The Triune God: 
Basic Trends in the Christian Doctrine of God

(Tues, 4:30-7:30 pm)

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- Course’s Description: For many non-Christians, and sometimes Christians as well, one of the most puzzling and controversial teachings in Christian faith is the claim that God is triune in nature: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This course aims to explore the biblical, historical, and philosophical contexts that drove Christians to develop an understanding of God as Trinity. It first unpacks the biblical roots of the church’s encounter and experience of God as creating Father, redeeming Son, and sanctifying Spirit. It then traces the historical development of this churchly spiritual experience into an intellectual trinitarian theology by investigating some major Christian discourses and trends considered to be milestones on the long historical track of the doctrine of the Trinity in Christianity.

- Course’s Objectives:
  At the end of the course the students would:
  1- acquire a systematic and historical analysis and understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity
  2- would have a chance to link the doctrine of the Trinity 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 the Trinity and to reflect their implications for today.
- Course’s Outlines and Sessions’ Reading Assignments

I- Week One (Sep. 8, 2015)
- 4:30-6:00 pm: Introducing the Course

II- Week Two (Sep. 15, 2015)

I. The Trinity and the Scripture
- 4:30-6:00 pm: The Scriptural Beginning of the Doctrine of the Trinity (1):
- 6:15-7:30 pm: The Scriptural Beginning of the Doctrine of the Trinity (2):

III- Week Three (Sep. 22, 2015)

II. The Trinity in Patristic Theology (East)
- 4:30-6:00 pm: The Trinity and the Rejection of Christ’s Divinity (1): Arianism
  [R.R: Rowan Williams, Arius: Heresy and Tradition, pp. 95-116]
- 6:15-7:30 pm: Counter Trinitarian Orthodoxy (1): Athanasius
  [R.R: Athanasius, Orations Against the Arians, Bk. 1, in The Trinitarian Controversy, William G. Rusch, pp. 63-129]

IV- Week Four (Sep. 29, 2015)
- 4:30-6:00 pm: The Trinity and the Rejection of the Holy Spirit’s Divinity (2): Eunomianism
  [R.R: Richard P. Vaggione, Eunomius: the Extant Works, pp. 67-75]
- 6:15-7:30 pm: Counter Trinitarian Orthodoxy (2): Basil of Caesarea & Gregory of Nyssa
  [R.R: Gregory of Nyssa, “Concerning We Should Think of Saying that There Are Not Three Gods to Abiliius,” in The Trinitarian Controversy, William G. Rusch, pp. 149-161]
V. Week Five (Oct. 6.2015)

II. The Trinity in Patristic Theology (West)

- 4:30- 6:00 pm: Counter Trinitarian Orthodoxy (4): St. Augustine
  [R.R: St. Augustine, the Trinity, Bk. VIII, Ch. 5; Bk. IX, Ch. 1, pp. 251-257; 271-275]

- 6:15-7:30 pm: Counter Trinitarian Orthodoxy (5): Hilary of Poitiers

VI. Week Six (Oct. 13.2015)

III. The Trinity Post Forth-Century AD

-4:30-6:00 pm: John of Damascus

-6:15-7:30 pm: The Treatise of Fi Tathlith allah al-Wahid

VII. Week Seven (Oct. 20.2015)

-4:30-6:00 pm: Theodore Abu Qurrah

-6:15-7:30 pm: The Trinity in the Reformation

VIII. Week Eight (Oct. 27.2015)

IV. Basic Trinitarian Trends in the Modern Age

-4:30-6:00 pm: The Trinity is our Relation with God (1): F. Schleiermacher

-6:15-7:30 pm: The Trinity is our Relation with God (2): Catherine M. LaCugna
  [R.R: Catherine M. LaCugna, God for Us, pp. 378-417]
IX- Week Nine (Nov. 3.2015)

-4:30-6:00 pm: The Trinity is God’s Being Itself (1): Karl Rahner
   [R.R: Karl Rahner, The Trinity, pp. 15-24; 45-48; 80-103; and Karl Rahner,
   Foundations of Christian Faith, pp. 133-137]

-6:15-7:30 pm: The Trinity is God’s Being Itself (2): Karl Barth
   [R.R: Karl Barth, Church Dogmatic, I.1, pp. 400-440]

X- Week Ten (Nov. 10.2015)

-4:30-5:45 pm: The Trinity as a Social Program (1): Jürgen Moltmann

-6:00-7:30 pm: The Trinity as a Social Program (2): Leonardo Boff
   [R.R: Leonardo Boff, Trinity and Society, pp. 123-154]

XI- Week Eleven (Nov. 17.2015)

V. The Trinity and Related Issues

-4:30-5:50 pm: The Trinity and the Question of Gender
   [R.R: Elizabeth Johnson, She Who Is, pp. 191-223]

-6:05-7:30 pm: The Trinity and Other Religions
   [R.R: V. Kårkkäinen, Trinity and Religious Pluralism, pp. 164-184]

Thanksgiving & Reading Week…Thanksgiving & Reading Week… Thanksgiving & Reading Week

XII- Week Twelve (Dec. 1.2015)

-4:30-5:50 pm: The Trinity and Uniterianism in the Church
   [R.R: H. Richard Niebuhr, Theology, History and Culture, pp. 50-62]

- 6:05-7:30 pm: The Trinity and Personhood
   [R.R: Stefan Oster, “Becoming a Person and the Trinity,” in Rethinking Trinitarian
   Theology, pp. 347-367]
XIII- Week Thirteen (Dec. 8, 2015)

- **4:30-5:50 pm**: The Trinity and Art

- **6:15-7:30 pm**: Conclusion & Evaluation

- **Course Requirements and Assessment Expectations**

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 **the last week** of the course’s schedule. The book the students must review should be one of the following texts:


3) **Term Papers**: students are expected to write 12-15 pages-long (5000-7000 words-long) papers (foot/endnotes, bibliography, outlines, are excluded). They must submit them to the instructor at the end of the teaching calendar of the semester. The students are required to pick up one of the subjects related to the trinity and write a paper on it **either in relation to Christian life and ministry or in relation to Christianity’s interfaith relation with Islam or Judaism.**

- **Grading Division:**

1- reading’s preparation and class participation

2- Book Appraisal:

3- Presentation:

- **Grading Criterion**

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Reading’s prep</td>
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<td>2. Book Appraisal</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Presentation</td>
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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.

The students can find their course’s grade posted in SONISWEB starting from **January 10th, 2016**.

**- Additional Policies:**

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**


