

THEOLOGICAL STUDIES (THEO)

THEO 110 Christian Spirituality 3

This course explores the historic foundations of the Christian spiritual life. It considers key biblical texts and selected classical Christian writings in order to understand the nature and development of mature Christian faith, the connection between faith development and human development, the relationship between Christian faith and the various doubts and conflicts faced by contemporary believers, and the significance of classical spiritual disciplines in the formation of authentic Christian character.

Core Category: Spiritual Formation

THEO 140 Faith and the Big Questions 3

Just about everyone asks life's big questions. This course will explore fundamental questions about human existence such as: Why does faith matter? What is God like? Can God be known, and if so, how? Who is Jesus and why is he important? Who am I and why am I here? Why is the world so messed up and how do we fix it? Why is there evil and suffering? Why are there so many religions? Does God care about the planet? What happens when we die? The course invites diversity of thought and meaningful discourse on these topics. An introduction to Christian beliefs-presented as a 'story' that Christians around the world use to make sense of their life experience-will be provided. This course is designed for students who have no familiarity with religion generally or the particulars of the Christian faith.

Core Category: Theology

THEO 207 Christian Ethics 3

A study in practical theology, this course will examine Christianity as a coherent vision of life. We will explore how central biblical and theological themes, such as community, fall, cross, and new creation, are to be embodied in the lives of Christians. We will focus especially on how the confession that Jesus is Lord ought to inform our approach to the ethical issues and controversies of our day.

Core Category: Social Justice, Theology

THEO 210 Christian Spirituality 3

This course explores the historic foundations of the Christian spiritual life. It considers key biblical texts and selected classical Christian writings in order to understand the nature and development of mature Christian faith, the connection between faith development and human development, the relationship between Christian faith and the various doubts and conflicts faced by contemporary believers, and the significance of classical spiritual disciplines in the formation of authentic Christian character.

Core Category: Spiritual Formation

THEO 230B SpTop: Interreligious Discussion as Loving One's Neighbor 3

The world's major religions provide guidance on loving one's neighbor. This course will explore their respective guidance. We will study why and how we ought to love our neighbors from various religious perspectives, working to discern the depths of their differences and similarities. The course will not simply be a survey of content but an experiment in living. Its central claim is that rigorous, informed, and skillfully facilitated interreligious discussion is an act of loving one's neighbor. To test this claim, students will also study how to facilitate discussions to actively explore the course's content and test its argument.

THEO 230C SpTop: Chamberlain Interfaith Fellowship 3

The Chamberlain Interfaith Fellowship (established in 2014) is a Jewish-Christian student interfaith exchange between Eastern University and Temple Beth Shalom (Needham, MA), which emphasizes shared learning, immersive experiences and building friendships. A cohort of up to six (6) students from each institution are selected for an academic year (August -April). EU travels to Temple Beth Shalom for a four (4) day immersive Jewish experience in November each fall, whereas Temple Beth Shalom visits Eastern University for a four (4) day immersive Christian experience each April.

THEO 240 Introduction to Christian Theology 3

A survey of the main themes of Christian theology from both systematic and biblical perspectives. Special emphasis is on the development of responsible theological thought. Such topics as the basis of authority, the nature of God, human nature, the person and work of Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Church will be treated.

Core Category: Theology

THEO 305 Theology in Historical Context 3

A study of the development of classical Christian theology in the particular historical context that shaped it. Attention will especially be given to the distinctive features of patristic, medieval, and Reformation theological traditions, and to Eastern (Orthodox) and Western (Catholic and Protestant) traditions. Prerequisite: THEO 240

Core Category: Theology

THEO 310 The Triune God 3

An investigation of the Christian doctrine of God in its biblical foundations and its historical development, with particular attention to the life of God as Trinity and to the relationship between God and the world. Specific topics may include the relationship between transcendence and immanence, the efficacy of natural theology, the impassibility and immutability of God, the character of divine foreknowledge and providence, the nature of divine "personhood" and the debate over "social trinitarianism", and the relationship between equality and order among the divine persons.

Prerequisites: THEO 240

THEO 315 Theological Foundations of World Religions 3

A detailed exploration of the explicit and implicit theologies of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam, aimed at grasping the internal logic and coherence of each tradition. Special attention will be given to comparing and contrasting these faiths with historic Christianity.

Core Category: Cultural Perspectives, Theology

THEO 321 Addiction and Grace 3

Addiction is widely acknowledged as a serious individual, interpersonal, and social problem. But what is addiction? Is it a brain disease? A sin? A problem of will, or of knowledge? Does addiction have primarily to do with individuals, or is it constituted or maintained in intimate relationships or on a societal level? Do addictions necessarily involve psychoactive substances, or can we properly speak of addictions to activities like gambling or shopping, or even eating or sex? Who is susceptible to addiction, and why? If a person stops engaging in addictive behavior, is he or she still an addict? Christians and others offer a variety of answers to these questions, and a similar diversity of opinion exists where treatment for and recovery from addiction are concerned. In this class, we will explore, first, some Christian theological voices and biblical and historical resources for understanding how Christians have understood addiction in the past and more recently. Secondly, we will read three current books treating aspects of addiction that are often neglected in Christian treatment of addiction. Finally, we will read one or two personal accounts of addiction and recovery, and consider how a Christian response to addiction might incarnate the prophetic values of justice, mercy, and humility.

Core Category: Theology

THEO 322 Spirituality in the Thought and Life of The Church Fathers 3

"Spirituality" has been a hot topic over the past few years. In this course we want to explore together a specific type or model of spirituality practiced by Christians living from roughly the third to the seventh centuries. How, for example, did these early Christians pray? Were there other spiritual disciplines that formed part of the rhyme and rhythm of their spiritual lives? How did they deal with temptation? What was their understanding of Christian character? Who were the "desert fathers?" What was their particular contribution to Christian spirituality? How can the insights of these early Christians be translated into the context of the modern world? What possible mistakes did they make that may be avoided by later generations of Christians? These and other questions and issues will form the heart of the course.

Core Category: Theology

THEO 329 C.S. Lewis 3

A study of the theological vision of C. S. Lewis through his own writings, both fiction and non-fiction. Special attention is given to the features of Lewis's thought that make it an integrated whole, and also to aspects that are not widely known, or that are controversial, or that have made a distinctive contribution to Christian theology in the last hundred years.

Prerequisites: THEO 240, THEO 251, or THEO 252

THEO 330 Special Topics 1-3**THEO 335 Global Christianity 3**

Western forms of Christian faith are becoming increasingly marginalized as the church grows dramatically in the southern hemisphere, where highly contextual, conservative and charismatic forms of the faith abound. This course will explore how the Christian faith is being embodied and carried forth in these contexts through the close reading of texts that consider how these communities read the Bible and contextualize the theological themes and liturgical forms that characterize the Christian tradition.

THEO 337 Theology of Culture 3

This will be a course on the theological origins and purposes of human culture, setting human culture-making within the broad contours of the Christian story. We will be considering three fundamental theological ideas that account for the reality and importance of human culture: God as triune Creator, the created order as contingent, and the human person in the image of God. The notions of justice and flourishing will be explored both theologically as well as practically as integral to understanding what culture is and how it is meant to function. These explorations will be done in conversation with those in the social sciences who work on injustices related to class (poverty), race (racism), and ethnicity (nationalism) in particular. The particular issue explored will vary from section to section.

Core Category: Theology

THEO 340 On Being Human 3

This course will offer students a theological portrait of the human person as a creature created in the image of a triune God. Interpreting this phrase and noting its implications will occupy a great deal of our time in this course. Along the way we will consider how the creation of humanity in the image of God compares with alternative visions of the human creature (its constitution and vocation), the implications of our material and immaterial constitution for questions related to ethnicity and identity, sin, the soul, reconciliation and the vocation of the human creature as an ethical and cultural being.

THEO 350 The Son and Salvation 3

This course will offer students a theological portrait of the person and work of Jesus Christ as the key to understanding the nature and activity of God, the nature and activity of human persons and the nature and telos of the created order. As such, we will consider Jesus as both mediator of revelation, creation and reconciliation and lord of history. We will accomplish this goal through a consideration of the central Christological (person of Christ) and soteriological (work of Christ) doctrines of the Christian faith: their historical development, theological coherence and cultural significance.

Core Category: Theology

THEO 351 Modern Theology 3

The course examines the central figures, themes and movements in theology during the 19th and 20th centuries with particular attention to what is distinctive about modern theology, how it is related to philosophical and cultural developments and how traditional Christians may critically appropriate modern insights.

THEO 353 Postmodernism and Pluralism 3

A critical, theological study of contemporary postmodernism and religious pluralism, aimed at developing an appropriately complex understanding of Christianity's truth and of Christianity's place in a diverse religious world. Prerequisite: Minimum grade of C in THEO 240.

THEO 355 Catholics and Protestants in Conversation 3

An exploration of the theological background between Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians over the past five centuries, aimed at understanding the key points of disagreement, such as the relationship between Scripture and Tradition, the nature of justification, the status of the Virgin Mary and the saints. Prerequisite: Minimum grade of C in THEO 240.

Core Category: Theology

THEO 360 The Holy Spirit and Human Flourishing 3

This course will offer students a theological portrait of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. We will accomplish this goal through a consideration of the identity and work of the Holy Spirit as God at work in the world to bring about justice, flourishing, and the renewal of creation. We will read material by sociologists, psychologists, and artists as well as theologians in understanding how the Holy Spirit works to accomplish these ends.

Core Category: Theology

Prerequisites: THEO 240

THEO 400 Directed Studies 1-3**THEO 440 Senior Seminar 3**

Consideration of special topics in theological studies helpful for integrating theological knowledge and liberal arts studies.

THEO 498 Teaching Assistant 1-3**THEO 510 Theology and Ethics of Congregational Life 3**

This course explores the nature and mission of the church through its identity as people of God who are called to bear witness to the good news of God's reign. Giving priority to self and the local congregation, participants address questions asked by contextual methodologies from several disciplines, especially theological ethics and congregational studies.

THEO 520 Syst.Theo.& Ethics: Vision of Community 3

This course probes several major themes in Systematic Theology with the intention of cultivating the student's ability to think deeply and carefully about their beliefs in dialogue with Christians past and present, from the Mediterranean basin to global points of view. A critical component of this exploration engages the ethical implications of Christian theology. This course will discuss major themes within the framework of two major focal points: the Trinitarian God and vision of God expressed as God's Reign. Within those two major themes, the course will discuss Scripture, the doctrine of Creation, theological anthropology, the problem of sin, and the gift of grace. In all of this, the course attends to the student's ability to think, articulate and apply beliefs and ethics clearly and cogently to life and ministry.

Prerequisites: #Take THLE-510 BIBL-501 BIBL-503; Minimum grade of C-

THEO 521 Syst.Theo.& Ethics: Reign of God 3

This course probes several major themes in Systematic Theology with the intention of cultivating the student's ability to think deeply and carefully about their beliefs in dialogue with Christians past and present, from the Mediterranean basin to global points of view. A critical component of this exploration engages the ethical implications of Christian theology. This course will discuss major themes within the framework of two major focal points: the Trinitarian God and the eschatological Reign of God as God's encompassing vision for creation. Within those two major themes, the course will examine more closely the Persons of the Trinity-the Creator as the Dabar of the Reign, Jesus Christ as the Embodiment of the Reign, and the Holy Spirit as the Ruach of the Reign-as well as the doctrines of salvation (soteriology), the church (ecclesiology), and the "last things" (eschatology). In all of this, the course attends to the student's ability to think, articulate and apply beliefs and ethics clearly and cogently to life and ministry.

Prerequisites: #Take THLE-510 BIBL-501 BIBL-503; Minimum grade of C-

THEO 545 Disability and Theology: Reimagining Narratives of the Disabled Body in Society 3

This interdisciplinary course considers the category of disability through interlocking discourses of theology, race, and gender. Students will think critically about Christianity's contribution to ableist rhetoric and identify resources within Christianity that support movement towards disability justice. Exploring how experience, scripture, and theology informs our faith and social justice commitments, we ask questions like: Does attending to the relationship between race and access to care complicate ideas about the spiritual benefits of suffering? Do Christian sensibilities regarding future hope serve to defer, rather than motivate, the social transformation disability activists demand? How might chronic illness, impairment, and Deafness shape engagements with art and worship? This course introduces students to disability theory and gives them tools to respond creatively, compassionately, and proactively to access needs.

THEO 550 MTS Research in Theology 3

This course represents the first of two summative projects required for the MTS in Theology, in which the student, with the help of a faculty member, designs a research project in the form of an independent or directed study that is relevant to the student's area of interest. The project typically produces a research paper of 30-40 pages in length. There is room for flexibility and creativity if other formats are integral to achieving the learning outcomes of the project.

Prerequisites: Prerequisite: THLE-520 or THLE-521

THEO 550A MTS Research in Theology 3

This course represents the first of two summative projects required for the MTS in Theology, in which the student, with the help of a faculty member, designs a research project in the form of an independent or directed study that is relevant to the student's area of interest. The project typically produces a research paper of 30-40 pages in length. There is room for flexibility and creativity if other formats are integral to achieving the learning outcomes of the project.

Prerequisites: Prerequisite: THLE-520 or THLE-521

THEO 551 MTS Internship in Christian Faith and Public Policy 3-6**THEO 551A MTS Internship in Christian Faith and Public Policy 3-6****THEO 552 MTS Research in Christian Faith and Public Policy 3****THEO 570A Theologia:doing Theolog in Context-Part1 3**

The purpose of this module is to explore critically the constructive relationship between theological reflection and articulation on the one hand, and the socio-cultural contexts in which such reflection and articulation take place on the other. The fundamental questions guiding the exploration are: (1) what are the dynamics of doing theology in context; (2) in what ways are theology and context mutually influenced and determined; and (3) how do we do theology in context? The Openseminary prologue consists of 12 weeks of online readings, assignments, and discussions in preparation for the on-ground engagement. Openseminary M.T.S. program course.

THEO 570B Theologia: Doing Theol in Context-Part 2 3

The purpose of this module is to explore critically the constructive relationship between theological reflection and articulation on the one hand, and the socio-cultural contexts in which such reflection and articulation take place on the other. The fundamental questions guiding the exploration are: (1) what are the dynamics of doing theology in context; (2) in what ways are theology and context mutually influenced and determined; and (3) how do we do theology in context? The Openseminary one-week, on-ground experience consists of full-day class sessions and engagement with teacher-practitioners in the field of study. Openseminary M.T.S. program course.

Prerequisites: Prerequisite: THLE-570A

THEO 570C Theologia: Doing Theol in Context-Part 3 3

The purpose of this module is to explore critically the constructive relationship between theological reflection and articulation on the one hand, and the socio-cultural contexts in which such reflection and articulation take place on the other. The fundamental questions guiding the exploration are: (1) what are the dynamics of doing theology in context; (2) in what ways are theology and context mutually influenced and determined; and (3) how do we do theology in context? The Openseminary final project consists of 8 weeks of research and online discussions to produce a final paper/project, based on the learnings in the prologue and on-ground engagement. Openseminary M.T.S. program course.

Prerequisites: Prerequisites: THLE-570A and THLE-570B

THEO 580A Theologia: Doing Theol in Context-Part1 2

The purpose of this module is to explore critically the constructive relationship between theological reflection and articulation on the one hand, and the socio-cultural contexts in which such reflection and articulation take place on the other. The fundamental questions guiding the exploration are: (1) what are the dynamics of doing theology in context; (2) in what ways are theology and context mutually influenced and determined; and (3) how do we do theology in context? The Openseminary prologue consists of 12 weeks of online readings, assignments, and discussions in preparation for the on-ground engagement. Openseminary M.P.T. program course.

THEO 580B Theologia: Doing Theol in Context-Part 2 2

The purpose of this module is to explore critically the constructive relationship between theological reflection and articulation on the one hand, and the socio-cultural contexts in which such reflection and articulation take place on the other. The fundamental questions guiding the exploration are: (1) what are the dynamics of doing theology in context; (2) in what ways are theology and context mutually influenced and determined; and (3) how do we do theology in context? The Openseminary one-week, on-ground experience consists of full-day class sessions and engagement with teacher-practitioners in the field of study. Openseminary M.P.T. program course.

Prerequisites: THLE-580A (Theologia: Doing Theology in Context)

THEO 580C Theologia: Doing Theol in Context-Part 3 2

The purpose of this module is to explore critically the constructive relationship between theological reflection and articulation on the one hand, and the socio-cultural contexts in which such reflection and articulation take place on the other. The fundamental questions guiding the exploration are: (1) what are the dynamics of doing theology in context; (2) in what ways are theology and context mutually influenced and determined; and (3) how do we do theology in context? The Openseminary final project consists of 8 weeks of research and online discussions to produce a final paper/project, based on the learnings in the prologue and on-ground engagement. Openseminary M.P.T. program course.

Prerequisites: THLE-580B (Theologia: Doing Theology in Context)

THEO 581 Doing Theology I: Theological Method and Reflection 3

The course focuses on the nature, method, and sources of theological method and reflection, helping students to understand the relationship between Christian confessions, historical influences and method. Students begin to "exegete" the theology of their context as well as beginning to identify their own theological presuppositions. This course also provides an overview of the six classical church practices. It will be offered in every Summer 2 and Spring 1 Semester.

THEO 582A Doing Theology 2: Exploring the Doctrines of the Christian Faith: Part 1 1.5

This course introduces Christian theology as a critical discipline in the church and in relation to wider society. It serves as a basic introduction to some of the traditions and diversity of Christian understandings for students both unfamiliar and familiar with the various expressions of Christianity.

Prerequisites: THLE-581

THEO 582B Doing Theology 2: Exploring the Doctrines of the Christian Faith: Part 2 1.5

This course introduces Christian theology as a critical discipline in the church and in relation to wider society. It serves as a basic introduction to some of the traditions and diversity of Christian understandings for students both unfamiliar and familiar with the various expressions of Christianity.

Prerequisites: THLE-582A (Doing Theology 2: Exploring the Doctrines of the Christian Faith)

THEO 611 Theology & Public Policy 3

A theological/biblical analysis of the problems involved in moving from biblical revelation and theological concepts to concrete public policy proposals. This is a required course for the M.T.S. concentration in Christian Faith and Public Policy and is a prerequisite for other courses in that concentration.

THEO 612 Political and Public Theologies 3

This course is designed to provide theological and ethical reflection on political thought and action. Representative doctrines for the Christian faith will be discussed with their implications for responding to government and politics. Participants will explore classical and contemporary formulations of the relationship between the church and the socio-political order. Biblical, historical and philosophical resources will be examined and interrogated. In addition, students will be asked to question two divergent yet related schools of thought: political theology and public theology. Our chief objective will be to consider sound theological-ethical options for Christians as they participate in the political order. This is a required course for the M.T.S. concentration in Christian Faith and Public Policy.

Prerequisites: Prerequisite: THLE-520 or THLE-521

THEO 623 Christian Social Ethics 3

An introduction to ethical discourse, this class will survey the field of theological ethics so that Christians may engage the ethical issues of the common life, shape the institutions of society, and aid persons in forming faithful and objective moral judgments about public matters. Special attention will be given to the relationship between Christian faith and economics, politics and law. A sub-theme will be ecclesiology, a critical examination of the mission and purpose of the Church.

THEO 624 Truth and Transformation: the Ethics of The Visionary 3

The goal of this course is to explore ethical and philosophical dimensions of projects of social and political transformation. The category of "vision" will be developed and deployed metaphorically; used as a trope to describe how moral actors receive, review and relate messages to their constituencies. Attention will be paid to how specific moral actors were "educated" by these messages, how specific moments and stages in their lives were formative for their emotional, intellectual and "spiritual" maturation and how this maturation impacted broader social dramas. An attempt will be made to probe the critical interplay between the individual moral subject and the social dramas and currents that shaped their eras. Selected historical personages will be viewed as religious homoiousios, as prismatic figures embodying certain constitutive features of their time, people or civilization.

THEO 625 The Church As Community of Compassion 3

This class will identify, explore and interrogate strategies by which local faith communities enact moral and aesthetic resources to create cultures of compassion and technologies of concern. The class rests upon the assumption that compassion is a central feature of our discipleship and an inextinguishable dimension of Christian ethics. In a world in which many of our differences are settled in a theatre of violence - military, legal, economic, political, religious or domestic - how does the church serve as a healing agent, as community of reconciliation? What does a compassionate church look like? What does a compassionate disciple look like?

Prerequisites: THLE-510 minimum grade C-

THEO 631 Persevering Hope: Evil, Suffering and Goodness of God 3

The daily news is filled with reports that may provoke questions about the goodness of God. If God is good, then why does God allow people to do evil things? If God is good, then why does God allow so much suffering? People in professional ministry are regularly faced with these and related questions arising both from our personal experiences and the personal experiences of those whom we serve. The purpose of this course is to equip the participants and those they serve in ministry to persevere in hope in the face of personal encounters with evil and suffering.

Prerequisites: Take BIBL-501 or BIBL-503; minimum grade C-

THEO 637 Theology and Ethics of Martin Luther King 3

This class will examine the theological and philosophical foundations of the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Attention will be paid to King's understanding of God, Christ, the Church and humanity, and how the interplay of these themes informed his quest to critique, contest and transform North American civilization and the emerging global order. Students will be asked to probe into King's identity as a minister of the gospel, explore his role and significance in the history of the Church, and examine his international theological legacy. Finally, students will be invited to discover the implications of King's work for contemporary ministry.

Prerequisites: Take THLE-520 or THLE-521 minimum grade C-

THEO 650A NCSS Interaction/Reflection Seminar 4**THEO 652 Research in Public Policy 1-3**

An independent study course for advanced students who desire to undertake intensive, independent research in issues related to Christian Faith and Public Policy. By permission and agreement with an appropriate instructor.

Prerequisites: Prerequisite: THLE-520 or THLE-521