THEO 303 Theology and the Christian Life

Azusa Pacific University, Haggard School of Theology, Undergraduate Division
Fall 2009, 3 Units

APU Mission Statement
“Azusa Pacific University is an evangelical Christian community of disciples and scholars who seek to advance the work of God in the world through academic excellence in liberal arts and professional programs of higher education that encourage students to develop a Christian perspective of truth and life.”

APU Academic Integrity Policy
“The mission of Azusa Pacific University includes cultivating in each student not only the academic skills that are required for a university degree, but also the characteristics of academic integrity that are integral to a sound Christian education. It is, therefore, part of the mission of the university to nurture in each student a sense of moral responsibility consistent with the biblical teachings of honesty and accountability. Furthermore, a breach of academic integrity is viewed not merely as a private matter between the student and a professor, but rather as an act which is fundamentally inconsistent with the purpose and mission of the entire university. The maintenance of academic integrity is the responsibility of each student at Azusa Pacific University and each student is responsible for understanding and upholding the Academic Integrity Policy. A complete copy of the Academic Integrity Policy is available in the Office of Student Life, the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs, and online.”

Available Support Services for Students with Disabilities
Students in this course who have a disability that might prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should meet with an advisor in the Learning Enrichment Center (ext. 3849) as soon as possible to initiate disability verification and discuss accommodations that may be necessary to ensure full participation in the successful completion of course requirements.

Course Description for THEO 303
“The course provides an introduction to the doctrines of the Christian church, focusing on the Christian life and its relationship to theology. The course approaches theology from an inductive method in the Wesleyan tradition, helping the student learn to think theologically from the Scriptures, orthodox ecumenical tradition, experience, and reason. Meets general studies core doctrine requirement for God's Word and the Christian Response. Prerequisite(s): three units of biblical studies, CMIN 108, PHIL 210 or PHIL 220, or instructor's permission.”
Desired Learning Outcomes/Faith Integration Outcome

1) Students will gain both broad and specific knowledge of the issues that have faced the Christian church in the past as well as those issues which we as Christians today must wrestle with;
2) Students will learn to think theologically about their surroundings, their decisions, and their practices and theories about life and the world;
3) Students will gain practice in searching the Scriptures for direction and guidance for all aspects of living out the Christian life;
4) Students will engage in those disciplines that make the Christian life distinct, and will deepen their understanding of how these disciplines function in the life of Christian scholars.

Required Text:

Course Packet

Recommended Texts:


Assignments:

In-Class

1) This course will have a heavy DISCUSSION component. I expect all of you to thoughtfully and respectfully contribute your ideas, comments and questions to our meetings together. This is a forum for you to work out your personal theology, and I encourage you to use it as such. Attendance is a significant component of this course, and your grade will suffer if you have excessive absences. Attendance may be taken at random. ***Please bring your course packet and a Bible to class each day.***

2) We will have periodic QUIZZES throughout the course of the semester. These may be announced or unannounced, and they will cover the material discussed in lecture or presented in your reading assignments. If you have attended class and read the assigned readings, you should have no problem performing well on them.

3) There will be a MIDTERM exam. This will be take-home, and will cover only the material that we have either discussed in class or you have read as homework. We will have a review session before the exam. The midterm will be handed out on Thursday, October 29 and due on Tuesday, November 3.
4) At the end of the semester, we will have GROUP PRESENTATIONS as the culmination of your Vocation Project. These presentations will take place on Tuesday, December 8, Thursday, December 10 and Tuesday, December 15 (Final Exam period).

**IN CLASS ASSIGNMENTS MAY BE MADE UP FOR HALF CREDIT**

Outside of Class

1) **Class Readings and Reading Log.** You are expected to complete all of the required reading for this course. For each reading assignment, you will fill out a reading log indicating how much of the reading you completed. The reading log will be turned in on Tuesday, December 8.

2) **Spiritual Discipline Practice and Reflection Paper.** 6-10 pages double-spaced. Choose one spiritual discipline from those outlined in Willard and Foster and practice that discipline throughout the semester (we will discuss the specifics of this assignment in class). At the end of the semester, you will write a reflection paper on your experience of practicing that discipline and your theology of spiritual disciplines (see assignment sheet, to be handed out). **Due Tuesday, December 8.**

3) **Two reading response papers.** 2-4 pages each, double-spaced. Throughout the semester, choose two readings that you find particularly interesting, controversial, thought-provoking, etc. Write a reading response paper for each reading assignment, outlining what particularly struck you about the reading. I am looking for you to do more than just summarize the author’s ideas—I want to see you critically interacting and evaluating them. (As you write, consider the following questions: What was new to you about this author’s perspective? Did you agree? Did you disagree? What are your thoughts on the subject? What biblical support does the author have? What biblical principles challenge this author’s perspective? Have you read any other material on this subject? How does it compare with the reading assignment? What objections could you raise to the author’s point of view? How was this reading helpful (or not helpful) in your practice of the Christian life?). **First reading response due Tuesday, October 13; second reading response due Thursday, November 19.**

4) **Israel/Palestine Paper.** 2-4 pages double-spaced. Together as a class, we will be studying the ongoing conflict in Israel/Palestine. After hearing a first hand perspective from a Palestinian Christian, watching a documentary on the events that took place at the Munich Olympics in 1972, and wrestling with the issue as a whole, you will write a paper with your thoughts—thoughts on the film, our discussion, and your perspective on the conflict. There will also be readings assigned on the topic of Israel and the current conflict, and you should include the
ideas expressed in these readings in your paper. Questions to consider as you write this paper are: What is the connection between the Jewish people and the land of Israel, and what is its basis? What role does religion play in the ongoing conflict? What do you think is a Christian perspective on the conflict? What has been most eye-opening for you about this unit? How much prior knowledge did you have on this issue? How has this unit affected the views you held before this class? Due Thursday, October 29.

5) Vocation Project. This project serves as the culmination of the course, and is a group project that includes both a research and a presentation component. Group presentations will take place during the last week of class and finals week. Groups will be assigned based upon your major or area of vocational interest. At the time you present, you will turn in a one-page paper summarizing what you have learned through the group project.

**ALL LATE WORK IS AUTOMATICALLY MARKED DOWN 10%, AND IS MARKED DOWN BY 5% EACH ADDITIONAL DAY THAT IT IS LATE**

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project/Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Discipline Project/Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework assignments and Reading Log</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Response Papers</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel/Palestine Paper</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocation Project</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation/in-class assignments</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Total possible points: 500 points

The grading scale is as follows:

- A  100-93%
- A- 92-90%
- B  86-83%
- B- 82-80%
- C  76-73%
- C- 72-70%
- B+ 89-87%
- C+ 79-77%
- D  69-60%
Class Schedule:

**Thursday, September 9**—Introduction to course, go over syllabus, student information sheets. Discussion: the value of theological education

**HOMEWORK:** Read Simone Weil (“Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God”)

**Tuesday, September 15**—Intro to Theology, Bloom’s Taxonomy

**HOMEWORK:** Read Rob Bell (“Velvet Elvis”)

**Thursday, September 17**—Who is a Theologian? How does (or should) theology shape the way we live?

**HOMEWORK:** Read Dallas Willard Preface and ch. 1 (“The Secret of the Easy Yoke”)

**Tuesday, September 22**—Spiritual Disciplines

**HOMEWORK:** Read Richard Foster ch. 1 (“The Spiritual Disciplines: Door to Liberation”)

**Thursday, September 24**—Spiritual Disciplines

**HOMEWORK:** Read Dallas Willard ch. 9 (“Some Main Disciplines for the Spiritual Life”), write Spiritual Disciplines Proposal

**Tuesday, September 29**—**Spiritual Discipline proposal DUE.** Spiritual Disciplines

**HOMEWORK:** Amy-Jill Levine (“The Misunderstood Jew: Introduction”)

**Thursday, October 1**—Judaism and Christianity

**HOMEWORK:** Read Michael Wyschogrod (“A Carnal Election,” “Historicity”), Lauren Winner (“Introduction,” “Body”)

**Tuesday, October 6**—Judaism and Christianity

**HOMEWORK:** Read David Stern (“Appendix 1: Restoring the Jewishness of the Gospel”)

**Thursday, October 8**—Judaism and Christianity

**HOMEWORK:** Write Reading Response #1
Tuesday, October 13—Reading Response #1 DUE. History of Israel/Palestine

HOMEWORK: Read Gary Burge ch. 1 (“The Dilemma of Israel/Palestine for Christians”)

Thursday, October 15—Israel/Palestine

HOMEWORK: Read Israel’s Declaration of Independence

Tuesday, October 20—Revenge documentary/Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace

HOMEWORK: Read Glen Stassen (“Just Peacemaking as a New Ethic”)

Thursday, October 22—GUEST LECTURE: REVEREND SARI ATEEK

HOMEWORK: Find one news article (online, magazine, newspaper) which relates to the Israel/Palestine issue, read it, and bring it to class

Tuesday, October 27—Class discussion

HOMEWORK: Write Israel/Palestine paper

Thursday, October 29—Israel/Palestine paper DUE. Review for midterm. Pass out midterm.

HOMEWORK: Take-home midterm

Tuesday, November 3—Midterm DUE. Biblical Drama

HOMEWORK: Read Jonathan Sacks ch. 6 (“Mending the World”)

Thursday, November 5—Biblical Drama

HOMEWORK: Read N.T. Wright ch. 16 (“New Creation, Starting Now”)

Tuesday, November 10—Ecclesiology/Missions

HOMEWORK: Read Darrell Guder ch. 3 (“Mission as Witness”)

Thursday, November 12—Ecclesiology/Missions

HOMEWORK: Read Lesslie Newbigin ch. 10 (“The Logic of Mission”), Lament assignment
**Tuesday, November 17—GUEST LECTURE: CORY WILLSON**

HOMEWORK: Read Jonathan Sacks ch. 2 (“Faith as Protest”), write RR#2

**Thursday, November 19—Reading Response #2 DUE. Vocation in the Kingdom of God**

HOMEWORK: Enjoy your week off!

**Tuesday, November 24—NO CLASS**

**Thursday, November 26—Thanksgiving Holiday**

**Tuesday, December 1—Vocation in the Kingdom of God**

HOMEWORK: Read Cornelius Plantinga ch. 5 (“Vocation in the Kingdom of God”)

**Thursday, December 3—Vocation in the Kingdom of God**

HOMEWORK: Read N.T. Wright ch. 8 (“The Light of the World”)

**Tuesday, December 8—Spiritual Discipline Paper DUE, Reading Log DUE. Group Presentations**

**Thursday, December 10—Group Presentations**

***FINAL EXAM (Group Presentations): Tuesday, December 15 @ 9:45***