

TH302 - Topics in Systematic Theology

American Baptist College, Nashville, TN

Spring 2006 – Baptism and Doctrine of Christian Initiation

Evening class: Tuesdays 5:30 – 8pm

David Dault, Instructor

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In this class we will learn to discuss and place Baptism *theologically*. That is, we will examine how the Christian tradition has thought of and used Baptism as a rite of initiation and as a mark of belonging, as well as its interaction with other doctrines such as original sin, atonement, justification and sanctification.

Course Website: <http://shoeleg.yak.net/67>

The website will serve as an online resource for announcements, course texts, and general information. It can be accessed from the library terminals as well as your own computer, and requires no password. Please note there is **no** “www.” in the address.

Required Texts:

Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology*, Fortress Press

Other texts for the course are **posted online** and should be printed by the student.

Suggested texts: These are **not required** for the course, but will be helpful to consult:

Shirley C. Guthrie, *Christian Doctrine, Revised Edition*, Westminster John Knox Press

Van Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms*, Touchstone Press

Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation*, Liturgical Press

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. **Please read the assigned texts prior to your arrival to the lecture.** 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. However, please make sure what you bring is a *complete* text; no paraphrase versions.
- 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 (preferably) **leave them at home**. If you must bring one, please leave earphones out of your ears for the duration of class time. **Leaving class to take calls is disruptive and discouraged.**
- 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 class assignments, class participation, a midterm and a final examination given on the last day of class. I reserve the right to give pop quizzes, as well.

TH 302 06 Week 1 - [Jan 10] - Introductory remarks; Gospel origins; Baptism handout for next week

TH 302 06 Week 2 - [Jan 17] - Read Lathrop 1 - 32 and [Didache](#) ; turn in and discuss Baptism Handout; Theological elements of liturgy, Marking and transforming time

TH 302 06 Week 3 - [Jan 24] - Read Lathrop 33 - 53; Theological elements of liturgy, Remembering and receiving

TH 302 06 Week 4 - [Jan 31] - Read Lathrop 54 - 83; Theological elements of liturgy, Preparing and belonging

TH 302 06 Week 5 - [Feb 7] - Read and discuss the [Catholic doctrine of Baptism](#) ; Baptism is a universal mark of belonging

TH 302 06 Week 6 - [Feb 14] - Read and discuss the [WCC document on Baptism](#) ; Baptism as ecumenical event

TH 302 06 Week 7 - [Feb 21] - Read Lathrop 87 - 115; MID-TERM EXAM REVIEW

TH 302 06 Week 8 - [Feb 28] - **MID TERM EXAM**

March 6-10 Spring Break

TH 302 06 Week 9 - [Mar 14] - Read Lathrop 116 - 138; Baptism and Sanctification:
Making a sacred people

March 21-21 GNL Lectures - No Class

TH 302 06 Week 10 - [Mar 28] - Read Lathrop 161 - 179; Practicing criticism,
criticizing practices

TH 302 06 Week 11 - [Apr 4] - Read Lathrop 204 - 225; Turning outward: remembering
Baptism in the world

TH 302 06 Week 12 - [Apr 11] - Read handout on Decian persecution; Controversies
and church unity in the ancient world

TH 302 06 Week 13 - [Apr 18] (Final Exam for Seniors) - Read handout on Apartheid
and Black Liberation Theology; Controversies and church unity in the modern
world

TH 302 06 Week 14 - [Apr 25] - Read handout on Hurricane Katrina; Baptismal
covenant and prophetic witness - FINAL EXAM REVIEW

TH 302 06 Week 15 - [May 2] **FINAL EXAM**