THEO 303 (06)—THEOLOGY AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
Azusa Pacific University, Haggard School of Theology, Undergraduate Department of Religion and Philosophy
Spring 2007  Wednesday 7:30-10:30 p.m., 3 units

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This 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 and CMIN 108, or instructor’s permission.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

• Gain a clear understanding of the historical beliefs and practices of the Christian faith.

• Be able to differentiate Christian beliefs and practices from those of the culture(s) in which they are situated.

• Begin to think critically about the effect one’s own social and cultural setting has upon Christian thinking and practical Christian living.

• Gain an awareness of various traditions within the Christian community. Seek to be enriched by the knowledge of the traditions of others.

• Learn to apply Christian beliefs to Christian living in a consistent manner.
COURSE TEXTS:

Stanley Grenz. *Theology for the Community of God*. Eerdmans (SG)
Stanley Grenz, et. al. *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*. IVP.

RECOMMENDED COURSE TEXTS:

Elizabeth Elliot. *In the Shadow of the Almighty*. Harper & Row.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1.  **Attend** class regularly and **participate**. Please see “Course Policies.”

2.  **Read** assigned portions of the textbooks. You will be asked to verify that you have read all assignments

3.  **Quizzes**.

4.  Write an eight-page research paper with a **one-page typed annotated bibliography** examining one of the particular theological issues discussed during the semester. You may find it helpful to coordinate your research for your paper with your research for the panel discussion by covering the same topic. Your bibliography should include ten academically credible sources--required and recommended texts, books and articles cited in the texts. To be discussed further in class.

5.  Panel Participation. (see below)

6.  **Three** exams. Exams will focus on the material read, lectured on, and discussed since the previous exam; the final will include a few questions from previous exams. No one is exempt from the final exam, and it must be taken when scheduled by the University. I cannot grant exceptions; those require the written approval of the instructor, department chair, and dean. (The only exception is when you have three finals in one day.)
RELATIVE WEIGHT OF ASSIGNMENTS:

- Quizzes and Reading Assignments: 10% of final grade
- Panel and Class Participation: 15% 
- Research Paper: 20% 
- Exam One: 10% 
- Exam Two: 15% 
- Final Exam: 30% 

COURSE POLICIES:

Attendance: It is essential that you attend class. Excessive absences will affect your test scores. I reserve the right to penalize your grade if you have excessive unexcused absences. If you are absent you are responsible to find out what you missed and to make up any work affected by your absence. Attendance may be taken randomly.

Class decorum: In the interests of creating an optimum atmosphere for learning and to respect your peers, please observe the following during class sessions:

1. Do not eat food. Drinks are okay.
2. If you have a cell phone, turn it off.
3. Refrain from “coming and going.” Please do not get up and leave during the class period unless you’ve let me know you have to leave early.

Late work: You can make up the midterm exam if you missed it because of an excused absence (e.g., life-threatening illness, required university sponsored event); arrangements must be made with me before the exam (by phone if an illness). Class Quizzes cannot be made up. Research papers and creative exercises will be docked one grade increment for each day they are late (e.g. one day late A becomes A-; two days late A becomes B+). Note: All work must be received before 5 p.m. on Friday of finals week.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Cheating is the use of someone else's work which the student ought to have done personally. Plagiarism is the use of ideas and information (not commonly known) from a specific source without giving credit to that source by allusion, footnoting, or bibliography. Cheating or plagiarism will result in an automatic "F" for the assignment or exam affected.

Submitting papers: Written work should be submitted to me in hardcopy. I only accept emailed work if you have made prior arrangements with me and received my permission.

Students with disabilities: Students who have a disability that might prevent them from fully demonstrating their learning should meet with an advisor in the Learning Enrichment Center as soon as possible to initiate disability verification and discuss accommodations that may be necessary to ensure full participation in the class and the successful completion of course requirements. It also helps for me to know at the beginning of the semester of any special needs.
COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENT DATES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/10 Introduction</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Introduction to Theology and Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SG, Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/17 Class Introduction cont.</td>
<td>SG, Chapter 14</td>
<td>Scripture, Tradition, and Inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panel Sign Ups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/24 SG, Chapter 1</td>
<td>SG, Chapter 2</td>
<td>God the Father, The Trinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panel One</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/31 SG, Chapter 3</td>
<td>SG, Chapter 4</td>
<td>God, the Creator</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panel Two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7 Exam One SG, Chapter 5</td>
<td>SG, Chapter 6</td>
<td>Human Beings and Human Nature</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panel Three SG, Chapter 7</td>
<td>Sin, Brokenness, Evil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/21 Panel Four SG, Chapter 10, 11</td>
<td>SG, Chapter 12</td>
<td>Person and Work of Jesus Christ: Son of God and Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/28 Panel Five</td>
<td>SG, Chapter 13</td>
<td>The Third Person: Holy Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/7 Panel Six</td>
<td>SG, Chapter 15</td>
<td>Salvation and Conversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SG, Chapter 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/14 Exam Two SG, Chapter 17, 18</td>
<td>The Church or Churches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/21 Panel Seven SG, Chapter 19</td>
<td>“Plurality and Unity”</td>
<td>Sacraments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/28 Research Paper Due</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4/11 Class Resumes SG, Chapter 21</td>
<td>First and Last Things</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4/18 Panel Eight SG, Chapter 23-24</td>
<td>Reflections on Christian Living</td>
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<td>4/25 Class Review, IDEA, and Wrap Up</td>
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<td>5/2 Final Exam 7-9 p.m.</td>
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Panel Discussion Guidelines

LIFELONG LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Through this dimension of the course, you will gain skills in the area of collaborative learning, collaborative teaching, functioning as part of a work team, and developing a “think tank.” Regardless of your future professional and other activities, these skills will prove extremely helpful.

FORMAT
Three to Four students.

CONTENT
One topic: a question in the form: “What is/are the Christian perspective(s) on…? What is your perspective on…”.

PREPARATION (COLLABORATIVE LEARNING)
During small group discussions prior to the date of your panel, share stories about the subject for which you signed up. Draw from all of the assigned reading, including reserve articles and websites, as resources. Search scriptures on the subject. What does the Bible seem to be saying? Notice the many facets of what the Bible has to say. Is this different from the views expressed in the reading or stories? On the panel, you may either represent your own view or assume another identity (for example, one of the authors), presenting a view other than the one you really hold. (If you are undecided, choose a perspective to present, and maintain it consistently during the presentation.)

As a group, try to agree on the best three responses that have resulted from the conversation. Why are these answers better than the ones you left out? Decide which answer you will present as the conclusion of your panel presentation as “the” Christian perspective on the subject. You may integrate parts of several answers into one more complete answer. You may also admit that the issue is too complex or controversial to achieve consensus, or that there is insufficient evidence in Scripture to suggest Christians are required to agree on this subject.

Choose a facilitator whose role on the panel will be to explain the group’s conclusion at the end of the presentation.

Each panelist must represent a different perspective on the topic. For example, each panelist could represent a different theologian who wrote on the topic. (This is strongly recommended in order to coordinate your research for the panel with your research for your term paper.)

PRESENTATION (COLLABORATIVE TEACHING)

Panelist
1. Each panelist should express at least two major points about the subject when asked by the facilitator.
2. Each panelist should be consistent with the view s/he expressed.
3. Each panelist is responsible for helping the panel to cover and critique all of the major perspectives on the issue that were presented in the readings (including reserve and web).
4. Each panelist should be prepared to respond to questions and critiques, defending his/her viewpoint when asked by the facilitator, other panelists, classmates, or professor. Explain why you disagree with other views.
5. Each panelist should raise questions and critiques about other panelists’ opinions.
AUDIENCE (COLLABORATIVE LEARNING)

Bring a written comment or question on this topic to class for the question and answer portion of the panel presentation. Challenge the responses, including the assigned reading, using the panel’s definition. When you see flaws, challenge the panelists to revise their definition.

1. Be prepared to ask the panel intelligent questions based on Scripture and all of the assigned reading on the topic.
2. During the panel’s presentation, make a note of the major points about this topic, the texts, and any additional information the panel shares beyond the required reading. These discussions should enhance your knowledge of the topic, helping to prepare you for the essay exams.
3. When you see flaws in logic or other errors in the panel’s presentation, ask questions and share what you believe to be better reasoning and/or information.
4. Share whether you agree or disagree with the views expressed by the panel, and why.
5. Point out anything that the panel may have left out that may be important.

EVALUATION

Each panelist will be evaluated for:

1. **Comprehension:** Articulated at least two of the major issues relevant to this topic in a manner that reflects completion of reading.
2. **Sound Argument:** Remained logically consistent with the view you presented. Defended your viewpoint using appeals to scripture, reason, and tradition – not just experience.
3. **Preparation:** Responded thoughtfully to other panelists’ questions and critiques in a way that demonstrates that you have prepared by considering possible objections or questions in advance. Handouts and/or audio-visual aids will strengthen your grade in this area. Be sure to give full source citation for any such materials.
4. **Collegiality** Helped other panelists respond to questions and critiques from each other and audience, either by helping answer or by clarifying the questions and critiques.
5. **Critical Evaluation:** Demonstrated understanding of the views expressed by panelist(s), asking about any inconsistencies. Questioned and critiqued points of view other than your own on the basis of lack of scriptural support and logical coherence, demonstrating that you are listening to the other panelists and your classmates and reflecting genuine effort to understand and respect them when you disagree.