

WINGATE UNIVERSITY

Preparing students for lives of significance in the global community

Rel 330: Systematic Theology I

Fall 2014: Section 11:00-12:15pm TR

Burris Hall Rm 205

Dr. C. Wright

Office Location: 104D Burris

“A systematic study of methodology and the doctrine of God in the classic Christian tradition.”

Wingate Catalog

"We are like dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants. We see more, and things that are more distant, than they did, not because our sight is superior or because we are taller than they, but because they raise us up, and by their great stature add to ours"

The 12th century theologian John of Salisbury in *Metalogicon* (1159).

MAIN TEXTS:

- Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* 2nd Edition (2004)
- James Martin, SJ, *Jesus: A Pilgrimage* (2014)
- Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 5th Edition (2011)
- Clarke Williamson, *Way of Blessing, Way of Life: A Christian Theology* (Chalice Press, 1999)
- Holy Bible

GOALS:

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to Christian systematic theology and the content of classic Christian doctrine and modern expressions of this doctrine. Christians today are standing on the shoulders of many theological giants and this course attempts to introduce students to these individuals, their historical contexts, the questions they were trying to answer, their methods, their contributions to the formation of doctrine, and the practical implications of their work. This is done in order to discern how to Christians today can faithfully address the questions and controversies of our historical moment. In this class, we focus on studying classical voices, as well as doctrine as it has been historically understood. However, theology is a living entity so contemporary voices will be offered who offer expressions of doctrine in light of contemporary issues faced by Christians today. Students will be introduced to key aspects of many areas covered by systematic theology: Knowledge of God, Historical Periods, Themes and Personalities of Christian theology, Theological Methods and Sources, Doctrine of God, Doctrine of the Trinity, Christology, Sacramental theology, and Eschatology.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- comprehend what Christian systematic theology entails

- .. understand the richness of classic Christian theology and the diversity of methods and sources
- .. acquired basic methodological and critical skills employed in the study of Christian theology
- .. recognize significant figures and better understand their contribution to the formation of Christian doctrine
- .. appreciate and describe the historical contexts contributing to the formulation of Christian doctrine
- .. foster synthetic reflection on many aspects of Christian theology and how they impact Christians today
- .. cultivate communication skills via written and oral work

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Studying Christian theology is not purely a theoretical pursuit or merely accumulating data about concepts and ideas. It is equally a matter of engaging others about their beliefs and perspectives, while seeking to articulate your own. Thus, every effort will be made to cultivate a justice oriented, inclusive Christian community of faith within which each voice is heard and every person treated with dignity and respect -- the living manifestation of the doctrine of the Trinity. As participant in this interactive learning process, it is expected that course participants will be involved in all class activities (i.e., arrive on time, come with all texts and academic supplies, come with assigned work done) and that they will contribute positively to a healthy, faithful, and fruitful context for learning.

HONOR CODE:

This class will be conducted under the provisions of the Wingate University Honor Code: “Wingate University students do not lie or cheat, nor do they tolerate in their company the presence of one who does.” I take this Code seriously and expect my students to do so as well. Any infraction of the honor code may lead to a student’s receiving an F in the course and notification of the office of the university’s vice president for academic affairs. Any subsequent infraction may lead to expulsion from the university. Examples of cheating and plagiarism include, but are not limited to, handing in someone else’s work as if it were your own, or allowing someone else to hand in your work as if it were his or her own. Each test or paper submitted will include the following pledge and the student’s signature: “I pledge on my honor I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this work, and I am unaware of any violation of the Honor Code by others.”

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Any student with a documented disability who is requesting accommodations is required to register for services with the Office of Disability Support Services, which is on the second floor of the Ethel K. Smith Library in the Academic Resource Center: arc@wingate.edu. All discussions will remain confidential.

TECHNOLOGY: Cell phones should be *turned off* and *out of sight* during class. Lap tops may be used however, lap-top cameras and any recording devices are to be turned off during class (unless arranged with instructor).

LATE POLICY:

As a post-secondary institution, it is your responsibility to arrange to make up any missed work. You can turn work in late but for each day that it is late, the grade will be reduced. Work more than a week late cannot be accepted unless prior arrangements are made. No makeup tests are given. The final examination grade may be substituted for one test. Any other missing grades remain zeroes. Tests may be taken prior to excused absences if arrangements are made by the student.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: GRADES AND EXAMINATIONS

Your final grade will be determined on five factors:

Attendance and Participation	20%.
Engagement Papers	20%
History Presentation/Handout	10%
Mid-Term	20%.
Comprehensive Final	30%
Total:	100%

The final letter grade will be determined on the following scale

100-90 = A	(Excellent work -- meets and exceeds expectations outlined in rubrics)
89-80 = B	(Good work -- consistently meets expectations outlined in rubrics)
79-70 = C	(Fair work -- meets many expectations but not others outlined in rubrics)
69-60 = D	(Barely passing work -- rarely meets expectations outlined in rubrics)
59 and below = F	(Failing work -- does not meet expectations outlined in rubrics)

EVALUATION COMPONENTS

PARTICIPATION:

Participation is crucial for getting the full intellectual and spiritual depth of this course. This course is designed on the principle offered by Benjamin Franklin and many others: "Tell me and I forget, show me and I may remember, involve me and I'll understand." Thus involvement via student participation, discussions, presentations, and engagement papers is crucial for success in this class and academics in general. However, to make the most of classroom discussions, students must be prepared and willing to contribute. The following chart will help you to maximize your efforts to fruitfully participate in class.

	Strong Work	Needs development	Unsatisfactory
Listening	Actively and respectfully listens to peers and instructor	Sometimes displays a lack of interest in comments of others	Projects lack of interest or disrespect for others by texting, using earphones, working on other subjects
Preparation	Arrives fully prepared with all assignments completed, and notes on reading, observations, questions	Sometimes arrives unprepared or with only superficial preparation	Exhibits little evidence of having read or thought about assigned material

Quality of contributions	Comments are relevant and reflect understanding of: assigned text(s); previous remarks of other students; and insights about assigned material	Comments sometimes irrelevant, betray lack of preparation, or indicate lack of attention to previous remarks of other students	Comments reflect little understanding of either the assignment or previous remarks of others
Impact on course	Comments frequently help move the class conversation forward	Comments sometimes advance the conversation, but sometimes do little to move it forward	Comments do not advance the conversation or are actively harmful to it
Frequency of participation	Actively participates at appropriate times	Sometimes participates but at other times is “tuned out”	Seldom participates and is generally not engaged

(Adapted from John Immerwahr and Dr. Edwin Bagley)

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

Engagement Papers: The engagement papers will be constructed to answer the prompts given to the best of your ability. You must use references from the text to substantiate your ideas and thoughts. In your answers you will be assessed on the content of what you write, how well you comprehend the materials, and your writing skills. All papers will be submitted via Moodle and a rubric for grading will be attached along with comments.

All writing assignments must be submitted via Moodle. Place your name, course name and number, and date at the top of your assignment. In addition, students are expected to attempt to use gender inclusive language in their papers.

You will be given rubrics for each of the different assignments to effectively communicate the expectations you must meet. Please read carefully and if you have any questions please contact me. From the rubrics you will notice that your written papers will be graded on both content (i.e. ideas and creativity) and style (i.e. spelling, punctuation, and syntax). Lack of attention to either dimension will result in a lower grade.

PRESENTATIONS (with Handout)

History Presentation: You are to give an oral presentation on sections of Part I of the *Christian Theology: An Introduction* text. You will be assigned one of the following four areas: Patristic Period (c.100-700); Middle Ages and Renaissance (c.700-1500); Age of Reformation (c.1500-1750); Modern Period (c.1750-present). You are to cover the content offered in the text and supply answers to the questions posed by the text in your presentation (at the end of each section). Also, a short, concise handout must be offered as a study guide for your classmates. You will be assessed on how comprehensively and imaginatively you engage with the content of your historical period as well as how effectively you communicate this information to your peers. The final component of your assessment is your handout; the more effective your study guide is to creatively engage/teach your peers the important aspects of your assigned historical period, the better your assessment will be. You will be given 20-30 minutes to present your work.

MIDTERM and FINAL EXAMINATIONS:

These take home exams will reflect knowledge of all assigned readings, class discussions, history presentation, and any supplemental information. All exams must be submitted via Moodle by the assigned dates/time (See itinerary for the dates/times of submission). In your answers you will be assessed on the content of what you write, how well you comprehend the materials, and your writing skills.