

COS 522: Theology in the Contemporary Church

Spring Session 2021

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Objective:

This course covers significant individuals, movements, events, and theological developments from the nineteenth century to the present. Students will read selected primary sources, and after completing the course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the origins and theological tenets of liberalism from the early 19th century to the present, including its influence on ecumenism and process theology.
2. Understand and distinguish reactions to liberalism, including Fundamentalism, Neo-Orthodoxy, and Evangelicalism.
3. Understand the historical development and theology of the Holiness Movement, Pentecostalism, and the Charismatic Movement.
4. Understand the origins and tenets of Liberation and Contextual theologies.

Course Texts:

1. *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 3rd Edition, Daniel L. Migliore, Eerdmans Publishing, 2015. Required.
2. *What Would Jesus Deconstruct? (The Church and Postmodern Culture); The Good News of Postmodernism for the Church*, John D. Caputo, Baker Academic, 2007. Required.
3. *Documents of the Christian Church*, 4th Edition, Henry Bettenson and Chris Maunder, Oxford University Press, 2011. Reference.
4. *From Aldersgate to Azusa Street: Wesleyan, Holiness, and Pentecostal Visions of the New Creation*, Henry H. Knight, Pickwick Publications, 2014. Supplemental.

Assessment and Assignments:

Your performance in this class will be assessed in four ways: 1) online participation (25%), 2) a short analysis paper (20%), 3) a virtual presentation (15%), and 4) a capstone paper (40%).

Online Participation (25%): Your active participation in both synchronous and asynchronous online work will be important for the success of the course. Students are expected to attend conscientiously and prepare thoroughly for every week's lessons. Ask questions, offer your perspective, listen to others, take notes, and share your group's work with others. In these ways, we will become a classroom community.

We will have 8 contact hours of asynchronous activities (e.g. virtual discussion groups, online activities, etc.) that will be assigned throughout the course. In addition we will have 12 contact hours of synchronous work consisting of 2 synchronous video meetings per weekend for the

three weekends of interactive learning in the winter of 2021 (April 16/17, April 30/May 1, and May 14/15). These synchronous video meetings will be held Friday night from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Saturday morning from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Central Standard Time. Details for the video links will be uploaded to the Millsaps College Course Connect LMS.

In addition to your preliminary comments, your grasp of the material is assessed every session through an online performance grade. Again, this is not a 'soft' grade. Getting an 'A' here means that you participate actively and are prepared to answer questions with a strong command of the reading. A 'B' means that you participate solidly and can answer questions, but perhaps only with a passing recollection of the material. If you participate infrequently and show insufficient knowledge or duck questions when they are directed to you, we are entering 'C' territory. A 'D' indicates that you only participate when you are put on the spot and then not well. An 'F' indicates that you do not appear to have done the reading at all.

Short Paper (20%): In 1,500 words (approximately 6 pages), make an argument addressing the following question in light of the Migliore reading: **Does God need the world?** In other words, how would you describe the God-world relationship in order to answer that question? How does the Migliore text provide you with theological resources with which to formulate your position? To do so, offer a close interpretation and analysis of the assigned text. Due April 9.

Virtual Presentation (15%): In 10 minutes, lead the class in presenting one chapter self-chosen from *From Aldersgate to Azusa Street* Parts Four-Six, Chapters 19-33. Use a visual tool like PowerPoint or Prezi and interact with your audience. Thereafter, lead the class in discussion for 10 minutes by offering questions for consideration.

Capstone Paper (40%): In 3,000 words (approximately 12 pages), make an argument addressing the following question in light of the Caputo reading: **What does it mean to be a "person" and how does that understanding include both God and the world?** In other words, how would you describe the postmodern human condition and use the theological ideas found in the reading to answer that question? Link your argument to your own practice of ministry, and use course texts as evidence to substantiate your arguments. The capstone paper is worth 40% of the final grade. Please note that failure to pass the final paper will result in failure of the class, regardless of your numeric grade average.

Course Schedule:

Pre-work to do before the course begins:

Due April 9 via email: loyeashton@gmail.com

Reading:

Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*: Chapters 1-14 (read as much as you can in order to write your paper). Please email or call me if you have any questions.

Writing:

Short Paper (20%): In 1,500 words (approximately 6 pages), make an argument addressing the following question in light of the Migliore reading: ***Does God need the world?*** In other words, how would you describe the God-world relationship in order to answer that question? How does the Migliore text provide you with theological resources with which to formulate your position? To do so, offer a close interpretation and analysis of the assigned text.

Week One (16/17 April 2021): Synchronous sessions on ImmerseU

Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*: Chapters 1-9

Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, Section XIV

Week Two (18-24 April 2021): Asynchronous work on Course Connect

Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*: Chapters 10-14

Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, Section XV

Week Three (30 April - 1 May 2021): Synchronous sessions on ImmerseU

Knight, *From Aldersgate to Azusa Street*, Chapters 19-27

Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, Section XVI

Virtual Presentations

Short Papers Due: 3 May

Week Four (2 - 8 May 2021): Asynchronous work on Course Connect

Knight, *From Aldersgate to Azusa Street*, Chapters 28-33

Caputo, *What Would Jesus Deconstruct?*, Chapters 1-2

Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, Section XVII

Week Five (14/15 May 2021): Synchronous sessions on ImmerseU

Caputo, *What Would Jesus Deconstruct?*, Chapters 3-6

Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, Section XVIII

Capstone Paper due: 17 May 2021

Important guidelines:

1. Your work should be typewritten and **double-spaced: font size 12** and Times New Roman or Arial font and please use one inch margins. (Margins are the same as this page.) All written assignments must include your name, the course name and must be electronically signed by your mentor.
2. It is important to include a few words about plagiarism here since so much of the grade for the course depends on writing. Some students come close to copying from the textbook by changing a word or two in passages from the text, or splicing sentence fragments together. It's very obvious when this has been done. If there's something you don't understand, say so, and give it your best effort. Brief quotations from the text are fine, but such material should be indicated using quotation marks and the source noted. Papers must reflect your own thoughts, words, sentence structure, and ideas. Any use made of another author's material must be acknowledged in the form of a citation with or without a direct quotation. This applies most particularly to online sources like Wikipedia which can seem as though they exist in the public domain and so belong to everyone and no one at the same time. Importing online material without acknowledgement is plagiarism. Err on the side of caution, cite anything and everything you use to complete your assignments.
3. **Neatness, proper grammar, and spelling** will be factored into determining your final grade. If you know you have problems with grammar or spelling use the spell checker on your computer and/or get someone to check your work before turning it in.