Introduction to Christian Theology:
The Basic Components of Christian Faith and Life

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

Instructor: Dr. Najib George Awad
Associate Professor of Christian Theology
Tele: (860) 987-8048
Email: nawad@hartsem.edu

- Course’s Description: This course aims at guiding the students through a comprehensive survey of all the major dogmatic elements in the Christian confessions and theological discourses: the doctrine of revelation, the doctrine of God/Trinity, Christology, Sotereology, Christian anthropology, Pneumatology, Ecclesiology, Eschatology, etc. It endeavors to providing the students with basic, coherent and accessible, knowledge about every basic element of faith that underpin the Christian community’s life in the world. The survey would be pursued in reliance on the book of Daniel Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding* and also other readings whenever this is necessary.

- Course’s Objectives:
  At the end of the course the students would:
  1- acquire an introductory knowledge of the basic components of every Christian doctrinal claim
  2- analyze and perceive the core argument of one contemporary issue related to each Christian doctrinal teaching and its impact on the Christian life today
  3- would be exposed to some theological literatures from Islam and Judaism that will develop their knowledge of Christianity in comparison and contrast with these other two religions.
  4-recognizing the relation between the intellectual and the practical dimensions of Christian faith and construct an initial understanding of the mutual impact of these two dimensions of faith on each other and on the relation with other religions.

- Text Book:

This text is going to be used during the whole course. So, the students are expected to purchase their own copy of the book. The book would be studied chapter-by-chapter during the semester.
- **Required Readings**: to be read, studied and presented by the students during the sessions. The texts are going to be on the courses’ reserve shelf in the library, and the students not required to buy their own copies of these reading’s books. The texts in alphabetic order are:


- **Course’s Outlines and Sessions’ Reading Assignments**

  **I- Week One (Wed- Sept. 3, 2014):**
  - 4:30- 6:00 pm: Introducing the Course
  - 6:15- 7:30 pm: The Task of Theology  

  **II- Week Two (Wed- Sept. 10, 2014):**
  - 4:30- 6:00 pm: The Meaning of Revelation (1)  
  - 6:15- 7:30 pm: The Meaning of Revelation (2): Its Relational Nature  

  **III- Week Three (Wed- Sept. 17, 2014):**
  - 4:30- 6:00 pm: The Nature and Role of Scripture in Islam (Dr. F. Salem)  
    [R.R: Ingrid Mattson, *The Story of the Qurʾān*, Ch. 2, pp. 27-78]
- **6:15- 7:30 pm**: The Nature and Role of Religious Text/Scripture  

**IV- Week Four (Wed- Sept. 24, 2014):**

- **4:30- 6:00 pm**: The Understanding of God: the Trinity  
  [R.R: D. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, pp. 64-91]

- **6:15- 7:30 pm**: The Understanding of God in Islam  
  [(Dr. M. Ayoub )](#)  

**V- Week Five (Wed- Oct. 1, 2014):**

- **4:30- 6:00 pm**: The Good Creation (1)  

- **6:15- 7:30 pm**: The Good Creation (2): Panentheistic Relationality  
  [(presentation)]  

**VI- Week Six (Wed- Oct. 8, 2014):**

- **4:30- 6:00 pm**: Divine Providence (1)  

- **6:15- 7:30 pm**: Divine Providence (2): The Scriptural View  
  [(presentation)]  

**VII- Week Seven (Wed- Oct. 15, 2014):**

- **4:30- 6:00 pm**: The Theology of Humanity (1)  
  [R.R: D. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, pp. 139-162]

- **6:15- 7:30 pm**: The Theology of Humanity (2): Theocentric Particularity  
  [(presentation)]  

**VIII- Week Eight (Wed- Oct. 22, 2014):**

- **4:30- 6:00 pm**: The Identity of Jesus the Christ  
- 6:15- 7:30 pm: the Understanding of the Messiah in Judaism (Dr. Y. Landau)

[ R.R.: ]

IX- Week Nine (Wed- Oct. 29. 2014):

- 4:30- 6:00 pm: Faith and/in Context (1)  

- 6:15- 7:30 pm: Faith and/in Context (2): Context as Method (presentation)  
  [ R.R.: S. Bevans. An Introduction to Theology in Global Perspective, pp. 45-60, 164-188 ]

X- Week Ten (Wed- Nov. 5. 2014):

- 4:30- 6:00 pm: The Holy Spirit (1)  

- 6:15- 7:30 pm: The Holy Spirit (2): Inspiration & Conversion (presentation)  
  [ R.R.: S. Grenz, Theology for the Community of God, pp. 379-388; 405-415 ]

XI- Week Eleven (Wed- Nov. 12. 2014):

- 4:30- 6:00 pm: The Community of God/ Church (1)  

- 6:15- 7:30 pm: The Community of God/ Church (2): in Postmodernity (presentation)  

XII- Week Twelve (Wed- Nov. 19. 2014):

- 4:30- 6:00 pm: Church Service and Ministry (1)  

- 6:15- 7:30 pm: Church Service and Ministry (2): in Relation to Homosexuality (presentation)  
Reading Day

XIII- Week Thirteen (Wed- Dec. 3, 2014):

- 4:30- 6:00 pm: Christian Hope and Eschatology

- 6:15- 7:30 pm: the Idea of the End of Days in Judaism (Dr. Y. Landau)

- 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) Presentations: the students are required to prepare a presentation for the readings of the first session during every study week. 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’ contents and aspects related to their subjects. The students are free to use any audio-visual or material they find useful in performing their presentations. Every presenter must:

   A- present the content of the readings perceptively and coherently and make sure that every main argument 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 subject and claims.
   C- attend to the questions of the classmates in a way that would invite for further discussion.

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, Dec. 13, 2014, 10:00 pm. The students are required to pick up one of the subjects we talked about in the class 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- presentations:  
3- Term Papers:  

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.

The students can find their course’s grade posted in SONISWEB starting from January 10th, 2013.

- Additional Policies:

1) 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.

2) 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 the various elements of Christian faith. I do not enlist here the classical literature of basic theological authorities, like Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Schleiermacher, Barth, Tillich, Rahner, Bultmann, Brunner. While I strongly encouraged the students to go through the works of these aforementioned classic theological minds, I present here concise, relatively more contemporary, bibliographical suggestions on every studied subject. I also invite the students to expand their reading spectrum beyond them in their term-papers’ writing and further studies.
- Theology & Theologians in General


- The Meaning of Revelation


- The Authority of Scripture


- The Triune God


Hanson, R.P.C. The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God, the Arian Controversy 318-381, New York: T&T Clark/ Continuum Imprint, 2005.


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**- The Good Creation**


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**- Divine Providence**


Helseth, Paul Kioss; William Lane Craig; Ron Highfield and Gregory A. Boyd, *Four Views on Divine Providence*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.


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**- Theology and Humanity**


- Jesus the Christ


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, “The Dogmatic Significance of the Question of the Historical Jesus,” in *Theological


- Faith And/In Context


Tanner, Kathryn. Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997, Prt. II.


**- The Holy Spirit**


**- The Community of God/Church**


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**Church Service and Ministry**


- **Theology of Other Faiths**


- **Christian Hope**


