THE 830 — Theology of Ecclesiology
Spring Module 2014

Essential Information

Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available in the Essential Information section at http://support.nts.edu.

• NTS Mission Statement & Purpose Degree Objectives
• Tips for online learning success
• NTS library services
• NTS textbook information
• Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
• NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
• Handbook for Inclusive Language

Instructor Information
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Email: smccormick@nts.edu
Office: (816) 268-5486
Office Hours: By Appointment

Catalog Description

This seminar course will examine the being and mission of the Church by focusing on two basic questions: What is the Church? What on earth is the Church for? Specific attention will be given to John Wesley’s ‘missional
ecclesiology' and how he 'connected' the being and mission of the Church with the Trinitarian category of koinonia and the 'means of grace.'
This course will use lectures, readings, papers, and group work to fulfill its objectives.

Course Narrative & Rationale

This seminar course will examine the being and mission of the Church by focusing on two basic questions: What is the Church? What on earth is the Church for? Unfortunately, almost from the Church's inception these two have become disjoined. This course will work through these two questions and the soteriologic of the Gospel for 'reconnecting' them by examining the Trinitarian and Christological Faith of Nicea and Chalcedon. Mapping through the terrain of diverse ecclesiological traditions, this course will seek to understand Ecumenism's failure 'to be' after the likeness of the Holy Trinity, and 'to live' in the missio Dei as the 'one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.' Specific attention will be given to John Wesley's 'missional-ecclesiology' and how he 'connected' the Church's being to the Church's mission with the Trinitarian category of koinonia. The support for such a claim can be found in Wesley's practice of 'Connexionalism' that gives credence for why Wesley viewed the very nature of the Church to be missional. When the Church practices 'unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity' the Church uses these koinonetic 'means of grace'—the notae ecclesia are the marks of koinonia—and partakes in the nature of Christ and His Church by participating in Christ's mission to do the will of His Father, 'on earth as in heaven.'

Degree Objectives

M.Div.

1. The articulation of the knowledge of this God through prayerful, scholarly study and a deepening understanding of the Christian Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.
2. The development of wisdom and discernment through engagement with the intellectual challenge of the literature of the Christian faith, by the critical, scholarly study of the history and theology of Christianity, and of the literature and practices of Christian spirituality, ethics and ministry.
3. The growth of mature self-awareness and self-understanding as flawed human beings, reconciled to God and to each other within the Christian community, who are being transformed into the perfect likeness of Christ, filled with his Spirit, and gifted for the service of humanity.

4. The investigation of human society, thought and culture in order to articulate clear and coherent views of the context of the mission of the Church, and to develop an understanding of the Church as the community of faith with a passion for the gospel engaging in mission to different cultures.

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course you will have (R = Course requirement directed toward achieving objective):

1. Demonstrated understanding of the Being and Mission of the Church. (R1, R2, R3)

2. Demonstrated understanding for 'how' the various traditions of Christendom have come to terms with the Being and Mission of the Church, and 'why' the very marks of the Church continue to be the very marks of ecclesial impasse for these traditions of the Church. (R1, R2, R3)

3. Demonstrated understanding of the Gospel and 'why' the marks of the Church are the marks of the Holy Trinity. (R1, R2, R3)

4. Demonstrated understanding of our Wesleyan tradition as a 'missional-ecclesiology' that lives after the mission-Dei by the 'marked-practices' of the 'one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.' (R1, R2, R3)

5. Demonstrated understanding of Ecumenism and renewed 'hope' for entering into that ecumenical conversation that seeks to overcome the marks of ecclesial impasse. (R1, R2, R3)

Required Texts & Course Materials  (Total Pages: 1398)

**Recommended Texts & Course Materials**

*Any additional supplemental documents and resources for this course will be placed in Moodle.*

**Course Outline**

- The Biblical and Theological Underpinnings of Pentecost
- The Soteriologic of the Gospel
- Trinitarian & Christological Faith of Nicea & Chalcedon
- Ecumenism’s Vision, Failure & Signs of Hope
- John Wesley’s Missional Ecclesiology
- Critical Book Digest Conversations

**Course Assignments & Requirements**

**Pre-Module Assignments**

**Pre-Course Reading:**

From the *Course Outline*, all five of the required readings must be completed before the first day of the week long Seminar begins. Since this is "Pre-
Module” work, **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED!** All Critical Book Digest Papers must be submitted online in Moodle by 11:55pm on **Friday, January, 17, 2014**. This is absolutely essential preparation to the Class Forum.

**Course Assignments & Requirements**

1. **Class Seminar (Outcomes 1-3) & Critical Book Digest Papers**

   Participation is crucial. To assist in this process, each day you will be required to prepare for, and participate in, the Class Seminar as sketched in the **Course Outline** and the **Critical Book Digest Conversations**. The totality of your Class Seminar Participation (Book Digest Paper Presentations and Class Conversation) will constitute 1/2 of your final grade.

   **Critical Book Digest Papers: (Outcomes 1-3)** Each student will write a critically reflective précis for each of the five assigned theology texts (**For the Life of the World, Light to the Nations, Canonical Theism, After Our Likeness, The Witness of God**). Each précis is to be approximately **5-7 pages**, double-spaced and in twelve point font. The written papers along with your class presentations and the defense of your critical reflections will comprise **1/2 of your final grade**. Each paper will be presented on the assigned date for the Seminar Discussion:

   **Critical Book Digest & Presentation Schedule:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For the Life of the World</td>
<td>January 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Light to the Nations</td>
<td>January 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canonical Theism</td>
<td>January 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Our Likeness</td>
<td>January 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Witness of God</td>
<td>January 24</td>
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*Here are a few questions and issues to consider in your reading and in the careful writing of your Critical Book Digest Précis:*

1) What is the thesis of the author?
2) What underlying assumptions guide each author in the defense of their thesis and accompanying arguments?
3) What significant contributions are made in the thesis and its defense?
4) Where are the specific places of 'disconnect' in the critical arguments made to support...*
the thesis?
5) Where are the places of 'convergence' with one author to the other? Be clear and concise and explain why you think there is overlap and how and why this is important.
6) Where are the places of 'divergence' with one author to the other? Be clear and concise as you explain why you think there is strong disagreement and disconnect between them. How and why is this significant?
7) Where did you find yourself resonating with the author and why? What crucial difference will each make in the way you understand God, grace, salvation, Truth, Scripture, Church, Hope, etc?
8) Where are the provocative places in each author and why do you find yourself resisting such argumentation in each?
9) Does the author(s) fairly and consistently represent the theology of Irenaeus? How? Where?
10) Where and why do you think the author may have overstated his/her case?

2. Ecumenical Conversation: A Reimagining of the Being and Mission of the Church

Each person will be assigned to an Ecumenical Conversation Research Group (ECRG) of no more than 6 people. The aim of this assignment is to revision Jesus' prayer of Unity for the Church. Hopefully, your imagination will be enlarged to guide the groups research and (re-)discovery for how the Church may 'reconnect' the being and mission of the Church. What new ways may we speak about "unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity" as necessary 'practices' for living after the mission of God? What contributions should we consider from the various ecclesial traditions throughout the history of the Church? What insights from our 'assigned readings' are worth implementing? What can we take from the work of Ecumenism to rethink our primary objective of 'reconnecting' the being and mission of the Church? What specifically, can we re-appropriate from Wesley's Trinitarian category of koinonia as a way to 'reconnect' the being and mission of the Church? These questions along with the early semester Course Lectures and the stated Course Outcomes should be integrated and implemented into the final paper of each ECRG. Further discussion and direction for these Ecumenical Conversations will be given on the first day of class.

These Ecumenical Conversations should be researched, documented, footnoted, typewritten (10 pages maximum, 2,500 words), according to Turabian style. This paper will be uploaded into Moodle for the entire class.
The date for these papers to be posted is no later than **Friday, March 14, 2014.** This deadline is firm! All late work will only be considered in the New Creation. . . . :-) This assignment will comprise 1/4\(^{th}\) of your final grade.

3. **Final Essay Exam**

There will be one *Comprehensive Final Take Home Exam* (Outcomes 1-3) that is critically reflective and synthetic in nature. As this Exam attempts to answer the specific questions that make up this exam, every synthetic response to these questions should not only be written to properly cover necessary content, but they should also be carefully written to demonstrate the *Outcomes* that have been designed to govern this course. This will be given at the end of the semester. The content of this exam will cover all the class readings, lectures and Class discussion. This exam will be posted and available one week prior to the close of the class. This exam will comprise 1/4\(^{th}\) of your final grade. *This Final Take Home Exam is due on Friday, February 14, 2014.*

**Distribution of Student Learning Hours**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Face-to-face Class Sessions:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reading: (Pre-Course)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Writing: (Pre-Course)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Writing: (Course Work)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other Assignments and Learning Activities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Exams &amp; Quizzes: (Course Work)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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Method for Submitting Assignments

All assignments will be uploaded for this course in Moodle:
https://moodle.nts.edu/login/index.php

Form and Style Expectations

The 'Ecumenical Conversation Research Paper' must be documented and formatted according to Turabian style.

Inclusive Language

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams

In the spirit of ‘fairness’ and ‘class integrity,’ all late work that is submitted before the last day of class sessions (Late Work will not be accepted during final exams week) will be graciously accepted, but with a letter grade reduction. This means that if a late paper is turned in on the last day of class, the best your potentially perfect paper (A) can expect to receive is a B for that late submission.

Class Attendance

Since NTS is an academic community of faith, class sessions are the primary means by which the professor and students can share and explore together the stuff of our faith. Hence, Class Attendance IS Imperative. After a total of 2 absences, any unexcused absence in the total will reduce the final grade by one letter.

Policy on Incompletes
Only under the rarest of circumstances will the professor approve an incomplete. Only 'Death in the family' or the 'prolonged illness' of the student will be considered as a justifiable cause for petition. For the most part, all other requests will not be considered. And yet, if the rarest of unforeseeable circumstances do arise, and those circumstances are not the above mentioned ('death in the family' and 'prolonged illness'), then, and only then, may an incomplete be granted by the professor. And, if the incomplete is to be granted for reasons other than 'death in the family' and 'prolonged illness,' it will be given with a letter grade penalty. For example, if the final grade earned in the class results in an A, and an incomplete was granted for other reasons besides 'death and prolonged illness,' then the final grade to be submitted to the registrar will be a B. All other petitions and considerations must groan and yearn for the coming of the New Creation!

Audio and Video Recordings

In order to foster a safe learning environment in which various viewpoints are respected, audio or video recordings or transcripts thereof by students is prohibited without the permission of the faculty member in charge of the course. If permission is granted, redistribution of these recordings or transcripts thereof outside the scope of the course is prohibited.

Students enrolling in videoconferencing courses or participating in certain synchronous Moodle activities should be aware that their images and voices will be transmitted digitally through the videoconferencing equipment and may be recorded. Continued enrollment in these courses constitutes willingness to participate in the class with these conditions. If you have privacy concerns, please discuss your enrollment with the Registrar.

Course Grading


These 'Critical Book Digests,' Research Group Paper, as well as your 'Final Take Home Essay Exam' require good writing skills. To do well certain things should be accomplished or avoided:

a. Do not simply give me back my notes in a summarization.
b. Make an argument in every paper. To do this you should avoid merely repeating a laundry list of disconnected ideas.
c. Integrate class lectures, discussion and readings of sermons, letters, treatises, journals, etc., into your theological commentary.
d. Make an intelligible argument in every paper. This requires that you get the basic information correct, that your argument makes sense given the basic information, and that your essay is submitted in a presentable form.

To accomplish this, you should:
1. Avoid misspelled words, run-on sentences, and incomplete sentences.
2. Avoid "there is" as a subject if possible, and the use of the pronoun "it" without an antecedent.
3. Avoid complicated subject formations. This can usually be done if you check to see if you have piled up prepositions. For instance, a subject such as "The form of the way of life in Miller's novel about Leibowitz" is too complex and doesn't say anything. Sentences like this is like "language on a holiday."
4. Avoid complicated verbal formations that hide rather than convey significance. For example, "It is to be understood by anyone who thinks about it that..." Use the passive voice as little as possible.
5. Check to see if your sentences flow upon each other, avoid non sequiturs -- that is, when one sentence does not follow upon a previous one but introduces an unexpected interruption of thought which cannot be accounted for in the context.

My Evaluation of your written work will use the following criteria:

1. **Presentation**
   1 2 3 4 5
   (This criterion evaluates writing style, clarity of prose, basic grammatical and spelling competence, sentence and paragraph flow.)

2. **Description of Sources (Primary & Secondary)**
   1 2 3 4 5
   (This criterion evaluates the student's ability to describe in her or his own language the position of the theologians cited.)

3. **Comprehensiveness of Sources**
   1 2 3 4 5
   (This criterion evaluates the student's breadth of sources used in composing essays.)

4. **Critical Engagement with Sources**
   1 2 3 4 5
(This criterion examines whether a student’s work has taken the step beyond mere description and critically engaged with the sources she or he has drawn upon by subjecting them to a critical theological analysis.)

5. Development of Position and a Coherent Theme

(This criterion determines not only if a student has critically assessed the sources and arguments present in an essay, but also if he or she has done this through the development of her or his own coherent position.)

Summary of Grading for Assignments:

Ecumenical Conversation Group Paper will constitute 1/3rd of the final grade.
Final Essay Exam will constitute 1/3rd of the final grade.
Table Talks will constitute 1/3rd of the final grade.

Grade Scale:
A 100-90
B 89-80
C 79-70
D 69-60
F 59-0

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly, NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies, which have been beneficial for the student in the past.

Course Calendar

Critical Book Digest Papers (5)


Ecumenical Conversation Research Group Paper

- Friday, March 14, 2014

Final Essay Exam

- Friday, February 14, 2014