Huntingdon College

W. James Samford, Jr. School of Business and Professional Studies

COURSE NUMBER: REL301
COURSE NAME: Christian Theology
Spring 2016, Session III, Center Point, RCB 113
Dates: 3/21, 4/4, 11, 18, 25
5:30-9:30

INSTRUCTOR'S NAME: Dr. John Brannon

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Course Description
An examination of the basic doctrines of the Christian Church as they find expression in contemporary theological discourse. Topics include the doctrine of God (Trinity), Christology, soteriology, anthropology, and ecclesiology.

Course Objectives
a. Students will become familiar with the basic categories of systematic theology (revelation, creation, attributes of God, Christology, soteriology, etc.), measured by written work and class discussion. Appreciation for the diversity of voices in both historical and contemporary theology will be developed.
b. Students will develop interpretative and analytical skills with which to read and discuss theology.
c. Students will begin to develop a personal stance on the various theological topics covered in the course.
d. Students will be able to identify the practical significance of different theological positions for Christian living, the life of the church, and for the role religion plays in society.

Required Texts
3. The Bible   NRSV or NIV translations are strongly recommended.

Grading

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>(100 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td>Final exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theological Reflection Journal</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Total:</td>
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Theological Reflection Journal
Each week you must write 1-2 pages in your theological reflection journal in which you reflect upon the readings for the week. There are many ways to do this. You might ask questions that need clarification in class. You might talk about something you found interesting or compelling. You may wish to criticize the readings or challenge claims. You may wish to relate the readings to your own tradition, reason, experience and/or culture. You might engage in some exegesis of a Biblical passage that relates to the readings. In some way, engage the readings. You may wish to argue for or against one of the views expressed in the Boyd and Eddy text or you may wish to answer one of the reflection questions in the back of the Guthrie textbook. The grade will be based upon the amount of thought and effort that went into the entries, the quality of the writing, and the degree to which you engaged the readings.

Accommodation of Special Needs
Huntingdon College makes every reasonable accommodation for disabilities that have been processed and approved through our Disability Services Committee in accord with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In order to request disability-related services at Huntingdon College, students must self-identify to the Disabilities Intake Coordinator, Camilla Irvin, and provide appropriate and up-to-date documentation to verify their disability or special needs. After the accommodations have been approved by the Disability Services Committee, the 504 Coordinator, Dr. Lisa Olenik Dorman, will notify your professor(s) of the committee's decision. If you have any questions regarding reasonable accommodation or need to request disability-related services, please contact Disability Services at (334) 833-4577 or e-mail at disabilityservices@huntingdon.edu.

Medical Considerations - If you have a medical condition that may preclude participation in this course or any aspect of this course, the College suggests you consult your physician. The College will work with you based upon physician recommendations to find the best means to address any concerns.

Title IX Statement - Huntingdon faculty are committed to supporting students and upholding the College's non-discrimination policy. Under Title IX, discrimination based upon sex and gender is prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex- or gender-based discrimination, we encourage you to report it. While you may talk to a faculty member, understand that as a "Responsible Employee" of the College the faculty member MUST report to the college's Title IX Coordinator what you share. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you privacy or confidentiality, there are people who can meet with you. Faculty can help direct you or you may refer to Huntingdon's Sexual Misconduct Policy at http://www.huntingdon.edu/student-life/student-service/misconduct. You do not have to go through the experience alone.

Absences, Tardiness, and Early Departures
All students are required to attend the first session. Those who do not attend the first session will be automatically dropped from the course. Students with more than one absence will receive an "F" for the course. Since this class meets only five times, missing a single class meeting is equivalent to missing three weeks of a regular term. If you cannot attend a class you must let the instructor know via email as soon as possible. In case of absences you are responsible for obtaining all handouts and assignments. Tardiness may result in a deduction in your class participation grade. Excessive tardiness and/or early departures may count as an absence.

Academic Honesty
Plagiarism is literary theft. Failure to cite the author of any language or of any ideas which are not your own creation is plagiarism. This includes any text you might paraphrase, as well. It is not consistent with the College Honor Code, or with scholarly expectations, to submit work which is not the product of your own thinking and research. Severe penalties will result upon the submission of any work found to be plagiarized, including potential failure of the entire course. For purposes of documentation MLA and APA are acceptable.

**Late Assignments**

No shows fail the assignment. It is expected that the students fulfill their assignments on the date they are scheduled to do so. Students with illness or other problems that prevent them from attending class on the day a presentation or written assignment (including a test and/or exam) is due must contact their instructors PRIOR to the deadline via Huntingdon College email with supporting documentation to request an extension or a make-up. In most cases, missed assignments are logistically difficult to make-up while maintaining the integrity of the module. In rare cases, approval to make-up an assignment may be granted at the discretion of the faculty member based on the seriousness of the circumstance and on the supporting evidence provided by the student. Contacting a fellow class member does not substitute for contacting the instructor.

**Week 1 [Scripture]**

**Topics**
Introduction to Theology, Revelation, Scripture, and Authority

**Readings**
(To be completed prior to class beginning)
Guthrie, Chapter 1 Who Is a Theologian? (pp. 3-14)
Guthrie, Chapters 3 How Can We Find God? (pp. 39-52)
Guthrie, Chapter 4 How Does God Find Us? (pp. 53-69)
Boyd and Eddy, Chapter 1 Inspiration Debate (pp. 9-21)

**Key questions**
1. What is “theology?”
2. What is Christian theology?
3. What are the major sources or guidelines for doing theology?
4. What is the difference between general and special revelation?
5. How are the two types of revelation related?
6. What are some dangers of overemphasizing general revelation? special revelation?
7. What are arguments for and against natural knowledge of God (general revelation)?
8. What are some of the classic arguments for the existence of God?
9. What are various ways in which God reveals God’s self?
10. What is the difference between inerrantist view and the infallibilist view? What are the main arguments for each?

Journal 1 is due at the start of class

**Week 2 [Tradition]**

**Topic:** Trinity

**Readings:** Trinity
Guthrie, Chapter 5 Who Is God? (pp. 70-96)
Guthrie, Chapter 6 What Is God Like? (pp. 97-111)
Eddy and Boyd, Chapter 3 The Foreknowledge Debate (pp. 37-48)

Key Questions:

Trinity
1. What are some of the key Biblical passages used to support the idea of a triune God?
2. What is meant by subordinationism? Modalism?
3. What is the difference between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity?
4. What is meant by the idea of “social” Trinity? Why is it important in how we understand
   the nature of God?
5. How does the idea of God as Triune affect how we understand human beings who are
   made “in the image of God?”

Attributes of God
1. How does Guthrie describe the two key characteristics of God “in relation to us”? Do you
   agree or disagree with his treatment of these two key attributes of God?
2. How does Guthrie describe the attributes of “God in Heaven”: omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, eternal, and immutable? Do you agree or disagree?
3. What is the difference between the “classical” and “open” views of God’s foreknowledge? What are the key Biblical and theological arguments for each view?

Journal 2 is due at the start of class

Week 3 [Reason]

Topics: God’s Providence and the Problem of Evil
        Predestination, Covenant, and Election

Readings

God’s Providence and the Problem of Evil
Guthrie, Chapter 9 Why Doesn’t God Do Something About It? (pp. 166-192)
Boyd and Eddy, Chapter 2 The Providence Debate (pp. 23-36)

Predestination, Covenant, and Election
Guthrie, Chapter 7 What Does God Want With Us? (pp. 118-140)
Boyd and Eddy, Chapter 9 The Salvation Debate (pp. 132-144)
“God Will Save Everyone” Handout

Key questions:
Providence and Evil:
1. What does the word theodicy mean?
2. What are some different ways in which Christians have tried to understand the relationship between the existence of evil and idea of an all-powerful and all-loving God?

Election:
1. What are the three traditional views on election: double predestination, univeralism, arminianism (called by Guthrie semi-pelagianism)?
2. What are strengths and weaknesses of each interpretation?
3. What are some Biblical passages used to support each view?
Mid-Term Essays are due at the start of class

Week 4  [Experience]

Topic: Anthropology: Doctrine of Human Brings
      Christology: Person of Christ

Readings

Anthropology
Guthrie, Chapter 10 Who Are We? (pp. 192-227)
Boyd and Eddy, Chapter 5 The Divine Image Debate (pp. 74-85)

Christology: Person of Christ- Incarnation and Resurrection
Guthrie Chapter 12 Where Is God? (pp. 229-249)
Guthrie Chapter 14 Who’s In Charge Here? (pp. 270-287)
Boyd and Eddy, Chapter 7 The Christology Debate (pp. 101-111)

Key Questions:

Anthropology
1. What are some different understandings of the notion of the “image of God”?
2. How have Christians understood the nature of human sin?
3. What are different ways of interpreting the idea of original sin?
4. What is meant by the term “total depravity”?
5. In your opinion, can human beings not sin?

Christology: Person of Christ
1. What is the Classical view vs. the Kenotic view of the incarnation?
2. What are some of the arguments for and against each view?
3. What are some of the Biblical passages that support one view or the other?

Journal 3 is due at the start of class

Week 5  [Culture]

Topic  Christology: The Work of Christ

Readings  Guthrie, Chapters 13 Is God Against Us? (pp. 250-269)
          Guthrie Chapter 16 Are you a Christian? (pp. 314 -329)
          Boyd and Eddy, Chapter 8 The Atonement Debate (pp. 113-130)

Key Questions
1. What are some of the Biblical images used to describe how human beings are saved?
2. There are generally three classical theories of atonement: Christus Victor, substitutionary atonement (including penal substitution), and moral influence (also known as moral government). What are these three views? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?
3. According to Guthrie, what is the significance of the cross “from our side” and/or “from God’s side”?

Journal 4 is due at the start of class