

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

FALL 2010

THEO 311/511-A: Understanding the Old Testament Lecturer Carolyn Leeb, Ph.D. TR 1:20 - 2:35 PM

An introduction to academic study of the Hebrew Scriptures. Students will read widely within the Old Testament and will use literary, sociological, historical, and theological methods to build a bridge between the world from which these scriptures came and the world in which they are used by communities of faith.

While THEO-200 is not a formal prerequisite, students are strongly encouraged to have taken it before enrolling in this course.

THEO 314/514-A: The Pentateuch Lecturer Carolyn Leeb, Ph.D. TR 2:50 - 4:05 PM

An introduction to academic study of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament). Stories of creation, Exodus, and Israel's first ancestors will be explored using literary, sociological, historical, and theological methods. Students will examine the Old Testament law codes and discover what they meant to earlier communities, as well as considering consistent and appropriate ways to think about these law codes today.

THEO 317/517-A: The World of the New Testament Professor Richard DeMaris MWF 2:00 - 2:50 PM

A study of the societies and culture in which Christian communities arose with a view to understanding the New Testament better and determining its contemporary significance more accurately. May be used to fulfill the Cultural Diversity course component of the General Education Requirements.

THEO 318/518-A: Jesus & the Gospels Professor Frederick Niedner MWF 9:05 - 9:55 AM

This comparative study of the New Testament gospels focuses on the uniqueness of each presentation of the story about Jesus. The course consists of lectures, discussions, and readings that assist students in understanding the content, message, and structure of each gospel in light of its unique audience, historical context, and evangelical purpose.

In addition to the canonical gospels and other biblical materials, students will read Mark A. Powell's Introduction to the Gospels (ISBN 0-8006-3075-0). Two required projects include: a) a five-to-six page text study, book review, or small research project on a gospels-related topic; and b) an essay of approximately three pages that compares two films, drama, or other artistic depiction of Jesus' life as though

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they were modern "gospels." Students will also write three examinations, including the final examination.

THEO 319/519-AX : Ancient Near Eastern Civilization Professor George Heider TR 1:20 PM - 2:35 PM

Many people assume that, since the Bible begins with the story of creation, it is the oldest literature from the oldest civilization in the world. They assume wrong. Biblical Israel emerged in a world of already ancient civilizations on either side, both in Egypt to the west and in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) to the east. This course will trace the history of these civilizations and is designed to meet the interests both of students who are interested for the sake of biblical backgrounds and the context and of students who wish to study the early history of this crucial part of the world for its own sake. The course will feature reading and reflection on a great literary product of that ancient world, humanity's earliest known epic, "Gilgamesh," plus a field trip to the Museum of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago to view artifacts from ancient near eastern civilizations. Students will be given opportunity to shape the major assignment of the course according to their own interests, whether theological or historical. This course is cross listed with HIST-390.

THEO 322: Early Christian Social Thought Associate Professor Lisa Driver MWF 11:55 AM - 12:45 PM

This course will probe how early Christians understood human nature and what actions they took to foster human good in the battle against dehumanization and death. The Bible and Christian texts from the first to fifth centuries will provide a window into how early Christians balanced the tension between mankind's current weakness and its Christ-like potential. Topics may include Christian approaches to marriage, family, education, economics and participation in non-Christian culture. Written evaluation will be balanced between in-class tests and essays on issues.

THEO-328-AX : Martin Luther Professor Ron Rittgers TR 1:20 PM - 2:35 PM

This seminar examines various important aspects of Martin Luther's theology and life, along with their impact on the Christian tradition and western civilization. In the fall of 2010 the seminar will take up Luther's famous debate with Erasmus on the status of the human will. This debate turned on the question of whether the human will has any role to play in salvation. Is the human will in some measure free and thus able to turn to God with the help of divine grace, or is it completely bound by sin and thus unable to cooperate with such grace, requiring instead a more radical divine rescue in which God is the sole actor? Behind this question lay even weightier issues regarding the character of God, the problem of evil, and the proper exegesis of Scripture; in other words, this debate involved the central issues of the Reformation movement itself. This seminar will first examine the historical context of the Luther Erasmus debate, turn to the debate itself, and finally touch on its implications for the subsequent shape of the Reformation movement, which were

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profound. Students are strongly encouraged to take either Reformation Europe (HIST 312/THEO 329) or Reformation Theology (THEO 323) before enrolling in this course; at the very least students should have completed a course on the Christian Tradition (THEO 200/CC 215).

THEO-328-B : Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogues Professor Matthew Becker TR 1:20 PM - 2:35 PM

(Description Forthcoming)

THEO-329-AX : Reformation Europe Professor Ron Rittgers TR 9:45 AM - 11:00 AM

Sixteenth-century Europe witnessed a series of religious revolutions that altered the lives of its inhabitants in profound ways. The Catholic and Protestant Reformations permanently changed the religious, political, social, and economic landscape of early modern Europe, and have significantly shaped the course of western civilization in the modern and post-modern periods. The task of this course is to examine both the causes and the nature of these Reformations in an effort to understand better how they shaped early modern Europe and western civilization as a whole. Attention will be given both to ideas and institutions, significant persons and long-term trends.

THEO 329/529-BX: World Christianity Professor Marcia J. Bunge MWF 11:50 AM - 12:40 PM

(Description Forthcoming)

THEO 330/530-A: Christian Theology in the 18th & 19th Century Linn Marie Tonstad, Lilly Fellow in Humanities and the Arts TR 11:50 AM - 1:05 PM

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries laid the foundations of the world we live in today. With the rise of the modern industrial world, the expansion of settlement in the United States, the colonization of much of the world by European powers, the discovery of evolution, and the revolutions of 1776, 1789 and 1848, these world historical shifts both echoed within and were affected by theological approaches to reality. Issues of knowledge, faith, and certainty as well as desire and will rose to the foreground. Theologians were challenged to make the case for faith in contexts increasingly suspicious of or hostile to religious authority. Questions about what it means to be human in relation to nature and freedom became increasingly pressing as human beings encountered those with different beliefs and life experiences, gained increasing control over the natural world, and began to develop new ideas of political justice. Separation of church and state gave rise to tensions surrounding religious engagement in the public sphere. In this course, we

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will explore some of the most exciting and challenging theological developments of those years, against the background of the philosophical shifts that took place from Kant to Nietzsche. We will read primary texts by authors like Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, and Friedrich Schleiermacher, asking about the development of concepts of religion, the self, knowledge, and God.

No prerequisites are required for this course beyond a willingness to think and read carefully and engage openly with classmates in a discussion of these vital questions. Course requirements will include participating in discussion and writing weekly theses and questions as well as exams and a final paper. (ca. 10 pages).

THEO 332-A: Christian Theology and the Moral Life Lecturer David Weber, Ph.D. TR 9:45 - 11:00 AM

Christian reflection on the moral life considers the relationship between what Christians believe and how Christians ought behave. Of this relationship the poet W. H. Auden observed, "...if the Word was indeed made Flesh, then it is demanded of men that their words and their lives be in concord. Only he who is true can speak the truth. Truth is not ideal or abstract, but concrete." The concrete moral issues considered in this class are Christian community, bioethics, personal fulfillment, and care for the dying.

THEO 333/533-A : Black Theology and Black Church Adjunct Assistant Professor Gregory A. Jones MWF 9:05 - 9:55 AM

This course is designed to expose the student to the African American religious experience as well as the theological and historical journey of Africans in America who evolve religious institutions from that experience. The study will also develop a process of inquiry and understanding of the evolution of theological perspective within the African American religious community.

THEO 343-A : Theology of Marriage and Sexuality Professor James Moore TR 11:50 AM - 1:05 PM

A systematic study of the many issues stemming from contemporary views of marriage and sexuality, the course will be an opportunity to judge a variety of possible theological views, test views with concrete experiences and real issues, and begin the process of forming a personal viewpoint.

THEO 346/546-X: Medical Missions: History, Issues and Challenge Prof. Dr. Christoffer H. Grundmann, John R. Eckrich University TR 2:50 - 4:05 PM

Medical missions, both secular and religious, are held in high esteem. They are looked at as something unquestionably benevolent and thus exert a notable fascination. They stimulate commitment to dedicated service in response to

urgent health-care needs of mainly poor people at home or abroad. While such service is a demonstration of genuine humanitarian concern and solidarity to the common public to Christians medical missions is a kind of tangible witness for God's loving and caring presence amidst all suffering. Christian medical missions' personnel were among the first who realized that relief work is not the sole one purpose of medical missions. The community based care for the prevention of diseases in order to avoid health-disasters especially among the underprivileged like malnutrition, leprosy or AIDS has become part and parcel of any genuine Christian medical missions' concern today.

This course will unravel the coming about of medical missions in 19th century, its subsequent global expansion and its modern development of the Primary Health-Care program (PHC), which finally got accepted as official health-care policy by the World Health Organization (WHO). The rationale of medical missions and the various concepts propagated for its support as well as the controversies it created among mission boards and churches concerned will be discussed in the second part of the course. Special emphasis will be given to the theological arguments implicit in any such dispute like the valuation or devaluation of the human body and its needs as God's creation (and its subsequent repercussions on the belief in the incarnation).

As will be seen, the concept of medical missions provides a powerful critique of conventional perceptions not only of the Christian faith and the practice and theology by the church but of the practice of medicine in general as well. In a final section the

Literature: 1) Christoffer H. Grundmann, *Sent to Heal! - Emergence and development of Medical Missions*, Lanham/Boulder/New York, University Press of America, 2005. 2) Stanley G. Browne, Frank T. Davey, and W.A. R., *Heralds of Health - The Saga of Christian Medical Initiatives*, Thomson, eds., London, Christian Medical Fellowship, 1985. 3) McGilvray, James C., ed. (1979), *The Quest for Health and Wholeness*, German Institute for Medical Missions, Tubingen, 1982. Additional papers and materials will be handed out and availed of during the course of the class.

THEO 348-BX : Social Justice in Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer, and King Linn Marie Tonstad, Lilly Fellow in Humanities and the Arts TR 2:50 - 4:05 PM

The relationship between self and other, the possibility of communities existing in service of the common good, and questions of the nature and shape of social justice remain at the foreground of our shared reality in the contemporary context. These questions take many forms: the requirements and rewards of Christian love, the effect of sin and structural distortions on human relationality, the challenge of cooperation between religious and non-religious persons for the sake of human flourishing, and the need for faithful criticism and action against systems of horror, exclusion, and injustice. Soren Kierkegaard asked the question of love and service to God and neighbor, in a context of placid and self-satisfied Christianity that had lost any sense of the strangeness and otherness of God. Dietrich Bonhoeffer found himself challenged to active resistance against Hitler as a result of his beliefs about God, and his experiences of African-American spirituality and life in community.

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Martin Luther King Jr., considered by many a modern-day saint, was a leader of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States whose transformation into icon has often eclipsed the radical and vital nature of his thought and the increasing intensity of his critique of American militarism toward the end of his life. Both Bonhoeffer and King were martyred for their beliefs.

Studying these three figures together will allow us to think carefully about the challenges and possibilities of Christian approaches to social justice. We will ask questions about violence, action, limited structures and death-bound selves and we will consider the similarities and differences between our own situations in the United States today and those of Kierkegaard in 19th-century Denmark, Bonhoeffer in Nazi Germany, and King in the America of the 1960's and the Vietnam War.

No prerequisites, including religious commitments, are assumed or expected for this course, beyond a willingness to think and read with care, commitment, and openness, in conversation with classmates and the instructor. Course requirements will include weekly theses and questions, two short (4-5pp.) and one longer (10-12pp.) paper.

THEO 353-A: Christian Response to Social Victimization Adjunct Assistant Professor Gregory A. Jones MWF 10:10 - 11:00 AM

The course is designed to develop the critical ability and skills to identify and respond to victims in the social milieu. Key points of perspective will be race, class, and gender, bias as well as abuse of children, elderly, the environment and animals. Key theological discourse on the Christians responsibility with regard to these problems within our culture and society.

THEO 353-B: Theology and Practice of Church Leadership Assistant Professor Renee K. Schoer MWF 2:00 - 2:50 PM

This class will challenge students to examine their own concepts of leadership, study theological themes for leadership, and reflect on different aspects of church leadership in a variety of church settings, including authority, power, partnership, changing perspectives of the church, spiritual life of the leader, ethics, and conflict management. Students will be encouraged to interact with church leaders and observe generational differences in church leadership and management.

Course Objectives: a) Identify and discuss aspects of servant leadership and transforming leadership in the life of the leader and the church. b) Become familiar with the characteristics, challenges, and opportunities that four generations of adults bring to the leadership of the church. c) Reflect on one's own style of conflict management and leadership in light of the course readings. d) Consider and develop strategies to respond to challenges facing churches today including context, membership, stewardship, and discipleship in the 21st century.

Student will interview church leaders, write short reflection papers, participate in class visits to one or more churches, and complete a final paper. An open book mid term exam is also planned.

THEO 361/561-A: Indian Religions and Culture Assistant Professor George Pati TR
11:50 AM - 1:05 PM

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THEO 361/561-B: TR 1:20 - 2:35 PM

This survey course aims to introduce characteristic forms and key concepts of major world religions that have emerged in India through lecture and discussion. It seeks to engage students in a critical understanding of the history, philosophy, and practices of the different traditions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. In particular, this course will trace both conceptual and historical continuities and examine the development of the various religious traditions exploring issues of divinity, ritual practices, festivals, and concepts of salvation through different time periods.

**THEO 363-A: Religions of China and Japan Assistant Professor George Pati
TR 9:45 AM - 11:00 AM**

This survey course aims to introduce characteristic forms and key concepts of religions of China and Japan through lecture and discussion. It seeks to engage students in a critical understanding of the history, philosophy, and practices of the different traditions including Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Shinto, and Japanese Buddhism. In particular, this course will trace both conceptual and historical continuities and examine the development of the various religious traditions exploring issues of divinity, ritual practices, festivals, and concepts of salvation through different time periods.

THEO 367/567-A: Hindu Sacred Texts and Motifs Assistant Professor George Pati
TR 2:50 - 4:05 AM

This course aims to engage in an in-depth examination of Hindu sacred texts from different time periods and understanding the different strands of this complex and diverse tradition known as Hinduism. Keeping in mind both historical continuities and motifs, we will examine a variety of texts in English translation and consider the enduring significance and use of these texts in the lives of Hindus today. In addition, the course will enable students to understand the symbols, philosophies and temple ritual practices based on these texts.
