

Wesley Theological Seminary
Course of Study Program
Term One | July 10 – July 20, 2017

CS-522 Theology in the Contemporary Church
Faculty: Dr. James R. Noland
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Goals:

This course covers significant individuals, movements, events, and theological developments from the nineteenth century to the present. Students will read selected primary sources.

Students will be able to:

1. Understand the origins and theological tenets of liberalism from the early 19th century to the present, including its influence on ecumenism and process theology.
2. Understand and distinguish reactions to liberalism, including Fundamentalism, Neo-Orthodoxy, and Evangelicalism.
3. Understand the historical development and theology of the Holiness Movement, Pentecostalism, and the Charismatic Movement.
4. Understand the origins and tenets of Liberation and Contextual theologies.

Study Questions 2017

Texts:

Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding
Caputo, What Would Jesus Deconstruct?
Ed. Miller and Stanley Grenz, Introduction to Contemporary Theologies
Timothy Keller, The Reason for God

Books are available through the Wesley Amazon ebookstore. You may also order directly from either Amazon or Cokesbury.

Questions from Faith Seeking Understanding (*each answer should be at least one page*)

1. Migliore writes about three approaches or “methods” of doing theology. What are they? Assess their strengths and weaknesses.
2. According to Migliore, what is the source of the doctrine of the Trinity? What is the difference between the “economic” and the “immanent” Trinity? Define subordination, modalism, and tritheism. Define the psychological and social analogies of the Trinity.

3. How does the doctrine of the Trinity inform our understanding of creation? How should we understand the relationship between science and theology?
4. What is the theodicy question? How does the gospel narrative address it?
5. How does the concept of "relationship" help to clarify and deepen our understanding of (1) the image of God, and (2) the fallen, sinful nature of humanity?
6. How does the doctrine of the Trinity shed light on the personhood of Jesus Christ? How would you explain the phrase "Jesus died for us?"
7. Chapter nine outlines several contextual theologies. What do these diverse voices have in common? How should the "local" and the "global" be balanced in your view?
8. Name and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the models of the church that Migliore names in chapter eleven.
9. What is Barth's critique of infant baptism? Assess the argument for and against this practice. In United Methodist theology is Holy Communion an ordinance, a sacrament, or both?
10. In seeking to understand religious pluralism, how might the distinction between revelation and salvation be important? Be sure to define these terms.

From Contemporary Theologies

1. Using chapters one and four, create a dialogue between Barth and Tillich that brings out the differences in their theologies. *(an adequate answer will be two pages)*
2. Using chapters ten and eleven, define and assess Liberation Theology and The Theology of Women's Experience. What do they have in common? *(again an adequate answer will be two pages)*
3. From chapter five: What does Bonhoeffer mean by the terms "God of the gaps," and "religionless Christianity"? How might these terms relate to fundamentalism? Be sure to define this term as well. *(two pages)*

From Contemporary Theologies (CT) and The Reason for God (RG)

4. Using chapters 2 and 11 (CT) and chapter 10 (RG) explain your understanding of sin. Be sure to include your view of original sin. *(an adequate answer will be two pages)*
5. Using chapter one (RG) and chapter 12 (CT) define religious pluralism. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this view? *(an adequate answer will be at least one page)*

From What Would Jesus Deconstruct? **EXTRA CREDIT** (*an adequate answer will be at least two pages*)

How does Caputo define “deconstruction”? What does he mean by being “lost”? Caputo deflects criticism that his position entails relativism and that it is nihilistic. Define these terms. Is he successful? Explain.