

SYT 385I THEOLOGY OF GOD

INTERSESSION 2021

Course Outline

Class Start Date & End Date

May 4, 2021
June 25, 2021

Class Meeting Time, Location, and Room

Online

Instructors Name: Fr. Dave Norman O.F.M.
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Course Description

Aspects of the problem of God in the modern era. Preparations for belief in the Trinity in the history of Israel. The Christ event and the Trinity. The Trinity and the early Church Councils. “Explanations” of the Trinity old and new. Special questions regarding the Trinity (the Trinity and the immutability of God, creation, modern science, evil, gender, Christian worship and spirituality). Pneumatology.

Course Objectives

- a) **Intellectual Formation** - The course will nurture a learning environment wherein the student will come to an understanding of the revelation of the triune God in the person of Jesus Christ. The course will examine the phenomenon of modern atheism. The course will demonstrate the importance of a sound theology of the Trinity for other areas of theology, e.g., Foundational Theology, Scripture, and Moral and Spiritual Theology.
- b) **Cultural Context** - The course shall foster an evangelical discernment of the ‘signs of the times’ to engage with the reality of our world, beginning with role that belief in God brings to an understanding of humanity and of the various peoples of the world.
- c) **Personal and Spiritual Formation** - The course shall foster growth in terms of human and Christian maturity, focusing on the personal response of one who is a disciple of Jesus Christ, with the aim of giving public witness to the Word made flesh in the world. The

importance of maintaining the unity between theology and spirituality will be seen in the need to give expression to Christian faith in the Three Persons in One God.

- d) **Capacity for Ministerial Leadership** - The course shall foster and implement adult learning principles and techniques such as guided reading and pertinent questions for the discussion forum and the Zoom meetings. The course is set up to enhance students' capacity for ministerial leadership by bringing them to a deeper awareness of the pastoral and social implications of the importance of the Trinity for a fitting understanding of God, Christ, Church, sacraments, and moral action.

Course Assignments and Evaluation

All written work will be graded on content (70%) and style (30%). For an "A+," the work must be of a publishable quality. For an "A," the written work must demonstrate a clear, discerning eye; and the prose must be clear, comprehensive, insightful, well organized, and contain few if any grammatical and/or spelling errors. The difference between an A and an A- is usually attributable to errors in grammar and spelling. For a "B," the written work demonstrates a suitably clear presentation of the material and is adequately organized with a minimum number of grammatical and/or spelling errors. For a mark of "C+" or less, the writing is not clear, nor are the ideas expressed or organized very well, and there are numerous grammatical and/or spelling errors.

As regards the synopses on *The Tripersonal God: Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity* and *What Are They Saying About the Trinity?* the aim of the two assignments is to demonstrate a grasp of the thesis of each book through an exposition of the important points. You may want to summarize the chapters, or you may want to focus on those chapters you consider central to the thesis. Remember, you cannot summarize the content of the book, so you need to discern the most significant aspects. You may offer a critique of the book, but it is not obligatory. If you offer a critique, here are some of the things I look for: is the book readable, are the ideas clearly expressed, is the topic adequately addressed, does the book miss something that you thought should have been covered? You are also invited to share your thoughts on how the book did or did not advance your faith understanding? Did it contribute to your spiritual growth? How did the book influence your life or work? Both the critique and the thoughts you share on how the book influenced your (spiritual) life are **optional**.

Textbooks

Gerald O'Collins, S.J. *The Tripersonal God: Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity*. Second Revised Edition. New York/Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 2014, v-234.

Anne Hunt, *What Are They Saying About the Trinity?* New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1998, 1-97.

Recommended Reading

V. *Deus Trinitas* (505-535) from Hans Urs von Balthasar's *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory: III. Dramatis Personae: Persons in Christ*. Translated by Graham Harrison. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992, 11-546.

B. *The Final Act: A Trinitarian Drama* (247-321) from Balthasar's *Theo-Drama V: The Last Act*. Translated by Graham Harrison. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998, 13-529.

III. *Logos and Logic in God* (123-170) and IV. *Kata-Logical Aspects* (171-186) from Balthasar's *Theo-Logic II: Truth of God*. Translated by Adrian J. Walker. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004, 11-371.

II. *The Holy Spirit as Person* (105-164), III. *“The Father’s Two Hands”* (165-218), and IV. *The Role of the Spirit in the Work of Salvation* (219-249) from Balthasar’s *Theo-Logic III: The Spirit of Truth*. Translated by Graham Harrison. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005, 13-457.

Course Requirements

For Tuesday, May 4th, read the notes on “Introduction.” For the Zoom meeting we will have opening introductions and a discussion of the “Introduction.” Zoom Meeting Question: What is your understanding of the Trinity?

For Thursday, May 6th, read the notes on “Belief in and Knowledge of God Today” (pages 1-10), and Articles 19-22 of *Gaudium et spes*,” Discussion Forum Question: How would you assess the importance or nonimportance of atheism, given that everyone is granted the opportunity to be one with the paschal mystery of Christ (*Gaudium et spes* #22)? Zoom Meeting Question: What is your takeaway from the notes on “Belief in and Knowledge of God Today”?

For Tuesday, May 11th, read the notes on the “Belief in and Knowledge of God Today” (pages 10-19). Discussion Forum Question: Does Kasper’s presentation of the experience of God in faith resonate with your experience of God? Zoom Meeting Question: Why are people hesitant to discuss their experiences of God?

For Thursday, May 13th, read the notes on “The Message About the God of Jesus Christ—Father and Son.” Discussion Forum Question: What would you say to someone who had a Modalist understanding of God the Father? Zoom Meeting Question: What do we really know about what Jesus revealed to us of the Father and the Holy Spirit?

For Tuesday, May 18th, and 30% of the final mark, write a synopsis of 7 pages (300 words per page on a font of 12) of Gerald O’Collins’s *The Tripersonal God: Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity*. **Late submissions will be deducted 10%. No Zoom Meeting.**

For Thursday, May 20th, Zoom Meeting Questions: What did you like about *The Tripersonal God* and what did you not like about it? Were there any questions or issues that came to mind as you read the book? What is your critique of the book?

For Tuesday, May 25th, read the notes on “The Message About the God of Jesus Christ—Holy Spirit.” Discussion Forum Question: How would you argue for the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Trinity? Zoom Meeting Question: How do we discern the presence and action of the Spirit in our lives?

For Thursday, May 27th, read my notes on “The Development of the Doctrine on the Trinity.” Discussion Forum Question: Is there a theology or theologies of the Trinity that you gravitate towards? Why? Zoom Meeting Question: Are the Eastern and Western understandings of the processions of the Persons of the triune God reconcilable? Why or why not?

For Tuesday, June 1st, and 30% of the final mark, write a synopsis of 7 pages (300 words per page on a font of 12) of Anne Hunt’s *Trinity: Nexus of the Mysteries of Christian Faith*. **Late submissions will be deducted 10%. No Zoom Meeting.**

For Thursday, June 3rd, Zoom Meeting Questions: What did you like about Hunt's *Trinity* and what did you not like about the book? Were there any questions or issues that surfaced as you read the book? What is your major critique of Hunt's book?

For Tuesday, June 8th, read my notes on "Balthasar's Trinitarian Inversion." Discussion Forum Question: What do you think of Balthasar's proposal? Zoom Meeting Question: Do you think that it is fruitful to speak of the masculinity and femininity of God?

For Thursday, June 10th, and for 30% of the final mark, write a response of 6 pages to the following question: You are asked to explain the Trinity to a class of Grade 12 students or to a group of parishioners. What would you tell them? **No late papers accepted!** There will be a Zoom meeting that will provide an opportunity for students to share their responses to the question.

For 6% of the final mark—participation in the discussion forum. **Note: Submissions to the discussion forum must be made before Monday or Wednesday at 23:59, depending on the day for the forum and excepting those days (May 4, 18, 20, June 1, 3, 10) when there is no discussion forum. A minimum of 5 submissions of at least 150 words per submission must be made to qualify for participation status in the discussion forum. Students must respond to at least one other response. No late submissions will be accepted. Full participation in the Discussion Forum will earn a grade of 5.5 of 6 or 92%.**

For 4% of the final mark—participation in the Zoom meetings. **Every Tuesday and Thursday at 19:00 (7 pm) Mountain Time we will gather for a Zoom meeting (the exceptions are Tuesday, May 18th and Tuesday, June 1st). The meetings will provide students an opportunity to discuss the material of the previous week and to ask questions pertaining to the topic at hand, as well as to related topics in systematic theology. Participation in the zoom meetings is obligatory, except for those evenings when a rare conflict arises or in case of sickness, death in the family, and other extraordinary reasons. Full participation in the Zoom meetings will earn a grade of 4 of 4 or 100%. Those who miss a meeting will be docked 10% for each meeting missed.**

Late Submission Policy.

Please see Course Requirements

Course Schedule

- I. Introduction
- II. Belief in and Knowledge of God Today
- III. The Message About the God of Jesus Christ—Father and Son
- IV. The Message About the God of Jesus Christ—Holy Spirit
- V. The Development of the Doctrine on the Trinity
- VI. Balthasar's Trinitarian Inversion

General Academic Information

Course Attendance

No credit will be given for a course if the student has been absent, for any reason whatever, from one-third or more of the lectures and/or seminars scheduled for the term. Likewise, no credit will be given if term assignments or other assignments are or remain incomplete.

Leave of Absence and Policy for Incompletes

Extensions to an incomplete grade may be granted in extenuating circumstances, but may not exceed 16 weeks following the end of the course. Students who fail to complete course work by the agreed deadline will have a grade assigned which is based on work completed.

Academic Integrity

Acts of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, etc.) are subject to an appropriate penalty. The grade "F" may be assigned to a student guilty of such acts by the professor of the course in which the infraction occurred. A second offense against academic integrity renders the student liable to automatic dismissal from NTC. Further details are available in the Student Handbook in the Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Grievances

Students may appeal grades received; the procedure is outlined in the Student Handbook in the Grade Appeal Policy. For other grievances, students will refer to the Student Grievances Policy also outlined in the Student Handbook.

NOTE: The GPA is computed on the basis of cumulative grade point (letter) values, not percentage values. All courses are included in this calculation except those exceeding degree requirements and/or received as transfer credits from other recognized institutions.

Grading System

Undergraduate Studies		
Grade Meaning	Grade	Grade Point
Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0
	A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0
	B-	2.7
Adequate	C+	2.3
	C	2.0
	C-	1.7
Marginal	D+	1.3
	D	1.0

Graduate Studies		
Grade Meaning	Grade	Grade Point
Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0
	A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0
	B-	2.7
Adequate	C+	2.3
	C	2.0
	C-	1.7
Fail	D+	1.3
	D	1.0
	F	0.0

Fail	F	0.0
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Written Assignments - Style and Format

Newman Theological College requires that all written work be submitted in acceptable academic format and style. Please note the following regulations:

Regulations

Research papers, book reports, article summaries, reflection papers, and essays should be double-spaced, printed on one side only, and submitted on white, 8.5" x 11" paper.

A standard type style, such as Times New Roman, with a 12-point font size, must be used. The instructor will specify the most recent edition of the style manual to be used:

1. Kate Turabian, "A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
2. Joseph Gibaldi & William Aichters, eds., "MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers" (New York: Modern Language Association of America).
3. American Psychological Association "Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association" (Washington: APA Publications).

Copies of these standard references may be purchased in the NTC bookstore.

Ignorance of standard form is not considered an acceptable excuse for deviation from required standards of format and style.

Academic Regulations

The following Academic Regulations are located in the Academic Calendar for your reference:

- Changes in Registration: Add/Drop/Withdraw Notice
- Course Work
- Final Examination Schedule
- Incomplete Grade Policy
- Inclusive Language

Related Academic Matters

The following Related Academic Matters are located in the Academic Calendar for your reference:

- Grade Reports & Posting
- Glossary of Academic Terms

Other Related Policies

The following policies are located in the Student Handbook for your reference:

- Academic Misconduct Policy
- Grade Appeal Policy

Recording of Lectures

Audio or video recording of lectures, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior consent of the instructor. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Student Accessibility Services:

A student with special needs that could affect their performance in class should contact their professor during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. They should also register with Student Services by contacting Sr. Zoe Bernatsky at 780-392-2450 ext. 2213; email zoe.bernatsky@newman.edu

Bibliography (May be distributed in class.)