THEO 303 Theology and the Christian Life

Azusa Pacific University, Haggard School of Theology, Undergraduate Division
Fall 2006, 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 Texts:


4) Course Packet/series of handouts

On Reserve at Stamps Library:

Grenz, Stanley. *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms.*
Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations.*

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. ***Please bring whatever reading assignment you had from the following class session to class with you, as well as a bible.***

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.

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1 See Dallas Willard’s *Spirit of the Disciplines* p. 14ff for an explanation of this term.
3) There will be a MIDTERM and a FINAL EXAM. Again, these will be taken in-class, and will cover only the material that we have either discussed in class or you have read as homework. We will have review sessions before each exam. The midterm is scheduled for **Thursday, October 26**, and the final is scheduled for **Thursday, December 14 at 12:15 (please note time change)**. Please make your holiday travel plans with this date in mind—the final cannot be made-up.

*Outside of Class*

1) **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 DECEMBER 7.**

2) **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. (You do not have to answer the following questions, but they might help to get you started: 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 SEPTEMBER 28; second reading response DUE NOVEMBER 9.**

3) **Issue Position Paper.** 3-5 pages double-spaced. Choose one of the issues that we have discussed in class (i.e. violence, wealth, politics, etc.) and write a position paper. Present BOTH SIDES of the debate (using the material we’ve discussed or outside material), and defend one side. All of these issues are very complex, and respected scholars who love Christ stand on both sides of the debate. As a Christian, you have the ability to prayerfully come to your own conclusions on these issues, and I believe each of us has the responsibility to engage these ideas and formulate opinions. Let this paper help you in this process. I realize that you may still be wrestling through these questions, and I hope this process continues for the rest of your life. You do not have to be confined to the opinion you express in this paper. Rather, let it be a report of where you are at in your journey of searching through the questions of the Christian life. **DUE NOVEMBER 30.**

4) **Munich Reaction Paper.** 2-4 pages double-spaced. Together as a class, we will be watching the film *Munich*. For those of you who have not seen this film, I will tell
you now that it is very violent. (If for any reason you do not want to watch it, please talk to me and we will arrange an alternate assignment. There is no shame in doing this—you know yourself better than I do, and if you feel that such a film will negatively affect you, please don’t hesitate to let me know.) This film gives Steven Spielberg’s perspective on the conflict between Israel and its neighbors, and should launch a very lively discussion regarding an issue that, as Christians, we have the responsibility to engage. Following the film and our class discussion, I would like you to write a paper with your thoughts—thoughts on the film, our discussion, and the issue as a whole. There will also be readings assigned on the topic of Israel and the current conflict, and you are encouraged to include these readings in your thoughts on the issue. **DUE OCTOBER 19.**

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Discipline Reflection Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Reading Response Papers</td>
<td>30 points each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Position Paper</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Munich Response Paper</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes (or other in-class assignments)</td>
<td>50</td>
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</tbody>
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Total possible points: 530 points

The grading scale is as follows:

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

Class Schedule:

(Course schedule, topics, evaluation and assignments may be changed at the instructor’s discretion.)

**Thursday, September 7**—Introduction to course; go over syllabus; student information sheets; discussion—the value of theological education.

**HOMEWORK:** Read Simone Weil essay (CP), read Preface in Plantinga (pgs. ix-xix)

**Tuesday, September 12**—reactions to/discussion of Weil and Plantinga; What is Theology? Who is a Theologian?: How does (or should) theology shape the way we live?
HOMEWORK: Read McGrath p. 137-139 ("A Working Definition of Theology"), 141-147 ("The Architecture of Theology"), 149-151 ("Commitment to Neutrality in Theology")

**Thursday, September 14**—Discussion of McGrath, sub-disciplines within theology; Explain Spiritual Disciplines assignment, handout; lecture on Willard, Foster; discussion

HOMEWORK: Read Willard Preface and ch. 1 and Foster ch. 1 (CP), write proposal for Spiritual Discipline assignment (look at Willard ch. 9)

**Tuesday, September 19**—Spiritual Discipline proposal DUE; discuss spiritual disciplines; introduce Longing and Hope/Eschatology

HOMEWORK: Read Plantinga ch. 1

**Thursday, September 21**—discussion/in-class writing: What in your life has made you feel the pangs of longing and hope that Plantinga discusses on p. 3? Intro to Eschatology


**Tuesday, September 26**—questions on eschatology? Intro to Creation; Intro to Theology and Culture

HOMEWORK: Read Plantinga ch. 2, McGrath p. 296-300 ("God as Creator"), write reflection paper

**Thursday, September 28**—Reflection paper one DUE. Theology and Culture

HOMEWORK: Read Jacobsen foreword, ch. 1, ch. 6 (CP)

**Tuesday, October 3**—Theology and Culture (continued); GUEST LECTURER: Eric Jacobsen

HOMEWORK: Read Lynch 97-110 (CP), Van Til 15-24 (CP)

**Thursday, October 5**—Intro to Sin/the Fall

HOMEWORK: Read Plantinga ch. 3, McGrath p. 443-449 ("The Pelagian Controversy")

**Tuesday, October 10**—Lecture: Sin; Intro to Theology and War; GUEST LECTURER: Kent Davis Sensenig

HOMEWORK: Read “From Christ to the World” p. 409-445 (CP)
Thursday, October 12—Theology and War (cont.), discuss readings, intro Munich and conflict in Israel, the Jewishness of Christianity

HOMEWORK: Read The Economist articles, Stassen article (CP)

***Friday, October 13—watch Munich as a class—we will be in Duke 114 from 3:30-7:30pm***

Tuesday, October 17—discuss Munich, Theology and War (continued); hand-out Munich writing assignment

HOMEWORK: Write Munich Reflection Paper

Thursday, October 19—Munich paper due. Intro to Redemption; a look back to Creation


Tuesday, October 24—Review for midterm

HOMEWORK: Study for midterm.

Thursday, October 26—MIDTERM

Tuesday, October 31—Intro to Theology and Wealth

HOMEWORK: Read Sider p. xiii-xvii, 1-19, 91-108 (CP)

Thursday, November 2—discuss Sider; Introduce alternative—Schneider

HOMEWORK: Read Schneider p. 101-121, 145-164 (CP)

Tuesday, November 7—discuss Schneider, parables, traditional interpretations—thoughts?

HOMEWORK: Read Willard ch 10 (“Is Poverty Spiritual?”), write reflection paper

Thursday, November 9—Reflection Paper Two DUE. Intro Vocation in the Kingdom of God; Ecclesiology

HOMEWORK: Read Plantinga ch. 5
Tuesday, November 14—in-class writing—what do you see, at this point, as your vocation? Why? For you, where does “…your deep gladness meet the world’s deep hunger”?; Ecclesiology as universal Christian calling

HOMEWORK: Read Barth p. 751-780 (CP)

Thursday, November 16—Intro Theology and Politics

HOMEWORK: Read Gushee p. 15-28, 45-55, 79-96 (CP)

Tuesday, November 21—Theology and Politics (continued)

HOMEWORK: Read Boyd p. 67-85 (CP)

Tuesday, November 28—Theology and Politics (continued)

HOMEWORK: Read Carter p. 157-186 (CP); write Issue Position Paper

Thursday, November 30—Issue Position Paper DUE. Intro to Christology—who was Christ?

HOMEWORK: Read Wright p. 96-125 (CP)

Tuesday, December 5—Wrapping Up…Review course, discuss

HOMEWORK: Read Willard ch. 11, finish Spiritual Disciplines project

Thursday, December 7—Spiritual Discipline Assignment DUE. Review for Final.

HOMEWORK: Study for Final.

***FINAL EXAM: Thursday, December 14 12:15-2:15***
Selected Bibliography: (** = course packet material)


**Wright, N.T. *The Challenge of Jesus*. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL: 1999


