Looking at Jesus Christ in the Context of The Modern World
(Wednesdays, 4:30-7:30 pm)

Instructor: Dr. Najib George Awad

Associate Professor of Christian Theology
Hartford Theological Seminary
nawad@hartsem.edu
(Cell: 860-987 8048)

Course Description: This is an attempt to learn about the person and work of Jesus Christ in the theological literature and within the context of the modern age. The course begins with a brief introduction into the classical/patristic confessions on Jesus Christ (Nicene & Chalcedonian Christologies), setting up the foundational and principal components of the Christian belief in Christ. The rest of the course looks at the basic presumptions and claims behind various modernist biblical and theological interpretations of Jesus Christ in the last two hundred years or so. The course will analyze these various trends and assess their theological value for the Christian church.

Course’s Objectives:
At the end of the course the students would:
1- acquire a systematic and historical understanding of the roots of the contemporary thinking about Jesus Christ in Christianity
2- would have a chance to link this modern view of Christ to some contemporary issues that are pertinent to today’s world.
3- will learn how to discuss carefully and argue critically some primary theological texts on Christology and to reflect their implications for today.

Office Hours: I shall be available from Monday to Thursday between 1:00 and 4:00 pm. Students are welcomed to drop by my place in 98 Girard Avenue after making an appointment. Asking for an appointment can be done via my email: nawad@hartsem.edu, or via my cell phone: 860-987 8048
- Attendance Policy: Attendance in class is required. If you know you will be unable to attend a class session please inform the professor in advance. Missing two sessions will result in an automatic lowering of your final grade by 10%. Missing three or more sessions will result in automatic failure of the course.

-Suggested Primary Readings: there is no single textbook for this course and there are no required texts to be read before the beginning of the class. Students are required to read the assigned texts for every session during the semester (you will find them recorded underneath the title of every session in the course’s outline section). In addition to these assigned texts, the students are encouraged to read at least one of the following basic texts either before the beginning of the semester or during its progress. These texts offer general overview on major aspects and questions related to Christology. The texts are placed here in alphabetical order, not in importance:


- Course’s Outline and Reading Assignments

I- Week One (Jan. 22, 2014):

I- Setting the Contextual and Historical Scene

1- 4:30-6:00 pm: Introducing the course

2- 6:15-7:30 pm: The Context (1): Christology in the Life of Today’s Church

II- Week Two (Jan. 29, 2014):

3- 4:30-6:00 pm: The Context (2): the Intellectual Framework Called Modernity
[R.A: A. McGrath, Historical Theology, Ch.4, pp. 214-237]
4-6:15-7:30 pm: the Early Background (1): Christ in Scripture and early Christianity

III- Week Three (Fab. 5. 2014):

5-4:30-6:00 pm: the Early Background (2): The Beginnings of Christology

6-6:15-7:30 pm: the Early Background (3): Fourth-Century Christology

IV- Week Four (Fab. 12. 2014):

7-4:30-6:00 pm: the Early Background (3): an Attempt at Settling the Christological Debates

II- Christ in 20th Century Historical-Critical and Theological Research

8-6:15-7:30 pm: Modern Historical-Critical Research (1): the First Quest of the Historical Jesus

V- Week Five (Fab. 19. 2014):

9-4:30-6:00 pm: Modern Historical-Critical Research (2): Elaborating on the First Quest of the Historical Jesus
[R.A: A. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Ch. XV, XX]

10-6:15-7:30 pm: Modern Historical-Critical Research (3): Questioning the First Quest of the Historical Jesus

VI- Week Six (Fab. 26. 2014):

11-4:30-6:00 pm: Modern Historical-Critical Research (4): The Second Quest of the Historical Jesus and Jesus Seminar

12-6:15-7:30 pm: Modern Historical-Critical Research (5): How about a Third Quest?
VII- Week Seven (Mar. 5, 2014):

13- 4:30-6:00 pm: Christological Outcomes (1): the Paradox Called 'Incarnation'  
[R.A: S. Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, Ch. II, IV]

14- 6:15-7:30 pm: Christological Outcomes (2): Christology from the Seats of the Worshipers  
[R.A: F. Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, §. 3-4, 93, 95, 100]

VIII- Week Eight (Mar. 12, 2014):

15- 4:30-6:00 pm: Christological Outcomes (3): Christology in the Proclamation’s Texts  

16- 6:15-7:30 pm: Christological Outcomes (4): Christology ‘*From-above*’, from the Pulpit, At Least!  
[R.A: K. Barth, *The Göttingen Dogmatics*, Vol. 1, Ch. I, Sec. 4, 6 (pp. 131-141), and Barth, “The Humanity of God,” in *The Humanity of God*, Ess. 2]

IX- Week Nine (Mar. 19, 2014):

17- 4:30-6:00 pm: Christological Outcomes (5): Christology Armed with the Shield of History  

18- 6:15-7:30 pm: Christological Outcomes (6): Christology as Interaction and Reciprocity: ‘*From-below*’  
[R.A: W. Pannenberg, *Jesus, God and Man*, pp. 19-37]

X- Week Ten (Mar. 26, 2014):

19- 4:30-6:00 pm: Christological Outcomes (7): The Logical Tenability of the Incarnation as Theological Notion  
[R.A: C.S. Evans, *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith*, Ch. 6, pp. 116-136]

20- 6:15-7:30 pm: Christological Outcomes (8): Epistemology and the Nature of Theological Knowledge  

XI- Week Eleven (Apr. 2, 2014):

III- Contemporary Christological Questions

21- 4:30-6:00 pm: Christ’s Uniqueness (1): One of His Kind? Not Really  
[R.A: J. Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*, Ch. 9, 13, 14]  
(presentation)
22- 6:15-7:30 pm: Christ’s Uniqueness (2): One of His Kind? Yes, But!
[R.A: P. Knitter. *No Other Names?* Ch. 9] (presentation)

XII- Week Twelve (Apr. 9, 2014):

23- 4:30-6:00 pm: Christ’s Uniqueness (3): One of His Kind? Absolutely

24- 6:15-7:30 pm: Is Jesus Sinless or Sinful? (1): His Ethical Life
Proves His Sinlessness
[R.A: W. Herrmann. *The Communion of the Christian with God*, Ch. II, §. 9-11, 14; and

XIII- Week Thirteen (Apr. 16, 2014):

25- 4:30-6:00 pm: Is Jesus Sinless or Sinful? (2): “Sinless, Yet Became Sin for Us”

26- 6:15-7:30 pm: Is Jesus Sinless or Sinful? (3): In the Image of Sinful Humanity
Theology,” in *Trinitarian Soundings in Systematic Theology*,
B.L. Metzger (ed.), pp. 113-126] (presentation)

XIV- Week Fourteen (Apr. 23, 2014):

27- 4:30-6:00 pm: Jesus’ Gender (1): A Male Redeemer? Give Us a Break!

28- 6:15-7:30 pm: Jesus’ Gender (2): Christology as Socio-politically ‘Contaminated’
[R.A: E.S. Fiorenza. *Jesus, Miriam’s Child, Sophia’s Prophet*, Ch. 1] (presentation)

XV- Week Fifteen (Apr. 30, 2014):

29- 4:30-6:00 pm: Chalcedon Christology: Can it still Be Valid?
[R.A: N. Awad, “The Two Natures of Christ, the Quest of the Historical Jesus and a New
Hermeneutics of Scriptural Christology,” in *Theological Review*, 31, 2010, pp. 152-178]

30- 6:15-7:30 pm: Conclusion and Evaluation of the Course
- **Course Requirements**

1) **Assigned readings’ preparation and active class participation:** Students are required to read these texts as thoroughly and perceptively as they can and then to demonstrate an active class participation by coming to the sessions with questions or comments on them and the taught materials therein.

2) **Book Appraisal:** Students are required to write 5-8 pages-long book appraisals. The appraisal must 1) present a sufficient and accurate exposition of the book’s main argument and claims, 2) offer a perceptive critical assessment of these argument and claims and 3) end with a proposal on how such a book is valuable for today’s readers on the Trinity. Students must submit this book appraisal to the instructor no later than the **week Fourteen (the last week)** of the course’s schedule. The book the students must review should be one of the following texts:


3) **Presentation:** The students are required to prepare **one presentation** during the course. The instructor would ask the students to sign in for the required presentations during the first introductory session of the course. The presentation must be no more than **45 minutes** long. The second 45 minutes of the session would be spent in open discussion between the presenter and the classmates over the texts and aspects related to their subject. The students are free to use any audio-visual or material they need to perform their presentation. Every presenter must:

   A- present the content of the readings perceptively and coherently and to make sure that every main/basic argument (though not necessarily every idea) in the texts have been given fair presentation before his/her class-mates.

   B- give his/her own appraisal and point of view on the text’s understanding of the trinity and whether it is lucid, convincing and plausible or not.

   C- attend to the questions of the classmates in a way that would invite for further class discussion on the studied theological sample.

- **Grading Division:**

  1- reading’s preparation and class participation: (20%)
  2- Book Appraisal: (40%)
  3- Presentation: (40%)
- Grading Criterion

Students are graded using the A, B, C, or F system, with “+” and “−” markings allowed. For purposes of this course, these grades mean:

A Exceptional in several or most ways; completes all tasks, is creative and even original in content, and displays mastery of expression.

B Adequate in all basic ways; parts of the task are slighted, the content has minor weakness, and expression is competent yet not compelling.

C Inadequate in some ways; does not address significant tasks, shows weak or erroneous content, and expression sometimes obstructs understanding.

- Additional Policies:

1) Forbidden in the Classroom:

- mobile phones, unless shut down completely, are disallowed in the classroom.
- while bringing laptops or electronic Tablets is allowed for the purpose of recording or writing lecture notes, surfing the net or using any other program on the internet during the session is strictly forbidden.

2) Attendance: Attendance in class is required. If you know you will be unable to attend a class session please inform the professor in advance. Missing two sessions will result in an automatic lowering of your final grade by 10%. Missing three or more sessions will result in automatic failure of the course.

3) Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the failure to give proper credit for the words or ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, and is strictly prohibited. Credit will not be given for written work in this course containing plagiarism, and plagiarism may result in a failing grade for the entire course. Please consult the Plagiarism Policy on pp. 56-57 of the Hartford Seminary Catalogue 2011-2012, and/or contact the instructor with questions in this regard.

- Selected Bibliography

The books enlisted here are by no means exhaustive of all the literature on christology that is available in the field. Students are encouraged to look for other primary and secondary literature and to use every theological book they believe is helpful for their term papers’ writing or understanding of Christology.

Awad, Najeeb G., “Is a Perichoresis between Theological Interpretation and Historical Criticism Possible?”
toward a Balanced Hermeneutics of Scriptural Christology,” in Theological Review, 31/2, pp. 152-178


Jüngel, Eberhard. Theological Essays, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995, 2 Vols

Kähler, Martin. The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historical Biblical Christ, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964


Metzger, Paul L (ed.). Trinitarian Soundings in Systematic Theology, London: T&T Clark, 2005


O’Collins, Gerald, S.J. Christology: A Biblical, Historical and Systematic Study of Jesus Christ, Oxford:
Oxford University Press, 2009
Reimarus, Hermann S. *Fragments from Reimarus*, London: Williams & Norgate, 1879
Robinson, James M. *A New Quest of the historical Jesus*, London: SCM Press, 1959
Thompson, William M. *The Struggle for Theology's Soul: Contesting Scripture in Christology*, New York: Crossroad, 1996