

ST 2315 God in Christian Tradition

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Monday/Thursday 12:40 - 2:00 PM

Fall Semester 2006 [August 18, 2006]

Description: The trinitarian understanding of God emerges from sustained reflection on Christian consciousness of experiencing the divine in the person of Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Hebrew and Christian scriptures, as well as the writings of the early Church and the experience of mystics have all contributed to our understanding. This lecture-seminar course explores the Christian understanding of God as origin and final mystery of our lives in terms of a triune community of love.

Requirements: Informed participation in discussion of readings; bi-weekly biographical exercises; two 10-12 page research quality papers. The first, due end of Reading Week, will focus on scriptural and early doctrinal sources for the trinity; the second, due at the end of the semester, will explore a contemporary question touching on the mystery of the triune God: e.g., inter-religious dialogue; liturgical and spiritual questions; inclusive language and the liturgical life of the Christian community. For both papers, follow *The Chicago Manual of Style* 14th Edition, or Kate L. Turabian *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* 6th Edition.

Objectives: Course participants will be able to (1) discuss the primary scriptural, liturgical and early Church sources which have shaped the doctrine and understanding of the trinity; (2) compare and contrast central theological and mystical figures in the medieval and modern period who have reflected on this core Christian mystery; (3) correlate the doctrine of the trinity with contemporary problems for belief in God; (4) articulate the issues about God arising in inter-religious dialogue.

Assessment: Class discussion and the assigned papers will especially document competence in Objectives 1 and 3 and 4; the biographical exercises will expand and assess competence for objectives 2, 3 and 4.

REQUIRED READING

1. Catherine LaCugna, *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*. (HarperCollins, 1991)
2. Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*. (Crossroad, 1988)
3. Jerome Neyrey, *Render to God: New Testament Understandings of the Divine* (Fortress, 2004)
4. Plus selected primary and secondary sources.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Materials Provided on Webpage or on Blackboard

COURSE SCHEDULE

Thursday Sept 7-Introduction

Objective: Grasp overview and structure of the course; discuss framework for contemporary discussion of God.

Read: Susan Wood, "[Participatory Knowledge of God in the Liturgy](#)," and Christoph Schwab, "[Interreligious Encounter and the Fragmentary Experience of God](#)," Walter Kasper, *Modern Problematic of God, The God of Jesus Christ*, 3-64.

Monday Sept 11 Speaking About God: Relationship between experience, knowledge and faith.

1. Kasper "Chapter Four: Experience of God and Knowledge of God," pp 65-115; "Chapter Five: Knowledge of God in Faith," 116-30.
2. **Bibliographical Exercise: Prepare a Bibliography of ten (10) reference work articles on the topic "God"; six should be in English; four should be in non-English languages.**

Thursday Sept 14 Images of God in Hebrew Scripture:

1. Dale Patrick *The Rendering of God in the Old Testament*. 13-27, 63-100.
2. Cf. Pontifical Biblical Commission, [The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible](#) (May 24, 2001).
3. Roland Murphy, "The Biblical Commission, the Jews, and Scriptures," *Biblical Theological Bulletin*, 32(2002): 145-149.

Monday Sept 18 Approaches to Hebrew Scripture:

Read 3 of the 4 following articles by Walter Brueggemann (all are available on-line through the EBSCO databases).

1. "That the World May be Re-described" *Interpretation* 56 no 4 2002, p 359-367;
2. "The Matrix of Groan." *Journal for Preachers* 24 (2001): 41-47;
3. "The Costly Loss of Lament." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 36 (1986): 57-71;
4. "A Shape for Old Testament Theology: 1, Structure Legitimation; 2, Embrace of pain." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 47 (1985): 28-46.

Thursday Sept 21 Images of God in Christian Scripture. Sociological Approach to Retrieving New Testament sources, applied to the Gospel of Mark.

1. The Gospel of Mark
2. Jerome Neyrey, *Render to God*, Preface, Chapter One, Appendices, pp. xv - 43, 249-68.

Monday Sept 25 Images of God in Christian Scripture: Tradition of Matthew and Luke

1. The Gospel of Matthew, Acts of the Apostles
2. Neyrey *Render to God*, Chapter Two: "Provident, Benevolent, Foolish and Shameful--God in Matthew," Chapter Three: "Benefaction, Providence and Theodicy--God in the Acts of the Apostles." 44-106

Thursday Sept 28 Images of God in Christian Scripture: Romans and Corinthians.

1. Romans; I Corinthians
2. Neyrey, *Render to God*, Chapter Four: "A Systematic Theology--God in Romans," and Chapter Five: "Patronage and Honor, Order and Disorder--God in 1 Corinthians," 107-90. Conclusion 243-48.

Monday Oct 2 Early Christian Conceptions of God Prior to the Early Councils

1. Tertullian *Ad Praxean*. *Evans translation Paragraphs 1-31, pages 130-179.*
2. Origen (185-254) *de Principiis*. *Book I, Chapter I-III.*
3. For more on Tertullian, see [The Tertullian Project](#), an on-line resource, with articles, bibliographies, and the works of Tertullian, including Latin texts.

Thursday Oct 5 Early Christian Controversies about God Leading to the Council of Nicaea 325.

1. Arius: RPC Hanson *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*: pp [60-128](#);
2. [Creed of Nicaea](#).
3. Catherine LaCugna, "Chapter One: God's Economy Revealed in Christ and the Holy Spirit," 21-52.

Monday Oct 9

1. Athanasius: *Orations Against the Arians Book One*;
2. The Cappadocians: Gregory of Nazianzus, "Third Theological Oration", from William G. Rusch, Editor, *The Trinitarian Controversy*. pp 60-129, [131-47](#)
3. Catherine LaCugna, "Chapter Two: The Cappadocian Theology of Divine Relations," 53-79.
4. Walter Kasper, 233-63.

Thursday Oct 12 Early Liturgical Texts.

1. Nils Alstrup Dahl, "[Trinitarian Baptismal Creeds and New Testament Christology](#)," in *Jesus the Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine* Edited Donald Juel. (Fortress Press, 1991): 165-186;
2. Hippolytus of Rome: [Apostolic Tradition](#);
3. Justin Martyr [First Apology](#);
4. Cyprian [Letter 69](#).
5. Cf. John F Baldovin, "Hippolytus and the Apostolic Tradition: Recent Research and Commentary," *Theological Studies* 64 (2003): 520-542;
6. [The Apostolic Tradition a Commentary](#) (Augsburg Press, 2002).
7. Thomas M. Finn, [Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: West and East Syria](#). *Containing: Cyril: Baptismal Catechesis; The Apostolic Constitutions: Theodore of Mopsuestia Baptismal Homily 3; Narsia Homily on the Epiphany.*
8. [MAP: 4th-5th Century Sites](#)

Monday Oct 16

1. Augustine: *De Trinitate Books V, VI, VII*;
2. Catherine LaCugna, "Chapter Three: Augustine and the Trinitarian Economy of the Soul," 82-110.
3. Eugene TeSelle [Augustine The Theologian 116-123, 223-237, 295-309.](#)
4. Cf. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo. A Biography*. University of California Press, 1967.

Thursday Oct 19

Walter Kasper, 133-229

Monday Oct 23 READING WEEK: No Class

Thursday Oct 26 READING WEEK: No Class

Monday October 30 Medieval Victorine and Franciscan Development: Richard of St. Victor, St. Bonaventure

1. Richard of St Victor (+1173): *Book Three of the Trinity Chapter I - XXV* (New York: Paulist, 1979): [373-397](#);
2. St. Bonaventure (1221 - 1274): *Itinerarium or Journey of the Soul to God. Chapters 1 through 3; and Chapters 4 through 7.* For a Latin version of the *Itinerarium*, cf. [On-Line InterText](#). or for a parallel [Latin/English version](#).
3. Cf. Ilia Delio, "Bonaventure's Metaphysics of the Good," in *Theological Studies* 60 (1999): 228-46.
4. Cf. Steven Chase *Contemplation and Compassion: The Victorine Tradition. Traditions of Christian Spirituality Series.* (Orbis Books, 2003).

Thursday Nov 2 Thomas Aquinas

1. Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologia Prima Pars Questions 27-30*;
2. Catherine LaCugna, "Chapter Five: Thomas Aquinas' Theology of the Trinity," 143-80.
3. *Summa Theologia, Prima Pars, Table of Contents*

Monday Nov 6 Trinitarian Mysticism: Mechthild of Magdeburg (1207-1297), Meister Eckhart (c.1260-c.1328), John Ruusbroeck (1293-1382).

1. Frank Tobin, "Mechthild of Magdeburg and Meister Eckhart," in Bernard McGinn, Editor, *Meister Eckhart and the Beguine Mystics. Hadewijch of Brabant, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and Marguerite Porete.* (Continuum: 1994): [44-61](#)
2. Mechthild of Magdeburg (1208-1282), [Book III: 9; IV: 12, 14; VI: 1, 16, 31.](#) *Mechthild of Magdeburg, The Flowing Light of the Godhead Translated and Edited by Frank Tobin.* (Paulist Press, 1998).
3. Cf. Kari Elisabeth B?en, "[Matristics: Female Godlanguage in the Middle Ages,](#)" *Revue d'Histoire eccl_astique* 95 (2002): [342-362]
4. Bernard McGinn "Lost in God. What Can We Learn from the Mystics," in *Christian Century* 120 (2003): 22-28.
5. Cf. Bernard McGinn *The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart. The Man from Whom God Hid Nothing* New York: Crossroad, 2001, esp 75-113.
6. *Meister Eckhart (1260 - 1328) selections from Meister Eckhart Teacher and Preacher* (Paulist Press): 182-193, 207-227.
7. Cf. Bernard McGinn, "[The God beyond God: Theology and Mysticism in the Thought of Meister Eckhart,](#)" *Journal of Religion* 61 (1981): 1-18.
8. Cf. John Ruusbroeck (1293-1381): *Spiritual Espousals* (Paulist Press) [110-134.](#)

Thursday Nov 9 Modern Approaches -- Trinitarian God as Love --

1. Walter Kasper *The God of Jesus Christ* 264-316

Monday Nov 13 Modern Approaches:

1. Karl Rahner *The Trinity (Selections)*;

Thursday Nov 16 Modern Approaches:

1. Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics* (Selections)

Monday Nov 20 American Academy of Religion Meeting ? NO CLASS

Thursday Nov 23 Thanksgiving Holiday ? NO CLASS

Monday Nov 27 Modern Approaches: Trinity and Persons in Community --

1. Catherine LaCugna, *God for Us*, "Chapter Seven: The Self-Communication of God in Christ and the Spirit," 209-241.

Thursday Nov 30

1. LaCugna, "Chapter Eight: Persons in Communion," First part 243-317.

Monday Dec 4

1. LaCugna, "Chapter Nine: Trinity, Theology, and Doxology," 319-75.

Thursday Dec 7

1. LaCugna, "Chapter Ten: Living Trinitarian Faith," 377-417.

Monday Dec 11 The Trinity and World Religions: Islam

1. Ewert Cousins, "The Trinity and World Religions," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 1970: 476-98.

Thursday Dec 14 The Trinity and the World Religions: Buddhism

1. Masao Abe "Kenotic God and Dynamic; Sunyata" Part I; Part II.
2. Tracy "Kenosis, Sunyata and Trinity" (135-154) in *Cobb/Ives*;
3. Neiji Nishitani: *Notes on Nothingness; Reflections on the Experience of Nothingness a la Bernhard Welte*.