2014

111-17 Theological Foundations

Andy Buechel

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THEOLOGY 111.17: THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS/Fall, 2014
Tuesday/Thursday: 1 PM – 2:15 PM (Cintas Center 202)

Instructor: Andy Buechel, Ph.D.
Office: Hinkle 121
Office Hours: T/Th 10 – 11:15 AM and by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:
THEO 111 is a basic introduction to theology understood as a mutually critical dialogue between human experience and religious traditions, specifically—but not exclusively—Roman Catholic Christianity. This investigation will consist of 1) understanding human experience as revelatory of deeper reality, 2) discussing how revelatory experience is incorporated in sacred scriptures and religious traditions, and 3) demonstrate the integral connection between religious faith and issues of social significance, including the call to responsible action. In addition to the Christian tradition, Judaism will be a major focus in the course’s readings and conversation.

OBJECTIVES:
In this course, we will:
1) Provide an opportunity for reflection upon the Christian tradition.
2) Foster knowledge of and appreciate for other major religious traditions.
3) Encourage thoughtful exploration and articulation of one’s own religious identity.
4) Consider the place of faith and theology in addressing issues of ethical and social significance (E/RS component).
5) Strengthen reading and writing skills necessary for collegiate flourishing.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
The vast majority of readings for this class will be found on CANVAS. As part of your participation grade, these readings are to be PRINTED out and BROUGHT to class on the relevant date(s).

You will also need a standard, modern version of the Bible (or at least a print-out of the relevant passages on a given day). Standard Versions include the NRSV, RSV, NAB, NIV, NEB, Jerusalem, etc. Paraphrases such as The Living Bible or The Message are unacceptable, and, despite its ubiquity, the King James Bible will not work for this class either. If you have a question about whether your translation will do, please see the instructor.
AN EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLE:

The construction of this course (the syllabus, assignments, classroom time, etc.) is grounded upon one basic pedagogical principle: “Learning results from what the student *does* and *thinks* and only from what the student does and thinks. The teacher can advance learning only by influencing what the student *does* to learn” (Herbert Simon). My goal in this course is to create the circumstances that are most likely to lead to significant learning for students. First and foremost here is the requirement of frequent, active engagement with the course material – both inside and outside the classroom.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

*Participation* (10%)

Since learning is a cooperative endeavor, participation in class is a significant component of the course and grading. All students are expected to come to class having read the assigned readings and ready to make a positive contribution to the class discussions. As part of participation, attendance is required. A student who is unable to attend a scheduled class meeting for any reason should notify the instructor in advance, whenever possible. An excused absence is given on account of personal illness, a death in the family, or duties performed for the University (some form of verification is needed: a signed note or email from your health-care provider, department of Athletics, *etc.*). After consulting with the instructor, the student will be permitted to make up any coursework missed as a result of excused absences. Students are allowed *three* unexcused absences without penalty. Additional unexcused absences will result in the reduction of the participation portion of the grade and more than *five* may result in failure for the course. Absences do not excuse a student from knowledge about the material discussed, any announcements, or any syllabus changes. Any unexcused absence on days of tests/exams will result in a score of zero on the test. An excused absence on a test date will result in a make-up taken as soon as possible.

There will be an attendance sheet at the front at each class session. The Instructor will take it upon the beginning of class. If you arrive late you MUST inform the instructor after class to ensure you have been counted as present. Three tardies will be counted as one unexcused absence.

Laptops, cell phones, *etc.* are NOT to be used during class time, unless you are specifically instructed to do so by the professor.

Student athletes are responsible for ensuring that the instructor is aware ahead of time of any scheduling conflicts or absences due to university-sponsored athletic events. Please provide a letter from your coach or advisor with the team schedule and dates highlighted that will necessitate an absence.
Most class sessions will be semi-lecture format, with the instructor asking questions of the students and encouraging discussion. It is ESSENTIAL that, in any such discussion, all persons are treated with respect and attentiveness. Active debate is both healthy and encouraged (including with the instructor), but must always take place within a context where we assume the best of one another and seek always after the truth.

Tests (20% each—60% total)
There will be three, non-cumulative tests given during the course. The last will take place during the time scheduled for our Final Exam.

These tests will consist of two parts: identification of key terms and essay. There will be six terms given, and the student will choose three to identify in one-two paragraphs. There will be three essay questions given, and the student will answer two.

Study guides will be given in the week before the exam and, should there be interest, the instructor will host a non-required study session before the test, with times and places to be announced. The instructor will NOT be re-lectureing or re-teaching at these sessions, but will be there as a resource if there is genuine confusion on a topic. It will be up to the students to come having reviewed the pertinent material and, as a rule, students will assist one another in understanding the required material.

Reader Responses (9%)
Once a week, BEFORE that class’ meeting, students will respond in 1-2 paragraphs to a question provided by the professor on the day’s readings. These are to be well-formed paragraphs responding to the question asked. They will be graded on the following scale:

2/2: Posts ranging from good to excellent; illustrates an engagement with the text and some critical reflection.

1/2: Posts ranging from poor to satisfactory; shows that the text has been read, but with little engagement.

0/2: Posts not completed on time, not completed at all, or undeserving of credit.

Reader responses will be submitted via CANVAS and can be accessed by clicking on either “Quizzes” or the “Syllabus” tabs and scrolling to the appropriate date at the bottom. After the beginning of class on the date due, you will no longer be able to access the question or turn in the response. As these can be answered from anywhere with computer access, the only valid excuse to make up one of these will be to bring me a doctor’s note or being on a school-sponsored athletic trip.

Argument Papers (7% each—21% total)
The student will write three, 2 page papers which systematically present the main argument of
the author of one of our readings, how it develops, and what evidence the author uses to back it up. This will be done in 1.5 single-spaced pages. The remaining .5 pages will be your critical engagement with that argument, whether you agree, and why or why not. These papers are to help the students see how arguments are made and presented, and also how to determine what constitutes good and bad arguments. Due dates are listed below.

Alternately, students may, if they choose, go on one of Xavier’s service learning trips and write a 3 page, double-spaced reflection paper on the experience. For information on these opportunities, see the Dorothy Day Center for Faith and Justice through Campus Ministry at: http://www.xavier.edu/cfj/service-justice/Student-Volunteer-Opportunities.cfm. If you decide to take this option, reflection papers are due on the same day as the argument paper you are looking to replace.

XAVIER’S POLICY FOR ACADEMIC HONESTY:

This course will be conducted in keeping with Xavier’s policy on academic honesty:

Academic Honesty

The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record including letters of recommendation. All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student's own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another's efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one's own. Penalties for violations of this policy may include one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an "F" in the course, and expulsion from the University. The dean of the college in which the student is enrolled is to be informed in writing of all such incidents, though the teacher has full authority to assign the grade for the assignment, test, or course. If disputes of interpretation arise, the student, faculty member, and chair should attempt to resolve the difficulty. If this is unsatisfactory, the dean will rule in the matter. As a final appeal, the academic vice president will call a committee of tenured faculty for the purpose of making a final determination.

DISABILITY STATEMENT:

If you have a documented physical or learning disability requiring academic adjustments for this course, please contact the Learning Assistance Program (www.xavier.edu/lac), and see me in the first week of class to discuss any necessary arrangements or ways I can be of assistance.

GRADING SCALE:
This course uses the standard Xavier University grading scale, which can be found here: 

According to Theology Department standards, the grade of “A” does not mean “average” or “good” work or “strong effort.” It is reserved for exceptional academic performance. Students who seriously engage this class—the readings, discussions, papers, tests—should do will. Students who do not attend closely to the readings, bring necessary materials with them, pay attention to the discussions and lectures will do poorly.

The instructor is here as a resource. Part of your education, especially at a school like Xavier with relatively small class sizes, is getting to know your professors. Please take advantage of my posted office hours or, if those times do no work, make an appointment. If you find yourself struggling or uncertain at any point in the semester, I am happy to help. But do not expect a sympathetic response if you actively blow-off most of the semester and come to me in December worrying about your grade.

COURSE SCHEDULE, REQUIRED READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS:

(C): Indicates reading is available on CANVAS, and should be PRINTED and brought to class on the day assigned.

(RR): Indicates that a Reader Response posting is due on this date.

**NOTE:** These readings and schedules are subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.

**August**

**UNIT I: Introduction**

TUESDAY, 26th: Introduction/Class Overview

THURSDAY, 28th: Why should we care about religion?

**READ:** Hill, Knitter, and Madges, “Chapter Five: Religion—Why Bother?” pp. 133-159. (C)

John Garvey, “Something is Wrong: That’s the Beginning of Wisdom.” (C)

*No Reader Response due today. They will begin next week.*

**September**

TUESDAY, 2nd: What is theology?
READ: Stone and Duke, “Chapter Two: Fashioning Theology” and “Chapter Three: Resources for Theological Reflection”, pp. 27-57. (C)

THURSDAY, 4th: Our Search for Meaning (RR)

READ: Martin, “St. Ignatius of Loyola,” pp. 73-102. (C)
Domestico, “Being Prepared for Joy: An Interview with Christian Wiman.” (C)

UNIT II: Theology and Experience in the Hebrew Scriptures

TUESDAY, 9th: Ways of Understanding the Bible (RR)

READ: Harrington, “The Bible in Catholic Life” pp. RG 16-30. (C)
Harrington, “Chapter Seven: How do Catholics Interpret Scripture?” pp. 95-111. (C)

THURSDAY, 11th: Two Creation Stories

READ: Genesis 1-3.

TUESDAY, 16th: The Covenant with Abraham

READ: Boadt, 124-129

THURSDAY 18th: The Exodus (RR)


TUESDAY, 23rd: “Be Holy as I am Holy”—God’s Law and Ethics (RR)

Hillers, Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea, pp. 28-38. (C)
Levenson, Sinai and Zion, 50-56 and 75-80. (C)

THURSDAY, 25th: The Covenant with David and the Establishment of the Monarchy

READ: 1 Samuel 8, 12; 2 Samuel 7, 11:1—12:25
Faley, “Land and People,” pp. 44-50. (C)

TUESDAY, 30th: Prophecy—The Demand for Justice and Faithfulness

FIRST ARGUMENT PAPER DUE ON TILICH READING

October

THURSDAY, 2\textsuperscript{nd}: The Babylonian Exile and Responses


TUESDAY, 7\textsuperscript{th}: FIRST TEST

THURSDAY, 9\textsuperscript{th}: NO CLASS—ENJOY FALL BREAK!

UNIT III: The New Testament—Theology and the Experience of Jesus

TUESDAY, 14\textsuperscript{th}: The Gospel of Mark

\textbf{READ}: The Gospel of Mark
Keenan, “Jesus in the New Testament,” pp. 89-98 (C)

THURSDAY, 16\textsuperscript{th}: Jesus in Matthew and Luke (RR)

\textbf{READ}: Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2
Brown, \textit{The Birth of the Messiah}, pp. 26-32, 37-38. (C)
Alland, \textit{Synopsis of the Four Gospels}, pp. 70-71 and 84-86. (C)

TUESDAY, 21\textsuperscript{st}: The Ethics of Jesus

Sobrino, “The Principle of Mercy,” pp. 16-20. (C)

THURSDAY, 23\textsuperscript{rd}: The Gospel of John—The Word Made Flesh (RR)

\textbf{READ}: John 1—6, 9—12

TUESDAY, 28\textsuperscript{th}: The Origins of Christianity and the Resurrection

\textbf{READ}: N.T. Wright, “Christian Origins and the Resurrection of Jesus. (C)
N.T. Wright, “Early Traditions and the Origins of Christianity.” (C)
1 Corinthians 15:1-5
THURSDAY, 30th: Paul and Community Conflict (RR)

Johnson, Decision Making in the Church, pp. 67-87. (C)

November

TUESDAY, 4th: Paul and Confusions over Women

READ: Romans 16:1-16; Galatians 3:15-29; I Corinthians 7, 11:2-16, 14:26-37
The Acts of Paul and Thecla. (C)

THURSDAY, 6th: SECOND TEST

UNIT IV: Particular Issues and Traditions

TUESDAY, 11th: Theology and Women Today

   Elizabeth Johnson, “Feminist Christology,” pp. 97-113. (C)

THURSDAY, 13th: Theology and Science—Enemies or Allies? (RR)

READ: John Haught, “Was the Universe Created?” pp. 100-19. (C)

TUESDAY, 18th: God, Race, and Justice

READ: Martin Luther King, “Letter from the Birmingham Jail.” (C)

SECOND ARGUMENT PAPER DUE

THURSDAY, 20th: Contemplation, Spirituality, and Justice

READ: Martin, “Thomas Merton,” pp. 43-72. (C)

TUESDAY, 25th: TO BE DETERMINED BY CLASS DISCUSSION (RR)

THURSDAY, 27th: NO CLASS—HAVE A WONDERFUL THANKSGIVING!

December

TUESDAY, 2nd: TO BE DETERMINED BY CLASS DISCUSSION
THURSDAY 4TH: Jewish Life and Practice Today (RR)


TUESDAY 9TH: How Should Christians and Jews See Each Other Today?

READ: *Nostra Aetate.* (C)

THIRD ARGUMENT PAPER DUE ON ONE OF THE AUTHORS IN THE EXCHANGE

THURSDAY 11TH: Course Wrap-Up and Discussion

FINAL TEST DATE: Tuesday December 18, 10:30-12:20