

TH301 - Survey of Systematic Theology

T Th 3:00-4:14 pm

David Dault, Instructor

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615-321-5135 (**do not call** after 10pm or before 8am)

Goal: By the end of this course, students will have a basic sense of the major doctrines of Christian thought, as well as the context of their development within the history of the Church.

Required Texts:

Robert Louis Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2003)

Shirley Guthrie, *Christian Doctrine: Revised Edition* (Louisville: Westminster / John Knox, 1994)

Van A. Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms* (New York: Touchstone, 1992)

Students are expected to attend every class. If you expect to be absent, please let the instructor know **in advance** if possible. Doctor's notes and other documentation are not necessary; your word is fine for an excused absence. **Repeated or chronic absences or tardiness will result in a lowered overall grade and possible failure of the class.**

You should arrive at each class session *fully prepared* to participate and discuss the readings. Class time will be a mixture of lecture and discussion formats.

Expectations:

- 1) Please bring a Bible to every class meeting. Feel free to bring whatever translation you feel comfortable with—the more variety, the better.
- 2) Please complete the reading assignments for each class before you arrive.
- 3) Be on time. Roll will be taken. Please let me know in advance, if at all possible, if you plan to be absent.
- 4) Please turn off your cell phones during class, or leave them at home. Please leave earphones out of your ears for the duration of class time.
- 5) It is expected that all work done in your name for this course will be your work alone. There will be no tolerance for the giving or receiving of unauthorized help on any assignment for credit in this course. It is certainly acceptable to work together, study together, and discuss material for the course. Cheating, cribbing, and plagiarism, however, will result in severe academic consequences. If you have any questions regarding this expectation, ask.

Grading will be based upon performance on pop quizzes over the reading, class participation, a midterm and a final examination given on the last day of class.

- Tu Aug 24: **Introductory remarks**, syllabus, definitions of basic terms.
Sources and norms in theology
- Th Aug 26: **Wilken pp. 1-49.** Israel, Hellenism, and the rise of the Church; Practices;
- Tu Aug 31: **Wilken pp. 50-109.** The Desert Fathers and the Patristics; Apologetics
- Th Sep 2: **Wilken pp. 110-161.** Patristics (con't) and the Church Councils; Creeds
- Tu Sep 6: **Wilken pp. 162-211.** Christianity and the medieval period; Dogmatics
- Th Sep 9: **Wilken pp. 212-261.** The Crisis in Catholic Doctrine: Politics and Reformation
- Tu Sep 14: **Wilken pp. 262-321.** Review of Early Church material
- Th Sep 16: **Guthrie pp. 3-31.** Luther, Calvin, and the rise of Systematic Theology
The Basic Tasks of Theology (One Approach)
- Tu Sep 21: **Guthrie pp. 37-68.** God and Revelation
- Th Sep 23: **Guthrie pp. 70- 95.** The Christian God is Triune
- Tu Sep 28: **Guthrie pp. 97-141.** The Triune God is Almighty
- Th Sep 30: **Guthrie pp. 143-165.** The Creator God and Creation
- Tu Oct 5: **Guthrie pp. 166-191.** Theodicy (The Problem of Evil)
- Th Oct 7: **Guthrie pp. 192-227.** Sin: Humanity in Need of Redemption
- Tu Oct 12: Exam Review and questions
- Th Oct 14: MID TERM EXAM
- Tu Oct 19: **Guthrie pp. 229-269.** The Incarnate Son and Atonement
- Th Oct 21: **Guthrie pp. 270-312.** Bodily Resurrection and the Holy Spirit
- Tu Nov 2: **Guthrie pp. 314-329.** The Doctrine of Justification
- Th Nov 4: **Guthrie pp. 330-348.** Sanctification (Possible day off – Dault traveling)
- Tu Nov 9: **Guthrie pp. 349-371.** Ecclesiology: Christ's Body on Earth
- Th Nov 11: **Guthrie pp. 373-400.** Eschatology and the New Life to Come

Tu Nov 16: The Classically-Trained Revolutionary: **James Cone (Handout)**

Th Nov 18: The Prophet of the Dream: **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (Handout)**

- *Happy Thanksgiving* -

Tu Nov 30: The Dark Side of Reformation: Slavery and Apartheid: **Alan Boesak (Handout)**

Th: Dec 2: “Stony the Road We Trod” – Towards Liberatory Hermeneutics (Handout)

Tu Dec 7: Final discussions and exam review

Th Dec 9: FINAL EXAM

Texts for Further Study: The following recommended books might be helpful for this class and for your continued growth in theological study –

Placher, William, *A History of Christian Theology* (Westminster John Knox, 1983) – Gives an excellent overview of the subject from the first century to the present.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church – A clear example of a systematic theology, laid out in plain language with much Scriptural support.

Stroup, George, *Before God* (2004) – Recovering theological awareness in contemporary American culture.