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Dallas Theological Seminary

ST5102PX Trinitarianism (3 hrs; 2
hrs MABC)
Spring 2022
2/3-5

TRINITARIANISM SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the existence and attributes of the one God, the Holy Trinity; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in Scripture and in Christian history; and the ramifications of Trinitarian belief today.

Prerequisite: ST101 Introduction to Theology.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

- A. All students (course taken for 2 or 3 credits)
 1. The student will **understand** essential theological terms, concepts, and key biblical passages related to Trinitarianism, assessed by final objective exam.
 2. The student will **articulate** the orthodox, protestant, evangelical doctrines of Trinitarianism accurately and succinctly, assessed by Section 1 (Brief Statement) of the Doctrinal Synthesis Paper.
 3. The student will **explain** his or her doctrinal convictions regarding Trinitarianism with biblical, theological, and historical support, assessed by Section 2 (Exposition) of the Doctrinal Synthesis Paper (including notes).
 4. The student will **relate** the doctrines of Trinitarianism to his or her life and ministry, assessed by Section 3 (Practical Reflection) of the Doctrinal Synthesis Paper.
- B. All non-MABC students (course taken for 3 credits)
 1. The student will **analyze** and **critique** the positions of the author of a book, assessed by the Critical Interaction Paper.
 2. The student will **defend and explain** orthodox Christianity in response to contemporary challenges, assessed by the Response Paper (Cobb).
 3. The student will **confess** orthodox Christianity, assessed by memorization of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

III. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

A. Required

All students (course taken for 2 or 3 credits)

Horrell, J. Scott (with Nathan D. Holsteen and Michael J. Svigel). "God in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." In Nathan D. Holsteen and Michael J. Svigel, eds. *Exploring Christian Theology*. Vol. 1: *Revelation, Scripture, and the Triune God*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2014. (272 pp.)

Letham, Robert. *The Holy Trinity in Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship*. 2d ed. Philipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2019. (704 pp.)

Nichols, Stephen J. *For Us and for Our Salvation: The Doctrine of Christ in the Early Church*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2007. (176 pp.)

All non-MABC students (course taken for 3 credits)

Cobb, John. *Doubting Thomas*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1990. [This book is out of print but a pdf will be provided. (51 pp.)

Reeves, Michael. *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012.

B. Suggested

Boyd, Gregory A. *Is God to Blame?* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003.

Boyd, Gregory A. *Oneness Pentecostals and the Trinity*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.

Crump, David. *Knocking on Heaven's Door: A New Testament Theology of Petitionary Prayer*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006.

Edgar, Brian. *The Message of the Trinity: Life in God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005.

Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *The One Who Is to Come*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007.

Giles, Kevin. *Jesus and the Father: Modern Evangelicals Reinvent the Trinity*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.

Johnson, Keith E.. *Rethinking the Trinity and Religious Pluralism: An Augustinian Assessment*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011.

Leithart, Peter J. *Traces of the Trinity: Signs of God in Creation and Human Experience*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2015.

Packer, J. I. *Knowing God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1973.

Plantinga, Alvin C. *God, Freedom, and Evil*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989.

Shults, F. LeRon. *Reforming the Doctrine of God*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005.

Smail, Thomas. *Like Father, Like Son: The Trinity Imaged in Our Humanity*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006.

Willis, David. *Clues to the Nicene Creed: A Brief Outline of the Faith*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *Knowing the Holy Spirit Through the Old Testament*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006.

Wright, N. T. *Evil and the Justice of God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006.

C. Supplementary Bibliography

See course notes and textbooks.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Reading Assignments

All students will be expected to read the required textbooks in their entirety. A written statement of the percentage of reading completed must be submitted by **5 May**.

B. Written Assignments (papers, journals, study exercises, charts, etc.)

All students (course taken for 2 or 3 credits)

- 1) Doctrinal Synthesis Paper

The student will develop a 5–7 single-spaced doctrinal synthesis paper on Trinitarianism. There are three distinct parts to the paper: 1) a Brief Statement, 2) a Detailed Exposition, and 3) a Practical Implications Reflection. (Note that elements of this doctrinal synthesis paper will be reused in ST106 Eschatology in the student’s final capstone doctrinal synthesis assignment.)

1) **The Brief Statement** (150–200 words or one-fourth to one-third of a page). This first section will summarize Trinitarianism in non-technical (but biblically and theologically accurate) language similar to an article in a church’s or ministry’s doctrinal statement. It will include parenthetical key Scripture references and will reflect the orthodox, protestant, evangelical faith. (See sample doctrinal synthesis paper provided.)

2) **The Detailed Exposition** (500–750 words or two-thirds to three-fourths of a page). This second section will provide a succinct but thorough elucidation of Trinitarianism using technical, traditional language and covering the major issues related to Trinitarianism (see course description and outline for major issues in this area of doctrine). This exposition should read like a paper one would submit as part of an ordination or interviewing process. Substantiating his or her detailed exposition, the student will include three to five single-spaced pages of endnotes (not footnotes) that provide biblical-exegetical, historical-theological, and scientific-philosophical evidences, arguments, and explanations of the doctrinal assertions. These endnotes will include not only key biblical references but also interpretive notes that incorporate commentaries, theological works, or historical citations. Biblical citations should be without quotation, except when an exegetical point is not obvious. Justify interpretations of ambiguous passages with clarifying notes. Exegetical, theological, and historical sources, references, and observations should explain the student’s reasons for the affirmations in the main Detailed Exposition. In these notes, the student should incorporate insights gained from other courses in the curriculum, especially from other courses in the Biblical Studies and Theological Studies divisions. Bibliographic references should use Turabian formatting. E.g., Glenn R. Kreider, “Wise Unto Salvation: Gospel, Atonement, and Saving Grace,” in Nathan D. Holsteen and Michael J. Svigel, eds., *Exploring Christian Theology*, vol. 2, *Creation, Fall, and Salvation* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2015), 127. The student must incorporate sources beyond the required reading for this course.

3) **The Practical Implications Reflection** (500–750 words). This section will provide a discussion of practical applications and ministry implications of Trinitarianism. In this section the student will integrate insights from the course into his or her ministry emphasis, degree program, or anticipated area of vocational ministry focus. The student should also incorporate any insights gained from other courses in the curriculum, especially from the Ministry and Communications Division, as well reflections on his or her Christian walk and ministry experiences. Endnotes in this section should be minimal, but the student must properly cite any sources or quotations.

The doctrinal paper is due by **5 May**.

2) Final Exam.

There will be one online, multiple choice, comprehensive final exam at the end of the semester. It will be closed book, closed note, and closed Bible, with no helps. The goal of this exam is to prompt a thorough review of the course materials to firm up essential theological terms, concepts, and key biblical passages related to Trinitarianism. Studying the major biblical texts, central issues, and key definitions will best prepare the student for the exam. It is recommended that students utilize *Exploring Christian Theology* as a study guide.

The final exam must be completed by **5 May**.

All non-MABC students (course taken for 3 hours)

1) All non-MABC students will write a 5-7 page response paper to John Cobb’s *Doubting Thomas*. You should write from the perspective of an evangelical who affirms the classic orthodox views of Christ, as represented in the Nicea-Constantinopolitan and Chalcedon statements, to whom Thomas has come for counsel. “Write yourself into the book” to make up for the absence of a classic orthodox pastor/professor in the book. Your counsel

should be careful, well-informed, and “packaged” appropriately for Thomas’ situation. It must be scrupulously fair and gracious to the people and views in the book. The purpose is to assist Thomas, not “bash” the others. Further, focus on the doctrine of Christ in this assignment. You might be tempted to try to help Thomas with other “problems,” such as the doctrines of Scripture. Although such a paper might be interesting and helpful, it is not the specific focus of this assignment. This assignment is worth a maximum of 10 points and is due on **75May**.

2) Critical Response Paper – Students will choose to read and respond to one of the books in the suggested list above or another book approved by the professor. After reading the book, write a 1-2 page critical response paper. This paper is not simply a book review, but a critical interaction with the material. Briefly summarize the author’s thesis, explaining key arguments used to support the thesis. Then evaluate the thesis and the means of presentation. Finally, discuss personal and ministerial application of this material. Please note: Not all the books listed reflect the perspective of the professor. This assignment is due on **5 May**.

3) All students will be required to memorize the Creed of the Council of Constantinople (the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed). To receive credit, the student must recite the creed word perfectly to another person. A statement of completion must be submitted by **5 May**.

C. Quizzes and/or Exams

It is unlikely that there will be additional exams in this course.

V. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

1. The selection of textbooks should not be interpreted as implying the professor’s endorsement of any of the views of the authors. Textbooks are selected for their perceived value in helping to meet the course goals and objectives.
2. “The purpose of the Department of Theological Studies is to equip godly servant-leaders for worldwide ministry by: passing onto students an understanding of the church’s one true faith embraced within a distinctively dispensational, premillennial evangelicalism; encouraging students to think theologically as a response to Scripture with a sensitivity to the history of theology, philosophy, and culture; [and] helping students gain perspectives essential to spiritual formation, global servant-leadership, and the evaluation of contemporary issues and trends.” (*Catalog*).
3. Lecture notes (Powerpoint slides) will be provided after the class lectures. Other materials may be given from time to time. PLEASE NOTE: These materials are for your use only. Please do not copy or distribute them to individuals not registered for this course. Any requests for these materials by non-registered individuals should be directed to the professor.
4. Students may not tape class sessions without permission of the professor. If a student desires to tape record a class session, written permission must be obtained in advance of the taping. Please submit a written request explaining the purpose of taping and the extent of use of the tapes. Under no conditions may tapes be duplicated, given, or lent to anyone not registered for this class. No transcriptions of class lectures or discussions are allowed.
5. Please turn off cell phones and paging devices during class sessions.
6. Work that has been done for other classes may not be used to earn credit in this class. Submission of work for this class is presumed to include an affirmation that it is the student’s own work and has not previously been submitted in another course. “The website, Turnitin.com, defines plagiarism as “the use of another’s original words or ideas as though they were your own. Any time you borrow [copy] from an original source and do not give proper credit, you have committed plagiarism...” (http://turnitin.com/research_site/e_faqs_text). Plagiarism is academically dishonest and contrary to biblical standards of integrity. Any course work involving dishonest academic practices will be graded as zero without any resubmission permitted. In each case the Office of the Dean of Students will be

notified.” (*Student Handbook*). Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be referred to the professor or the Dean of Students.

7. Students are responsible for any additions or corrections made to this syllabus at the discretion of the professor and announced in class.
8. Due dates for graduating students (or those participating in commencement ceremonies) may be different than those listed in the syllabus. For these dates consult the deadlines in the information provided to graduation participants from the Registrar’s Office. Students who do not submit work by those deadlines jeopardize their graduation.
9. Written assignments will be submitted to the professor on Canvas. See the homepage at online.dts.edu for instructions.
10. Electronic Etiquette: “Students should refrain from using cell phones, laptop computers, or other devices in a manner that distracts others in the class. Playing games, browsing the Internet, using email, instant messaging, or text messaging, etc., are considered unacceptable when class is in session. Unless permitted by the professor, students should turn off all electronic devices during tests and quizzes.” (*Student Handbook*). The professor requests that students refrain from talking on their cell phones or having headphone(s) in ear(s) during class.
11. DTS does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of any of its programs and activities. To avoid discrimination the student is responsible for informing the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities and the course instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications.

VI. COURSE POLICIES

A. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

A 99-100	B+ 91-93	C+ 83-85	D+ 75-77	F 0-69
A 96-98	B 88-90	C 80-82	D 72-74	
A- 94-95	B- 86-87	C- 78-79	D- 70-71	

B. Weighing of Course Requirements for Grading

The overall course grade is a composite of several factors. It is not a measure of personal worth or necessarily of the amount of information that a student feels that he or she has learned. Rather, it is a cumulative figure that bears a relationship to the student’s successful completion of the course requirements. This figure is determined in the following manner:

For MABC students (course taken for 2 credits)

Reading	45 points
Doctrinal Synthesis Paper	50 points
Final Exam	5 points

For non-MABC students (course taken for 3 credits)

Reading	40 points
“Cobb” Paper	20 points
Doctrinal Synthesis Paper	20 points
Critical Response Paper	15 points
Final Exam	5 points

C. Class Participation

Students are encouraged to participate in class discussions and to support their classmates in theological conversation. Theology is best done in community. The professor assumes that all students share in this conviction and desire to build up one another in love.

D. Late Assignments

Late assignments are generally not accepted. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the professor in extreme circumstances. Such exceptions will usually include a significant grade reduction of up to a letter grade per day late.

PLEASE NOTE: “Students needing additional time to complete course work must petition the Credits Committee for an extension. The petition form is available on CampusNet, and must be submitted before the last day of the semester or session. Financial and grade penalties may apply to students who do not petition for extensions before the end of the semester or session. Students must read the extenuating circumstances criteria (Section 1.33) prior to submitting the petition, and must specify how their circumstances fit the criteria” (*Handbook*, 1.20.4)

E. Absences

Attendance at class sessions is required. Students will be responsible for keeping track of their attendance and reporting the number of absences on the final exam. The attendance policy in the *Student Handbook* will be followed in this course.

VII. COURSE LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

This course will be offered in a hybrid format. Live class interaction will supplement the online lectures delivered by Dr. Scott Horrell. See Canvas for further instructions.