

**CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES**

THEO 201

(3 credits)

INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

Winter 2007

Lectures: Thursday, 6:00 pm to 8:15 pm, OS-303 (1191 de la Montagne, SGW)

Instructor: Fr. Thomas Dowd
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theo201.adventus.org

Office hours: By appointment only.

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Course description

The course introduces the student to the structure, nature and method of theological studies and the relation of these studies to the other sciences. While the course focusses on Christian theology, it does so in a spirit of ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue. The course does not advocate what should be believed, but provides a survey of the philosophical and historical origins of theology in order that each student might come to a better understanding of the impact theology can have in contemporary society and even in their own lives.

The course is divided into two parts. In the first half, the course will examine the Who, What, Where, When, Why and How of theology as a genuine intellectual exercise (not necessarily in that order). The second half of the course will be used to examine features of post-modern society and show how theology can and does contribute to some of the issues facing our culture today.

Required texts

Dowd, Thomas, *Introduction to Theological Studies: The Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How of Christian Theology*, course notes (draft edition), 2004.

Dowd, Thomas, *Christian Theology and Post-Modern Culture*, course notes (draft edition), 2003-2004.

The texts will be provided to the students on-line, and may be purchased from the professor in paper form. Other course notes and announcements, as well as exam preparation materials, may be posted on the web site of the teacher (www.adventus.org). Students will be informed in class if such material is available.

Please bring a Bible with you to class (both Old and New Testaments, preferably with Apocrypha).

Workload and assessment

Each student is expected to attend the lectures and is responsible for the material taught during those lectures. *Students are highly encouraged to form study groups to be able to complete each others' lecture notes.*

The final grade will be determined by two exams, a mid-term and a final.

Mid-term exam	50%
Final exam	50%

The conversion table for converting number grades to letter grades is as follows:

A+	95-100	B+	80-84.5	C+	67-69.5	D+	57-59.5
A	90-94.5	B	75-79.5	C	63-66.5	D	53-56.5
A-	85-89.5	B-	70-74.5	C-	60-62.5	D-	50-52.5

The failing grades are as follows:

FNS	this is your grade if your total is below 50%; the "NS" refers to the fact that there is no supplemental exam
FNS-DNW	this is your grade if your grade is below 50% and you did not write the final exam (this is the meaning of the DNW)
NR	this is your grade if you wrote neither the mid-term nor the final; your grade is therefore zero

Students with disabilities are expected to apply to the Office for Disabled Students should they require special consideration for the course. Students unable to meet the evaluation requirements due to illness or other personal causes should speak with the professor to see if alternate arrangements can be made.

Schedule of topics and exams

Note: the order of these topics may be rearranged by the teacher should this prove necessary. As well, the teacher reserves the right to introduce substitute topics.

FIRST HALF: INITIAL BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY

- January 4 **Presentation of the course**
- Why do theology?**
- definitions: St. Anselm, Bernard Lonergan
- Who's who in theology** (major contemporary theologians)
- January 11 **The “what” of theology**
- The major elements of the Christian faith
 - Breakdown of the major subdivisions of theology
- January 17 Last day to withdraw from the course with a full refund**
- January 18 **The “where” of theology**
- Major Christian subdivisions
 - East vs. West theology
 - Liberal vs. conservative?
 - The “third church”?
- “How” – theology as a recipe** (sources and methods)
- The sources of theology (ingredients)
 - The methods of theology (the recipe itself)
- January 25 **“How” – theology as a recipe** (the role of philosophy in theology)
- the importance of philosophy to theology
 - breakdown of philosophical disciplines
 - historical development of philosophy

February 1	<u>“When” – history of theology (first millennium A.D.)</u>
February 8	<u>“When” – history of theology (second millennium A.D.)</u>
February 15	Mid-term exam (50%)
February 22	SPRING BREAK

SECOND HALF: THEOLOGY AND CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

March 1 Introduction to post-modern culture

Theology and ideology

- a core religious problem: the mystery of suffering
- the what, how, and why of suffering
- cultural reactions to suffering: denial of death
- responses to the problem: ideology vs. theodicy
- theology and the pursuit of happiness

The next 4 weeks will cover a selection of topics exploring the relationship between theology and culture. We will decide which topics in class, based on student interest. Possibilities include:

theology in a scientific and technological age
theology in a society of plenty
theology and the fine arts
theology in a culture of "well-being"
theology and feminism
theology of the body
theology and the law of the land
theology and history

March 8, 15, 22, 29 Topics in theology and culture

Course evaluation (March 29)

March 14 **Last day to withdraw from the course**

April 5

Theology and you

- pursuing further studies in theology
- theology and career opportunities
- finding your vocation

Review for the final (time permitting)

Exam period

Final exam (50%) [Exact date, time and location TBA]

VOTING SHEET FOR THEOLOGY AND CULTURE TOPICS (pick 4 of 8)

- Theology in a scientific and cultural age
 - theology and science: clarifying the discussion
 - theology and technology: what it means to be human
- Theology in a society of plenty
 - background to economics: “economic man”
 - microeconomics: theology and consumerism
 - macroeconomics: theology and social justice
 - human rights & the common good
- Theology in a culture of "well-being"
 - background to the scientific approach to the human sciences
 - certain sociological and anthropological theories
 - the response of theology: sin, grace, virtue, divinisation
- Theology and the fine arts
 - what are the “fine arts”?
 - philosophical approaches to aesthetics
 - theological approach to beauty
- Theology and contemporary feminism
 - background to the feminist movement
 - the theology of woman
 - feminist theology
- Theology of the body
 - theology and questions of body image
 - theology and the sexual revolution
- Theology and history
 - three ways of looking at history: indeterminate, cyclical, teleological
 - religious and secular theories of history
 - the Christian vision: providence and “salvation history”
- Theology and the law of the land
 - theories of the organization of the state
 - the relationship between Church and State
 - private morality and public duty