Instructor Information:
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Course Description
An introduction to the doctrines, methods and tasks of Christian theology, seeking active appropriation of Christian faith in the context of the church and in engagement with the world.

Course Objectives
Students will
- Become familiar with basic Christian doctrine in its historical development and systematic embodiment,
- Gain knowledge of the tools, texts and tasks of Christian theology,
- Articulate the necessity of theology and good news for ministry within the context of students’ various callings and skills,
- Explore the relationship of theology, culture, and power within God’s mission,
- Articulate hopeful witness as it relates to history and to one’s context.

Required Texts
The following authors will be our conversation partners this semester:

1. Bible (any translation)
8. Optional Articles/Selections from Catherine M. LaCugna, *Freeing Theology* (HarperOne, 1993). (All of these readings will be made available on canvas.)
ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING SCALE

See Assignment Rubrics and Weekly Posting Guide for additional clarification of standards.

1. Class Participation.
Involvement in on-line discussions and completion of on-line tasks, including reading the weekly lecture. Discussions will take place in small groups and will be asynchronous (class members do not need to be on-line at the same time). Mostly, original posts are due on Wednesdays and responses to classmates on Fridays BUT this is not always the case so please follow the calendar (below) closely. See Rubric on canvas main page called “Weekly Posting Guidelines.”

2. Essays (see essay prompts below)
Throughout the semester, I will assign 3 essays. These papers will include analysis, interpretation and evaluation of the major themes in the course and the readings. Length: 1000-1200 words.
Due: Essay 1 (due 2/16); Essay 2 (due 3/8); Essay 3 (due 4/6)

3. Summaries (Annotations)
You will submit summaries of 10 chapters of your choice in Lois Malcolm’s book *God: the Sources of Christian Theology* OR the Final Paper bibliography provided by your professor. You must choose at least two female writers and at least one scholar of color. The summaries include three parts: 1. What is the main point of the author? What is distinctive or interesting about his/her perspective of God?, 2. Who or what sources is the author interacting with?, 3. Your evaluation of the piece (brief).
Length: 3 full paragraphs or 1-1 ½ pages each
Due: first 5 summaries due 3/6; last 5 summaries due 4/20

4. Final Paper (see additional guidelines below)
This paper is a research paper that will respond to the question:
Is the social view or the classical view of the trinity a more faithful witness to the gospel (good news) as it is revealed in Scripture and interpreted in the Christian tradition? Why/Why not?
Length: 2000-2500 words
Due: 5/9

Grading Breakdown
Class Participation: 15%
Summaries: 5%
Essays: 45% (15% each)
Final Paper: 35%
*Grade percentages operate as follows: A (93+), A- (90-92.9), B+ (87-89.9), B (83-86.9), B- (80-82.9), and so on.
**Calendar**

**Week 1** Jan 14
Theology: A Way of Discovery
   Reading: González and Pérez (ch. 1); Frisk (Faith)
   Due: Introductions in Small Groups due 1/18; Original Post due 1/18 (no responses to others this week)

**Week 2** Jan. 21
Theology: A Way of Discovery
   Reading: Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* (chapters 1-3)
   Due: Original Post due 1/25 (see forum for the week’s question); no responses to classmates

**Week 3** Jan. 28
Midwinter, no class. Read Ahead.

**Week 4** Feb. 4
Who is God?
   Reading: González and Pérez (ch. 2); Frisk (God; The Holy Spirit and Salvation); LaCugna (moodle)
   Due: Original Post due 2/6; response to 2 classmates 2/8

**Week 5** Feb. 11
How does God reveal and communicate?
   Reading: Frisk (Revelation and the Word of God); *Santa Biblia* (all)
   Due: Essay 1 (2/16); Original Post 2/13; response to 2 classmates 2/15

**Week 6** Feb. 18
What is the world and who are we?
   Reading: González and Pérez (ch. 3); Frisk (God, the World, and Our Humanity) & (Sin)
   Due: Original Post 2/20; response to 2 classmates 2/22

**Week 7** Feb. 25
Who is Jesus Christ? What did Christ do?
   Reading: González and Pérez (ch. 4); Frisk (Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior) & (The Work of Jesus Christ); Johnson (moodle)
   Due: Original Post 2/27; response to 2 classmates 3/1

**Week 8** Mar. 4
All Students: First set of Summaries due (Mar. 6); No posts this week.
   Due: Essay 2 (Mar. 8)

**Week 9** Mar. 11
READING WEEK
   No additional work due. Read ahead!
**Week 10**  Mar. 18  
What is the Church?  
   Reading: González and Pérez (ch. 5)  
   Due: Original Post 3/20; response to 2 classmates 3/22

**Week 11**  Mar. 25  
How does the Church live?  
   Reading: Frisk (The Church and Sacraments); González and Pérez (ch. 6)  
   Due: Original Post 3/27; response to 2 classmates 3/29

**Week 12**  Apr. 1  
How does the Church hope?  
   Reading: González and Pérez (ch. 7); Frisk (Eschatology)  
   Due: Original Post 4/3; response to 2 classmates 4/5  
   Due: Essay 3 (4/6)

**Week 13**  Apr. 8  
Putting it together: …Christology, Race, Religion  
   Reading: Williams (Introduction, ch. 1-3)  
   Due: Original Post 4/14; no response to classmates

**Week 14**  Apr. 15  
Putting it together: Christology, Race, Religion  
   Reading: Williams (ch. 4-5, Conclusion)  
   Due: Original Post 4/17; response to 2 classmates 4/19; Second set of Summaries (4/20)

**Week 15**  Apr. 22  
Putting it together: Resurrection, Hope, Eschatology  
   Reading: N. T. Wright (ch. 1-8)  
   Due: Forum post 4/26; no response to classmates

**Week 16**  Apr. 29  
Putting it together: Resurrection, Hope, Eschatology  
   Reading: N. T. Wright (ch. 9-15)  
   Due: Forum post 5/1; no response to classmates

**Week 17**  May 6  
Finals Week – No class.  
   Due: Final Paper due May 9

Essay Assignments (Options for each paper below)

**Essay Prompts (Options for each paper below)**
Three short papers (1000-1200 words) are assigned for the semester. Each assignment offers several possible essay topics. Some topics are rooted in a story scenario drawn from pastoral ministry, others are more constructive in nature. Students must choose only one topic for each written essay. Essays should be theological (not, for example, exegetical or research oriented). It is encouraged that you interact with Scripture, but don’t write out verses (simply reference them, assume I can look them up if I’m not familiar with them). Your essays should utilize course themes and readings. No long quotes please – I want to hear from YOU! (The Student Academic Handbook guides us to write in ways that “use gender inclusive language when referring to people.”)

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**Essay 1**  
**Due 2/16**

Choose **one** of the three questions below and write on it.

1. One lecture claimed that faith should never be used as a wedge between people. What values are behind this claim and do you agree with them? How would you apply this claim to the use of Scripture as a wedge? Does this have implications for your own life as someone living in a multi-faith context?

2. Your friend, Sol, says to you, “Pastor, we only need the Bible. God has revealed all we need to know in it, and that’s good enough for me. We just need to figure out what it means and we will be all set.” Respond to Sol by reflecting on how God is revealed and how we know what is revealed is God.

3. In *On Christian Doctrine*, Augustine claims that one who is mature in faith, hope, and love no longer needs Scripture. Discuss this claim and give evidence for your support or critique of it. Use at least one quote from Augustine and one from *Santa Biblia*.

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**Essay 2**  
**Due 3/8**

Choose **one** of the questions below and write on it.

1. Many in the Christian tradition have argued that bodies are the source of sin and that human minds are the source of goodness. Write about a genuinely Christian theology of human beings that is rooted in the fact that all humans are created in the image of God. Include a discussion about the relationship between our minds and bodies.

2. Why do bad things happen to good people? Interact with relevant course themes and texts to develop your answer.

3. Many theologians from marginalized communities argue that penal substitution focuses too much on the death of Christ and on punishment. Respond to this criticism, and engage atonement views that encompass more than his death in your response. You do not have to agree with the critique but you must respond to it in a way that demonstrates understanding of the critique as well as other approaches to the atonement.
Essay 3  
Due 4/6

Choose one of the questions below and write on it.

1. How do you understand your personal ministry as it relates to your faith, your community, the sacraments, and your gifts/skills? Include a brief discussion of each of these.

2. A person comes to you and says, “I have harmed another person, and I want to find healing. How can the sacraments help me frame healing for myself and the person I harmed?” Provide a response that includes a discussion of both baptism and communion.

3. Christmas is a difficult holiday for many who have experienced loss. Reflect on Christmas and the season right before Christmas which is called Advent. Advent is the four week waiting period before Christmas. How might these seasons address grief and loss as well as hope?
Final Paper Guidelines

The classical doctrine of the Trinity is summarized in the Nicene Creed and the idea that humans can know *that* God exists but not know *what* or *who* God is. In other words, the Trinity is a conceptual framework for interpreting Scripture as it reveals God’s life. The classical view stresses unity and holds that the only distinctions between the three persons are relations of origin - the Father generates the Son and Spirit, the Son is begotten of the Father, and the Spirit proceeds from the Father (and the Son).

The more recent social view of the Trinity emphasizes the personhood of the three and God’s life in relationship. This divine communion is described as mutual, self-giving, perfect love. Some argue that this view is not an orthodox one because it reflects human beings more than God. Further, some argue that the social view is not in continuity with the classical view and the Nicene Creed.

PROMPT: For your final paper, write a *(2000-2500 words)* paper that discusses the question: Is the social view or the classical view of the trinity a more faithful witness to the gospel (good news) as it is revealed in Scripture and interpreted in the Christian tradition? Why/Why not?

Your paper must interact with at least 5 sources in *God: the Sources of Christian Theology* and 2 from the bibliography for the final paper (provided by professor). *At least* one source must be by a woman and another source by a scholar of color.

STEPS (the earlier you begin the better!):

1. Quickly skim *God: the Sources of Christian Theology* by looking at titles, reading intros, and getting a sense of different historical periods. Read with an eye toward how the thinker relates to the idea of the social trinity or classical trinity. If you see the classical view and social view as distinct, does one have more authority? Why/why not? Take good notes!
2. Choose Read/summarize 10 chapters for your Summarize (Annotation) assignment and read each chapter. Take good notes!
3. Reflect on one of the Scriptural passages discussed in class (or find your own) and take notes on what 1-2 passages or trajectories in Scripture indicate about the Trinity. While you may read and take as many notes in this step as are helpful, in your paper, you need to be able to summarize your findings in a couple paragraphs.
4. Choose at least 3-5 thinkers that you find compelling. Take notes on why you find them compelling.
5. Choose 2-4 thinkers that you disagree with and take notes on why you disagree with them.
6. Make a list of 3 specific claims you agree with. This will help you determine your position in response to the prompt. The claims you list should relate directly to the prompt. Offer 1-2 justifications or evidence beyond your own preference or thinking for each claim.
7. Make a list of 2 claims you disagree with. Summarize the claims fairly and offer reasons why you think they are not true or valid or strong claims.
8. Reflect on your own biases and summarize them in 1-2 paragraphs. Then re-engage your conclusion and strongly state why you have taken the position you have. If there are
unanswered questions you still have about your position, note them – it shows you are aware of many perspectives!

9. Write a draft of your paper. See the Paper Organization below. It includes approximate word counts. The Bibliography does not factor into word count. If you want to turn it in early for feedback, you may.

10. Make any changes to your final paper.

PAPER ORGANIZATION:
I. Introduction  (Approx 250 words)
Clearly state the question and the position you will take. Include the (3) general arguments why you take your positions and include the main sources you will be interacting with throughout your paper and Scripture texts. (step #3-4 above)

II. Historical overview/Scriptural Support (Approx 600 words)
Offer a brief overview of what you noticed in the reading (step #1 above) and how thinking about the Trinity has changed over time or stayed the same. Summarize what you think the main questions that should be engaged that relate to the social trinity. Do you think the social trinity is a new/modern question or an old question veiled in different language? Is there any Scriptural support for your position (step #3 above)? Explore in this section and have fun interacting broadly with thinkers you have read and ideas we discussed in class!

III. Arguments - the stronger of your arguments should go last (Approx 850 words)
Argument 1: State the first argument and elaborate. (step #6 above)
Argument 2: State the second argument and elaborate. (step #6 above)
Argument 3: State the third argument and elaborate. (step #6 above)

IV. Counter-arguments (Approx 300 words)
Fairly summarize the two claims you did not agree with (step #4, 6 above). Note why some think these claims are valid and offer your critique as to why neither is convincing or strong enough.

V. Conclusion (Approx 350 words)
Reflect on your process in writing the paper and taking a position. Note some of your own biases or say what is at stake for you. Then, re-state your conclusion as you have argued in the paper and as it addresses some of your own biases. State why your position is good news or a hopeful position. You may also note any ongoing questions you still have that you think are important to continue to think about!

VI. Bibliography (at least 5 sources from God: the Sources of Christian Theology and two from the bibliography provided by professor)

Here is an example of an entry that you might use:
PURPOSE: The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate:

- Familiarity with basic Christian doctrine in its historical development and systematic embodiment
- Understanding of the tools, texts and tasks of Christian theology
- Develop your own theological voice in conversation with key texts
- Articulate hopeful witness as it relates to history and to one’s context.

Your paper will be graded on the creativity, clarity, fair interaction with sources, and your ability to synthesize the material. Be sure that your paper length remains within the parameters given above.

NOTE: Please utilize Turabian guidelines in your paper (I will clarify this in class so don’t worry if this doesn’t make sense). Any ideas that you summarize or paraphrase that are unique to any author needs to be cited as a footnote at the bottom of your paper or on the back side the page. Your paper should not have extensive quoting including biblical quoting (you can simply give the reference in parenthesis or a footnote), although brief quotes are acceptable.

Here is an example of a footnote:
Liberation theologian Leonardo Boff argues that the social trinity best reflects God’s love for all people and especially those who have been marginalized. (1)

Bottom of page or backside (Author, Title, page number)

ACADEMIC HONESTY
In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating will receive a failing grade on the assignment and are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:
1. Plagiarism – the use of another’s work as one’s own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another’s answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one’s answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.
For additional information, see the Seminary Academic Catalog, pp. 25–27.

ACCOMMODATIONS
North Park is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this class related to a disability, contact the Center for Student Engagement by email ada@northpark.edu or phone at 773-244-5737 to schedule an appointment with the Learning Specialist. You can also stop by The Center for Student Engagement, located on the first floor of the Johnson Center.

TITLE IX
Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against, or involved in sexual violence should contact the Title IX Coordinator (773-244-6276 or TitleIX@northpark.edu) for information about reporting, campus resources and support services, including confidential counseling services.
As members of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students, and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty are legally obligated to share information with the
University’s Title IX coordinator in certain situations to help ensure that the student’s safety and welfare is being addressed, consistent with the requirements of the law. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of sexual assault, relational/domestic violence, and stalking.

Please refer to North Park’s Safe Community site for reporting, contact information and further details. http://www.northpark.edu/Campus-Life-and-Services/Safe-Community