

THEOLOGICAL STUDIES (THS)

THS 501. Christian Theology. (3 h)

A study of central themes and systematic connections in Christian theology from a variety of perspectives.

THS 520. Comparative Mysticism: Christianity and Islam. (3 h)

This course will examine the mystical traditions of Christianity and Islam on their own terms and in relationship with each other. Through comparison, we will draw out questions and points of emphasis that will deepen our understanding of the two traditions. We will also examine the phenomenon of mysticism and pursue some of the most intractable philosophical and historical questions it produces: What is mysticism? How does it relate to normative religious practice? What will be its role in the future?

THS 521. Foundations of Christian Ethics. (3 h)

This course is designed to show the relevance of Christian ethics to the contemporary world by way of exploring its distinct approaches to ethical reflection. To this end, we will study a number of classical and contemporary approaches in Christian ethics and their responses to contemporary moral challenges.

THS 522. History of Theological Ethics. (3 h)

This course provides a historical overview of the development of Christian morality from the Hellenistic period through the early 20th century. Throughout the course we will explore (1) major philosophical and theological ideas that helped shape the development of Christian morals and (2) how some of these ideas remain relevant to our contemporary ethical reflection. The purpose of this course is to help students appreciate the ways in which theological concepts and ideas can become resources for navigating today's moral challenges and dilemmas.

THS 530. Readings in Liturgical Theology: Denominations & Worship. (1 h)

This course explores how worship in various Christian traditions shapes and is shaped by those traditions' theologies. The focus is ecumenical, with texts selected from an array of Christian traditions and denominations.

THS 611. The Providence of God. (3 h)

A study of alternative models of God's relationship to and activity in the world, examining evil and suffering, miracle and prayer, tragedy and hope.

THS 612. Theological Anthropology. (3 h)

Perspectives on the origin, nature, and destiny of humanity in contemporary theological discussion.

THS 616. Faith and Film. (1-3 h)

This course relates a particular form of the arts to spiritual development. The class examines four diverse films and how they inform personal and group spiritual growth.

THS 618. Feminist, Womanist, Murjerista Theologies. (3 h)

A study of theology utilizing the methods and diverse voices of feminist theology.

THS 619. Readings in Queer Theology. (1 h)

This seminar-style reading course surveys classic and new works in queer theology, an approach to Christian thought that questions dominant constructions of gender identity and sexuality.

THS 620. Classics of Modern Theological Ethics: Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer, Barth, and Tillich. (1-3 h)

This course is a study of classic texts in modern theological ethics. By closely reading the works of Kierkegaard, Barth, Bonhoeffer, and Tillich, we will examine unique features of their theological and ethical methods and the relevance of their thought to contemporary religious and moral life. The purpose of this course is not only to get familiar with some of the great Christian thinkers but also to gain insights of permanent importance that can help us live faithfully and morally in a rapidly changing world.

THS 621. Christianity and Public Policy. (3 h)

A study of biblical warrants, historical developments, and contemporary issues related to Christianity and public policy. A look at the literature, relationship to other theological disciplines and basic ethics is involved.

THS 623. Religious Traditions and Human Rights. (3 h)

A study of relationships and tensions between religious traditions and human rights, with illustrations from historical and contemporary issues and movements. Also listed as Religion 336.

THS 624. Church & State in America. (3 h)

This course examines the theology, history, sociology and politics leading to the unique relationship of Church and State in the United States. The course engages contemporary issues and conflicts in the Church-State field with special attention to current developments and media coverage of those events.

THS 626. Contemporary Ethical Issues. (3 h)

This course explores contemporary ethical issues that have wide social, political, and religious significance. The issues include health care, environment, immigration, dying, and criminal justice. In order to properly understand the issues, we will examine arguments of various kinds – philosophical, sociological, political, economic, and theological, as they are often heard in public discussion. In particular, we will pay close attention to the ways in which theological discourse may make contribution to moral reflection.

THS 628. Postmodernism and Christian Ethics. (1-3 h)

Postmodernism has become an important movement in contemporary theology and ethics. In this course we will explore several variants of postmodern ethics in order to critically evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. In particular, we will take a close look at the ways in which certain features of postmodern ethics are used by contemporary Christian thinkers.

THS 629. Markets, Justice, & Christian Ethics. (3 h)

This course examines a range of ethical issues related to market economies, including consumption, desire, freedom, capitalism, exchange, market regulation, globalization, corporate responsibility, and the relationship between economy and ecology.

THS 630. The Problem of Evil. (3 h)

Many people, including religious believers, experience the existence of evil in the world. But how can this experience be reconciled with a theistic belief that the world is under the loving care of God who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and perfectly good? Can the experience of evil be evidence for challenging the existence of God or the common assumptions about the divine being? How should we make sense of various religious beliefs in light of the experience of evil?

THS 631. Black Theologies in the U.S.. (3 h)

An examination of the historical and cultural development of Black Theology in the United States. The course includes engagement with multiple modes of the black theological tradition, including early Black Liberation Theology, critical theorists of theodicy, Womanist Theology, intersecting feminist theories, and "Third Wave" Womanists thought.

THS 632. Feminist Theologies. (3 h)

Feminist critiques and reconstructions of Christian theology.

THS 637. African-American Theology. (3 h)**THS 642. Theology and Disability. (1-3 h)**

Considers how Christian theology can overcome traditional exclusions of persons with disabilities and how practitioners can make worship more inclusive and hospitable to all people. The seminar will explore these questions through contemporary theological work on disability, conversations with guest speakers, and field trips in the community.

THS 643. Homiletics, Ethics and Community Leadership. (3 h)

This course focuses on the relationship between leadership ethics, and preaching in communities of faith. Special attention is given to the roles of gender, race, ethnicity and class in homiletical practice and theology. The course also considers the role of pastoral leadership in guiding communities toward ethical decision-making that can result in justice and liberation. Also listed as Ministerial Studies 643.

THS 645. Contemporary Eco-theologies: Reimagining and Reembodying God, Humanity, and Creation. (3 h)

Over the past several decades, Christian theologians have responded to climate change, environmental racism, and ecological degradation by reimagining the nature of and relationship between God, humanity, and creation. This course examines how ecological concerns have been brought to bear on these topics in Christian theology. It begins by briefly considering how Christian theological traditions have been complicit in the anthropocentric, patriarchal, and racist ideologies that justify the economic and political mechanisms of ecological destruction. The course then turns to a series of constructive theological proposals that seek more just and sustainable ways of imagining and embodying the relationship between human beings and the non-human world. Throughout the semester and in their final projects, students will critically engage the viability of ecotheology as a resource for religious leadership in the realms of environmental justice and ecological well-being.

THS 651. The Emerging Church In the Two-Thirds World. (3 h)

An investigation of contemporary Christian communities in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America with special attention to theological, political, and economic activities.

THS 670. Classics of Contemplative Theology. (3 h)

Before the establishment of the great medieval universities, theology was an activity most often carried out in communal contexts of contemplation and asceticism. This course explores contemplative texts and practices as a mode of doing theology. Students will read spiritual classics from early Christianity through the early modern period and engage in experiential learning related to contemplative practices.

THS 671. Christian Mission in Global Perspectives. (3 h)

A study of the history of Christian mission including contemporary denominational, and ecumenical models for Christian presence, witness, and evangelism.

THS 672. Interfaith in Winston-Salem. (1-3 h)

This course seeks to prepare students to respond to issues related to religious diversity through experiential engagement in interfaith dialogue and critical reflection on these experiences. Also listed as MIN 672.

THS 711. The Doctrine of God. (3 h)

An exploration of the being and attributes of God in conjunction with the doctrine of the Trinity.

THS 712. Contemporary Christology. (3 h)

An examination of the definitive issues and basic alternatives for interpreting the person of Jesus Christ today, with specific attention to the formulation of the humanity and deity of Christ.

THS 713. Theological Hermeneutics. (3 h)

An investigation of current hermeneutical theory with specific attention to issues of theological method.

THS 715. Latin American Liberation Theologies. (3 h)

Latin American liberation theology is a body of religious thought that offers both a prophetic critique of unjust and violent systems of oppression and a hopeful vision of a more just and peaceful future. This course offers students a historical, contextual, and theological overview of Latin American liberation theology and asks students to enter into critical and constructive dialogue with the relevance of this body of thought for their own contemporary contexts.

THS 720. Comparative Theology. (3 h)

Comparative theology is an actively engaged response to the religious diversity characterizing our daily lives and global context. It is a way of seeing, reflecting, and learning within a pluralistic society that allows us to wrestle with our own commitments without abandoning our most deeply held beliefs. This course will introduce and analyze the purpose and methods of comparative theology as both academic discipline and spiritual journey. With an emphasis on Christianity and Islam, we will explore how two traditions can enter into fruitful conversation concerning a shared heritage and the fundamental, even existential, problems of humanity.

THS 725. Comparative Mysticism. (3 h)

This course will examine the mystical traditions of Christianity and Islam on their own terms and in relationship with each other. Through close reading and comparison of primary texts, we will draw out questions and points of emphasis that will deepen our understanding of the two traditions. We will also examine the phenomenon of mysticism and pursue some of the most intractable philosophical and historical questions it produces: What is mysticism? How does it relate to scripture and normative religious practice? Can it speak to concerns of social justice? What will be its role in the future? .

THS 730. Life, Death, and Beyond: Theories of Human Nature. (3 h)

A scientific, philosophical and theological exploration in search of answers to Big Questions: What is a human person? Is the person all material? Does the universe contain consciousness? Has science proven that religion is a mere illusion? Is life after death really possible?.

THS 739. Neuroscience and Ethics. (3 h)

A study of central philosophical and ethical issues at the intersection of neuroscience, ethics, and theology. The course explores neuroscientific accounts of human nature and morality as well as the ethical implications of neurotechnology.

THS 771. The Church in Contemporary Cultures. (3 h)

A study of historical antecedents, current structures, changing trends, and global relationships which impact the church now and toward the future.

THS 790. Topics Courses. (1-3 h)

Courses in theological studies can be developed and offered on a one-time basis using this designation.

THS 790A. Topics in Theological Studies. (1-3 h)

THS 790B. Topics in Theological Studies. (1-3 h)

THS 790C. Topics in Theological Studies. (1-3 h)

THS 790D. Topics in Theological Studies. (1-3 h)