



Introduction to Christian Thought
THEO / GS 2233
Spring, 2004

Name

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Course web page: <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert.fs/thought.htm>

DESCRIPTION:

An approach to basic concepts of Christian theology via the perspective of Biblical tradition, historical development, and contemporary relevance. It will cover the main topics of Christian theology, including God, Humanity, Sin, Redemption, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church and Last Things. Attention will be given how our beliefs on these issues should shape our approach to current social and ethical issues.

OBJECTIVES:

When students complete this course, they should be able to:

- Understand the basics of Christian theology and ethical thought
- See the importance of theology for laypeople in the church
- Envision how our ethics flow from our knowledge of God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit and from His body the Church.
- Apply an understanding of Christian ethics and Christian theology in a reflective and responsible way to major contemporary social issues
- Appreciate how one's Christian life must be intimately connected with what that person deeply believes to be true regarding Christianity

TEXTS:

Steve Harper, *The Way to Heaven: The Gospel According to John Wesley*
Justo Gonzalez and Zaida Perez, *An Introduction to Christian Theology*

REQUIREMENTS:

1. *Four Exams:* Study guides will be given out ahead of time. The first three exams will be unit exams while the final may contain some material from the rest of the course.
2. *Reading:* You are expected to complete each day's reading prior to the class session. Late responses will be given half credit. You will report that reading on with a half-page of reflection response plus one original "test question" on what you feel is a key point of that day's reading. References to exact phrases from the textbooks will enhance the grades earned on reading reports.

The Harper book has reflection questions in it. When we begin readings from that book, select one question and write a response to it, then come up with one original "test question" on some key point of that day's reading.

When you hand in a reading reflection essay, unless you tell me otherwise, I will assume that you have read all of the assigned material for that day and not simply just enough to write a response of some type.

3. *Classroom Presentations of Text Material.* The class will divide into small teams of 4-6 people to prepare 10-15 minute presentations of highlights of the textbook material listed. In these presentations, creativity in teaching methodology is encouraged. Among the things that can be used are drama, cross-word puzzles, a short videotape, contests, and PowerPoint presentations. For more ideas, see the web page: <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert.fs/creative.pdf>
4. *Attendance:* Regular attendance is expected. You may miss six class sessions without damage to your grade. Three tardies or early departures count as one absence.
5. *Burning Question:* Using the form provided, turn in a question by Easter (preferably early in the semester). These questions will be answered in class (although the questioners' names will not be used.) Should you lose the form handed out in class, you can print out a new one from: <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert.fs/question.pdf>
6. *Class devotional thoughts or 3-page paper:* Each student will present a brief devotional thought at the beginning of a class period. These thoughtful reflections should be tied very closely to the topics of that week and should show evidence of preparation beforehand. For those for whom stage fright is over-powering, the alternative option is a written 3-page paper on the particular topic.
7. *Trinity interview:* Ask two adult believers (pastors or lay leaders) for a brief explanation of the doctrine of the Trinity. Summarize their answers in a couple of paragraphs. Due January 28.
8. *Why study theology interview:* Ask your pastor or the pastor of some church: "Why should I be in love with the study of theology/doctrine/Christian beliefs?" Ask the same question of an adult that you consider a thoughtful, reflective Christian believer. Summarize the answers from the two people in a paragraph or two. Due February 11.
9. *Special speaker / video reports / other reflections:* When a guest speaker comes to class or we watch a video, you may be asked to write some kind of response paper. You may also be asked for other brief written stuff during the semester. Points will be assigned for each of these.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

A high level of academic honesty is expected of SNU students. Students will be held accountable for all forms of cheating and plagiarism. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will be immediately referred to the Academic Dean for academic discipline.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students with a disability that may affect their academic success are encouraged to contact the SNU Office of Academic services (491-6694).

GRADING:

4 Exams @ 100 pts	400
Reading reports 15 @ 20 pts	300
Group presentation on text material	100
Pastor/believer interview	35
Trinity interview	35
Burning question	10
Special speaker/video reports/other written responses	-- points to be assigned

GRADING:

Course letter grades will be assigned according to a standard 10-point breakdown (90% of total possible points = A, 80% = B, etc.). Borderline grades may be given a minus or plus.

Reading and Exam Schedule

Date	Reading Schedule
Week 1 Jan. 23	What is Theology? Gonzalez, Preface and Part I
Week 2 28 30	Who is God? Trinity interview, Group presentation Gonzalez, Part II
Week 3 Feb. 4 6	What is the World? Who are We? Group presentation Gonzalez, part III
Week 4 11 13	Review week Interview: Why study theology? Exam #1
Week 5 18 20	Who is Jesus Christ? Group presentation Gonzalez, part IV
Week 6 25 27	What is the Church? Group presentation Gonzalez, part V
Week 7 March 1 5	How does the Church Live? Group presentation Gonzalez, part VI
Week 8 10 12	What is our hope? Group presentation, Gonzalez, part VII Exam #2
Week 9 24 26	Group Presentation Harper, chapters 1-2
Week 10 31 April 2	Group Presentation Harper, chapters 3-4

Week 11	7 9	Group Presentation, Harper, chapter 5 Good Friday: No Class
Week 12	14 16	Group Presentation, Harper, chapter 6 Exam #3
Week 13	21 23	Group Presentation Harper, chapters 7-8
Week 14	28 30	Group Presentation Harper, chapters 9-10
Week 15	5 7	Group Presentation Harper, chapters 11-12
Finals Week	10	FINAL EXAM – Monday 8 a.m.