

DESCRIPTION:

The Mystery of God and how to speak of this Mystery is the primary concern of Christian theology. This course will explore the doctrinal articulation of this Mystery in its historical development and the concerns that surround contemporary issues involving the theology of the Trinity and the theology of God.

OBJECTIVES:

At the completion of this course students will

- Know and be able to trace of the historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity
- Understand and clearly explain the distinctions in the doctrine of God found Eastern and Western Catholic Churches
- be aware of the complexity of the problem of God-language and be able to articulate a balanced approach to the contemporary question of God-language.

PROCEDURES:

The hybrid course will consist of online lectures, discussions, and face-to-face intensive instruction (February 23-24, 9-4:30pm, and Feb 25, 9-12pm). Participants will be responsible for required readings, small group online class discussions, full mandatory attendance/participation in the two and one-half-day intensive and a final paper.

METHOD: THE DESIGN OF THE COURSE

This is a hybrid course that combines online learning with concentrated face-to-face classroom time during the course intensive. Weekly, students will complete readings, listen to narrated powerpoints, prepare responses to questions posed by the instructor and participate in asynchronous online small group discussions. **Facility with Blackboard as an online learning resource is an important skill for students who wish to take this course.**

- Each week you will engage in a focused online discussion, dedicated to a specific topic. For example, the theme of the first week of the course concerns theological context and method. The online discussion questions will help you better understand and grapple with the required readings.
- Readings and the discussion assignment will be available on Fridays, **allowing students to read and prepare Friday-Sunday for the coming week's discussion.**
- Students will take turns leading group discussions that are also monitored by the instructor. The designated leader will write a lead statement (250-500 words) in response to the question(s) posed for the week's topic. **The lead statement is due no later than Monday midnight** so that the other members will have time to read and reply thoughtfully.
- Other group members join the discussion initiated by the leader from **Tuesday through Friday**. Students are expected to comment on the leader's presentation and offer their own reflection, **making reference to at least two points made in the lead statement**. The goal is to advance the conversation, perhaps filling in aspects of thought not mentioned by the leader and raising your own questions.
- **Each group participant should have 2-3 substantive postings (in total, 250-300 words) per week.**
- The discussion for the week should end by **Friday, midnight**.

The most valuable resource in our learning is the wisdom and experience that each of us brings to the course. I encourage you to see this learning cohort as a genuine wisdom community within the wider communion of the church.

EVALUATION:

Assessment of Online Work:

1. Lead posting demonstrates
 - creative and critical engagement of course themes from both personal and pastoral contexts
 - thorough grasp of the readings and support presentations leading to a mastery of key concepts and themes
 - ability to communicate clearly online
 - evidence of critical thinking, the ability to relate theory to praxis and vice versa

2. Online group participation demonstrates
 - frequency of participation
 - quality of participation
 - quality of feedback to group members

This rubric is a helpful guide for assessing participation

	Incomplete	Proficient	Exemplary
Frequency	No postings or one posted response to the initial posting	2-3 postings during the week, but all postings are on the same day or in the same discussion thread	Actively participates in several discussions throughout the week
Quality of Participation	Does not address the discussion prompt or moves off topic	Addresses all aspects of the discussion prompt and demonstrates understanding of course content	Addresses all aspects of the discussion prompt and demonstrates synthesis of course content Responses serve to extend the discussion and foster reflection and analysis by other learners
Quality of feedback to others	Does not post follow up responses to others or posts simple responses that do not extend the discussion (e.g. "I agree.")	Feedback to others incorporates real-world examples, references to course readings/content, and is specific and meaningful	Feedback to others incorporates real-world examples, references to course readings/content, and is specific and meaningful. Feedback promotes analysis and reflection in others

Research process and paper

Students will research and write a paper (10-15) on a topic of interest, directly related to the course. Students should determine their topic early in the semester and begin their research. Students will receive a schedule of specific research-related assignments and due dates.

Final Grade:

The final course grade will be based on the following

- on-line contribution to your small group (50%),
- your overall contribution to the learning experience of the intensive (30%),
- your final paper (20%).

REQUIRED TEXTS: AN INITIAL LISTING

Johnson, Elizabeth, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*,

Kasper, Walter. *The God of Jesus Christ*. New York: Crossroad, 1982/2000.

LaCugna, Catherine Mowry. *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991.

Laporte, Jean Marc, *God One and Triune: Past and Present Approaches* (TBA..how to purchase)

Placher, William C. *The Domestication of Transcendence: How Modern Thinking about God Went Wrong*.
Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.

Placher, William C. *The Triune God: An Essay in Postliberal Theology*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007.

And more to come...