

# THEOLOGICAL STUDIES (THS)

## THS 501. Christian Theologies in Context. (3 h)

A study of central themes and systematic connections in Christian theology, with attention to the social, cultural, and historical contexts from which diverse theological perspectives arise.

## 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. Introduction to 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 523. Dangerous Memories: Theologies and Practices of Remembering Suffering. (3 h)

This course explores communal practices of remembering suffering that have healing and redemptive potential for persons and entire communities, especially in contexts of historical violence and marginalization. We will begin with case studies that raise important theological and pastoral questions about how remembering suffering endured in the past may or may not contribute to healing, enduring present suffering with hope and resilience, and working towards liberation and life abundant for all. With case studies in mind, we will reflect theologically on the meaning and appropriateness of practices of remembering suffering for not only the suffering community, but also communities that have been complicit in the perpetration of violence and oppression. Particular attention will be paid to how remembering suffering correlates theologically with the Christian memory of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Students will conclude the course with a final project that combines theological reflection and pastoral creativity aimed at transformative practices of remembering suffering in their own respective contexts.

## THS 530. Readings in Liturgical Theology: Denominations and 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 612. Theological Anthropology. (3 h)

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

## THS 618. Feminist, Womanist, Mujerista Theologies. (3 h)

This course investigates theological discourse featuring the voices of feminist, womanist, and mujerista theologies as 'lived' and 'living' religious orientations that shape theological and ethical worldviews. This body of discourse cultivates communal landscapes and offers theo-ethical responses that center women's voices and experiences of religious, ethical, and spiritual life.

## THS 619. Readings in Queer Theology. (1-3 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.

## THS 624. Church and 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 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 633. Power in the Blood. (3 h)**

No symbol is more omnipresent in Christianity than the cross, but Christians have often disagreed about its meaning. Beginning with the radical critiques of contemporary womanist theology, this class will explore different understandings of Jesus's crucifixion across Christian history, from antiquity to the present day.

**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 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 650. Ecowomanism: Religion, Gender and Environmental Justice. (3 h)**

Ecowomanism is an approach to environmental ethics that centers the perspectives, theo-ethical analysis, and life experiences of women of color—specifically women of African descent. It centers discussion in ecology on how womanist voices contribute new attitudes, theories and ideas about how to face the ecological crises we are living in today. This course will introduce students to the growing field of Ecowomanism in the study of religion and ecology. As a learning community we will engage womanist intersectional race-class-gender and anti-oppression forms of analysis as we examine links between oppressions suffered by women across the globe and oppressions suffered by the earth. We will also ask questions about sacred relationships between African American and African women and the earth regarding planetary and self care as well as practices of spiritual activism for earth justice. The course will use interdisciplinary approaches used in religion and ecology and reflect upon methods in religion, theology, ethics, literature, anthropology, environmental studies and more.

**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 681. Christian Responses to Immigration. (3 h)**

This course examines Christian responses to the realities of immigration in the United States, with a particular focus on Latin American immigration. It begins with an overview of the history, causes, and current policy debates around Latin American immigration and it offers a glimpse into the conditions of life in Hispanic/Latinx immigrant communities. The course then proceeds to analyze various biblical, theological, and practical approaches embedded in a variety of contemporary Christian responses to a number of issues related to immigration, including border policy, deportation of undocumented immigrants, and access to basic goods and services in immigrant communities. This is a hybrid course that will include weekly in person meetings, two Sunday site visits to local Latinx congregations, and other asynchronous learning activities.

**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 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 726. Nietzsche and Kierkegaard. (3 h)**

Is there any meaning to life? What is the significance of death for living? How should we understand the nature of moral values in a post-Christian world? How should we overcome nihilism that is so pervasive in our contemporary world? Both Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche, who foresaw the predicament of modern society and who heralded the impending demise of the Christian world, asked many similar questions yet offered starkly different answers for them. Why do these two 19th-century thinkers continue to attract and influence so many thinkers across various secular and religious schools of thought? What makes the ideas of these two thinkers so original and insightful for our moral and religious reflection? This course probes some central philosophical questions of the two thinkers and their distinct responses in order to assess their enduring relevance and contributions to contemporary philosophy and theology. Through an in-depth reading of their major works, students will gain a deeper understanding of their key philosophical themes, their distinct critiques of traditional morality, and their approaches to the question of meaningful and authentic existence.

**THS 735. Grace: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives. (3 h)**

From singing 'Amazing Grace' to saying grace at meals, 'grace' is a familiar term for Christians. But what does it mean? In this class we join a centuries-long conversation, exploring different views of this central concept in Christian theology from antiquity to the present. With these authors from different times and places we will ask questions like 'What does it mean that salvation is a gift from God?' 'Does salvation mean we become something more than human?' 'What is the relationship between our free will and the gifts of God's grace?' .

**THS 739. Neuroethics. (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 789. Biotechnology and Ethics. (3 h)**

With the convergence of medicine, nanotechnology, computer science, molecular biology, genetic engineering, and business, biotechnologies are emerging not only as an important provider of life-saving and life-enhancing treatments but also a fast-growing and very profitable industry. This course explores some of the major ethical issues related to the current and proposed uses of biotechnologies with particular attention to the reasons and arguments that are often used to support various views on the use of biotechnology.

**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)**