**Christology (IST 2088) Hybrid Course, Fall 2018**

Gathering Days are October 11th, 1-5 pm & October 12th, 8 am-Noon

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**Course Description**

Understandings of Christ and salvation in Christian theology.

**Course Objectives**

*Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:*

1. Imaginatively engage the content of Christian theology by carefully examining its classical and contemporary content, tasks, and methods; most specifically, with regard to doctrines and traditions concerning the figure of Jesus Christ, such as soteriology, the virgin birth, and the resurrection.
2. Identify and explain issues shaping current debate about the person, work, and relevance of Jesus Christ as both a religious and historical figure.
3. Consider the alternatives to a proposed Christology and recognize when the theological questions or commitments under consideration may need to be restated or even rejected.
4. Address effectively the pragmatic and moral implications of adopting a particular Christology.
5. Demonstrate competence concerning specialized theological vocabulary.
6. Articulate a critical and carefully reasoned Christological statement of one's own with sensitivity to its systematic connections to other doctrines.
7. Understand and characterize theological perspectives other than one's own with accuracy and generosity.

**Required Texts**

Tyron L Inbody. *The Many Faces of Christology*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002.

Kyle Roberts. *A Complicated Pregnancy: Whether Mary Was a Virgin and Why It Matters*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017.

Don Schweitzer. *Contemporary Christologies: A Fortress Introduction*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010.

Amos Yong. *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007.

*Also choose one of the following texts (see Book Review assignment description):*

Wendy Farley. *Gathering Those Driven Away: A Theology of Incarnation*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2011.

Wonhee Anne Joh. *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.

F. LeRon Schults. *Christology and Science*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008.

Kathryn Tanner. *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001.

\*All other assigned readings will be made available through Canvas.\*

**Recommended Resources**

*While each of these texts is part of the Ira J. Taylor Library reference collection, students are encouraged to acquire a personal copy of at least one.*

Justo L. González. *Essential Theological Terms*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.

Donald K. McKim. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms, 2nd Edition*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014.

Ian A. McFarland, et al., eds. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price, eds. *New and Enlarged Handbook of Christian Theology*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003.

**Course Requirements (At a Glance)**

Attendance/Participation 25%

Discussion Starter 10%

Book Review 25%
Group Presentation 5%

Written Report 20%

Constructive Proposal 40%

Prelim. Statement 10%

Final Draft 30%

**Special Needs/ADA Statement**

Iliff engages in a collaborative effort with students with disabilities to reasonably accommodate student needs. Students are encouraged to contact their assigned advisor to initiate the process of requesting accommodations. The advising center can be contacted at advising@iliff.edu or by phone at 303-765-1146. The Disability Services Officer at Iliff is Vince Tango, Associate Dean of Admissions/Student Services, vtango@iliff.edu. For more information, go to the Disability Services in the Master Student Handbook on Bloomfire.

**Policy on Late Assignments**
*Written Documents*: An assignment submitted after its stated deadline will incur a penalty of 5% the assignment’s total value for each 24-hour period it is late. If the instructor does not receive the assignment within 72 hours of its deadline, it will receive no points.

*Forum Posts*: A Discussion Starter posted after the Monday deadline will incur a penalty of 10% the assignment’s total value. If a Discussion Starter still has not been posted within 24 hours of its deadline, it will receive no points.
If a student does not make the first discussion post by the Thursday night deadline, one point will be deducted from the student’s weekly discussion grade for each day the post is late.

**Policies on Academic and Collegial Integrity**

All students are expected to abide by Iliff’s statement on Academic Integrity, as published in the Masters Student Handbook. Any detected plagiarism or cheating on an assignment will result in an automatic penalty of an "F" for that assignment. All participants in this class are expected to be familiar with Iliff’s Core Values.

Proper online and in-class participation consists of contributions that facilitate the stated objectives for this course. The purpose of our learning community is to equip **each** student to articulate a theological perspective and to demonstrate understanding and generosity toward each of our peers, not in the absence of disagreement and passion, but in the midst of them. Accomplishing this purpose demands that all students do their best to discipline themselves concerning the content, frequency, and spirit of what they say:

* The **content** of a quality contribution will depend on the material under discussion, be it an assigned reading, an instructor lecture, or a student presentation. Comments ought to remain relevant to this material and connect with the input and contributions of others. Personal stories and opinions, cultural references, humor -these things all have a place in constructive theological discussion, but only if they clarify or amplify the ideas at the center of an exchange. This is why preparation is key: If everyone is on the same page (sometimes literally), then being understood and understanding others gets that much easier. Also, when disagreeing with a theological proposal, remember that **criticism is not the same as critique**. True critique aims to illuminate the most perceptive or impactful points in another's position rather than remaining content to point out just any detail one might find objectionable.
* Achieving the proper **frequency** of participation is a challenge in all forms of communication, but especially during academic engagement. Many students will need to push themselves to contribute regularly in the face of uncertainty, anxiety, and (yes, sometimes) boredom. Others will have to curb their contribution occasionally because they are naturally verbose or prone to argue. To these students, I can offer no better advice than these words of Dr. Edward Antonio: "Be warned of the dangers of being besotted with the sound of your own voice and the appearance of your own ideas. This can lead to monopolizing the floor, over-participation, irrelevance and the exclusion and silencing of other voices." As the instructor, I will be sure to offer a tactful word of advice to students who habitually fall into one of these patterns of participation.
* By the **spirit** of one's remarks, I have in mind all those things that go into showing **respect** for a conversation partner. For me, it is a notion that brings together tone, intent, and specific types of content. Students should keep their comments free of hatred, slander, or discriminatory remarks. Each of us should be deliberate about which passions and convictions we give expression to in a class setting, rather than be impulsive or overly reactive. Students should almost always anticipate disagreement on sensitive topics and choose words that are charitable towards those with opposing viewpoints. Finally, all participants should use **inclusive language** in writing and in speech. This is not merely an instructor’s preference but an expectation of the institution itself.

**Course Requirements (Detailed Descriptions)**

*Class Participation and Attendance (25% of grade):* The discipline of theology is not merely a study of the history of certain ideas. More importantly, it is an ongoing conversation among persons who are commonly committed to addressing theological problems and questions about what it means to live faithfully in the context of day-to-day life. For that reason, active engagement in online discussions and full attendance during Gathering Days are two essential components of this course. Both the quality and depth of theological conversation depend heavily on the voices involved. Students should enter into online discussions and come to in-class sessions having read all the assigned readings for that day and having thoughtfully considered the key ideas and arguments presented in those readings. For more on what makes a proper contribution to class discussion, see "Policies on Academic and Classroom Integrity."

 The evaluation of a student’s weekly contributions to online discussion forums includes a quantitative requirement. In a typical week, a student ought to contribute at least 3 posts to the current forum, the first reacting to a classmate’s Discussion Starter (see the section below for details) and the others simply being organic and engaged comments or questions. Students are encouraged to post more than this if they would like. The quantitative requirement is just a minimal threshold meant to keep all students active in the course on a weekly basis. Each first post is worth 5 points, and both subsequent posts is worth 2.5 points. In most instances, a post that is on topic and on time will receive full points. The “Course Rhythm” section of the syllabus provides further instructions concerning the basic mechanics of online conversations.

*Discussion Starter (10% of grade):* Before the end of the quarter, each student will contribute one Discussion Starter post. Beginning in Week 2, the Discussion Starters will be the parent posts for our threads of conversation. These more substantial contributions (500-650 words in length) require the student to interpret and analyze one of the assigned readings more closely than one may be able to do in a typical week. An effective Discussion Starter both focuses and stimulates class discussion of that week’s material. The instructor will evaluate these posts according to how well the student performs the following tasks:

* **Identify the distinct contribution to Christology***.* If the reading is an author’s own constructive proposal, name the central thesis of that proposal. If the reading is a survey, state the key insights that bind a group of theologians together. This task often involves distinguishing passages of argument from passages of exposition.
* **Summarize the case to be made in support of this contribution**. If a constructive proposal, what are the most noteworthy points the author makes in support of the thesis statement? If a survey chapter, what are the most compelling reasons to adopt the general approach described there?
* **Raise a question of critical analysis for discussion**. For example, the student might address how the adoption of a particular Christology promises to promote or harm the life of faith communities. Alternatively, one might describe a specific way in which a theological proposal seemed to lack internal coherence or consistency of method. Above all else, this question needs to bring together the student’s strongest interests in the material with what one expects their classmates will be eager to unpack.
* **Revisit and guide the conversation**. A student’s responsibility for illuminating and unpacking the assigned reading does not end with the initial post. One should be prepared to provide additional exposition or analysis of that text if the comments and questions of other students require it. The student will also be expected to follow that week’s other threads of conversation.

As part of the process of organizing these contributions, students should use the electronic sign-up sheet on Canvas at their earliest convenience.
NOTE: There will be no Discussion Starters in Weeks 1, 5, or 6.

*Book Review (25% of grade):* In addition to the 4 common texts required for this course, students must choose a fifth text (Farley, Joh, Schults, or Tanner) which they will engage largely on their own. Students should use the electronic sign-up sheet on Canvas at their earliest convenience. Proper engagement of the selected text will involve the completion of two tasks:

* **Group Presentation during Gathering Days (5%)**. As many as 5 students will review each book. During Gathering Days, all of the students working with the same book will meet in a small group for roughly one hour to discuss their respective interpretations up to that point. For this reason, students should have read roughly half of their selected text before Week 5. Each small group will also make a brief presentation to the rest of the class explaining the basic thesis of the book, the author’s chosen method or approach, and the group’s collective reasons for being excited and/or apprehensive about the author’s constructive proposal. The group will also field questions. As long as these responsibilities are performed, each member will receive full credit for the presentation.
* **Written Report (20%)**. At the beginning of Week 8, each student must submit a 4-to-5-page, double-spaced written report (1” margins all around) detailing one’s critical engagement of the selected text. This document should accomplish the following three tasks. (Credit goes to Dr. Debbie Creamer for the structure of this section and most of its wording):
	+ **Summary/description of text**
		- How would you describe this book to a partner or a friend? What are some of the significant themes this text addresses?
		- What are the author’s key claims and ultimate conclusions? Identify a central thesis if possible.
		- What image of Jesus Christ does the author present? Is more than one image employed constructively?
		- What larger outcomes does this author appear to pursue? In other words, how do they think the world would be improved if the recommendations of this book were put into practice?
	+ **Analysis of text**
		- What do you see as the main strengths of this work?
		- What weaknesses/concerning implications do you find it?
		- Who do you think is the ideal audience for this book?
		- How cogent or internally consistent is the author’s constructive proposal on Christology?
		- How practical are the author’s suggestions for thought and action?
	+ **Creative engagement** – choose one of these two options:
		- How would you **apply** this approach?

Be very specific here – do not just say “I could preach a sermon on it” but tell me specifically what you would do, where you would do it, who you would do it with or for, what your intentions would be, what your ideal outcome would be, etc. Will this proposal work in real life? How can you “flesh it out”?

* + - How would you **extend** this author’s proposal?

If you think the author is on the right track but missed something, what would you fill in? How would you make this a stronger theological statement, and/or apply it to other issues and/or populations? How would you fit this Christology together with other theological doctrines or themes?

Students do not need to engage resources beyond their selected text in order to complete this assignment. However, they may choose to do so (e.g. looking at the author’s other publications or journal reviews of the book). Any additional resources must be cited properly using an established style. Full bibliographic information must be provided in either a footnote or a works cited page.

The written report must be submitted by **11:59pm MT (1:59 am ET) on Monday, October 29th**.

*Constructive Proposal on Christology (40% of grade):* The culminating project of this course is a short paper in which the student provides a carefully reasoned statement of one's personal Christology. This project will be completed in two stages:

* **Preliminary Statement (10%).** At the beginning of Week 3, each student must submit a 1.5-to-2-page, double-spaced document (1” margins all around) providing concise answers to the questions below. This part of the assignment is a task of self-assessment and, in that sense, is meant to be more confessional than academic. Papers that clearly and directly answer all the questions and are submitted on time will receive full credit. Students are encouraged to use the questions themselves as sections headings to structure the document.
	+ What importance or relevance does Christology hold today?
	+ What is the relationship between the Jesus of history and the Christ of theology?
	+ What does it mean to identify Jesus Christ as “savior”?
	+ What does it mean to identify Jesus Christ as “divine”?
	+ What bearing should religious pluralism have on Christology?
	+ How might your social location shape your answers to these questions?

This statement must be submitted by **11:59 pm MT (1:59 am ET) on Monday, September 24th**.

* **Final Draft (30%).** In this roughly 5-page, double-spaced document (1” margins all around), the student must describe a particular understanding of Christology and defend it. Building on the content of the Preliminary Statement, this proposal needs to draw on material from the assigned readings and additional research to substantiate its claims in light of relevant alternatives and possible objections. The method and structure of the paper is up to the student. The instructor will grade the final draft according to the following criteria:
	+ There is a clear, concise, and engaging thesis statement.
	+ The content of the paper includes, but is not limited to, refined answers to the questions addressed in the Preliminary Statement. These answers ought to integrate smoothly into the overall argument of the final draft.
	+ The student makes fair and effective use of academic resources, including the proper use of an established citation style.
	+ The paper is well-organized and intelligibly written, containing little-to-no errors of grammar and spelling.

The final draft must be submitted **by 11:59 pm MT (1:59 am ET) on Monday, November 19th**.

**COURSE RHYTHM**
In my experience, providing students a clear rhythm for a typical class week helps them plan their time in the course more easily. Keep yourself to a regular rhythm as suits your schedule to avoid getting lost. Let me know if you have questions.

**Monday Night**: The module for the current week becomes fully available at 6 pm MT (8 pm ET). The module will include an introductory video by the instructor. The remarks in this video are intended to help frame and inform class discussion.
Discussion forums also open at this time. Starting in Week 2, **Discussion Starters are due by 11:59 pm MT (1:59 am ET)**. (See the Discussion Starter assignment description and sign-up sheet on Canvas.) While all students will have access to the discussion forum at this time, only students providing a Discussion Starters should post before Tuesday. Conversation will benefit from waiting until all that week’s Discussion Starters have been posted.
The deadline for all other written assignments in the course will be 11:59 pm MT (1:59 am ET) on a Monday night. (See Course Calendar for details.)

**Tuesday Morning**: The week's discussion forum is officially open to all students. There will be only one discussion forum in a typical week (Weeks 1 and 5 being the exceptions). Students should watch the instructor’s video introduction to the module and read all Discussion Starters before making their first posts.

**Thursday Night**: Each student’s **first discussion post is due by 11:59 pm MT (1:59 am ET)**. This should be a 150-to-250-word response to one of that week’s Discussion Starters. Strong posts will directly address the content of a Discussion Starter, responding to its exposition of an assigned reading and/or attempting to answer the question(s) it poses. Students should not feel the pressure to make these posts mini-essays in their own right; they should simply be relevant and meaningful statements in an academic conversation. Also, posts may exceed the upper limit stated here. However, keep in mind that the longer a post runs, the more likely it is to put off classmates.

**Friday**: Having given students ample opportunity to engage one another first, the instructor will read all posts made up to that point and contribute as necessary.

**Sunday Night**: **All other discussion posts are due by 11:59 pm MT (1:59 am ET)**, when that week’s forum closes. Each student must provide at least two additional responses per forum (three total) - no length limits. This is a bare minimum requirement; even more posts across any or all of the forum’s threads are encouraged. The only posts that will be marked down are those that are late (see Late Policy) or stray too far afield in their content (also see Policies on Academic and Collegial Integrity).

**Monday Afternoon:**Weekly round-up. After reading over the weekend’s posts, the instructor will post a response video in that week’s module. This response will summarize key points raised during discussion and revisit ideas from the readings that may deserve further attention. Students should watch this video before moving on to the next week’s module or forum. The course rhythm starts over later that evening.

*Week 5 Exception (Gathering* Days)
There will be no online discussion forums during the week of October 8th. There will still be assigned readings, but the work we do with that material will take place in on-campus sessions on October 11th and 12th.

**COURSE CALENDAR**

NOTE: The contents of this schedule are subject to change

**Week 1 – Introductions and Beginnings**

* Kyle Roberts, *A Complicated Pregnancy*.
* The syllabus in its entirety.

**Week 2 – Considerations of History, Tradition, and Revelation**DISCUSSION STARTERS BEGIN

* Laurel Schneider and Stephen G. Ray, Jr., Awake to the Moment, Introduction (1-18).
* Tyron Inbody, The Many Faces of Christology, Preface & Chs. 1-2 (7-68).
* Don Schweitzer, Contemporary Christologies, Introduction & Ch. 1 (1-32).
* Recommended: Jarislov Pelikan, Jesus through the Centuries, Intro & Ch. 1 (1-33).

**Week 3 – A Liberal/Conservative Divide?**
PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS ON CHRISTOLOGY DUE

* *Many Faces*, Chs. 3-4 (69-114).
* Contemporary Christologies, Ch. 2 (33-52).

**Week 4 – A Closer Look at Soteriology**

* Alister McGrath, Theology: The Basics, Ch. 5 (81-101).
* Walter Lowe, "Christ and Salvation" (222-248).
* Roger Haight, *Jesus, Symbol of God*, Ch. 5 (119-151).

**Week 5 - Gathering Days**

*October 11th - The Implications of Human Suffering and Abuse for Soteriology*

* *Many Faces*, Ch. 6 (139-164).
* Mary J. Streufert, “*Solus Christus* within Empire: Christology in the Face of Violence against Women” (223-232).
* *Contemporary Christologies*, Chs. 3-4 (55-98).

*October 12th -* GROUP PRESENTATIONS *on Book Review Texts*

* Read about half of the text selected for the Book Review assignment.
* Reread assignment descriptions for Book Review and Constructive Proposal.

**Week 6 – Queering Christology**

* Thomas Bohache, *Christology from the Margins*, Ch. 11 & Epilogue (230-261).

**Week 7 – A Closer Look at Gender in Christology**

* *Many Faces*, Ch. 5 (115-138).
* Kwok Pui-Lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*, Ch. 7 (168-185).
* A. Elaine Crawford, “Womanist Christology and the Wesleyan Tradition” (213-220).

**Week 8 – Redemption through the Lens of Disability**
BOOK REVIEWS DUE

* John Swinton, “Disability Theology” (140-141).
* Amos Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome*, Chs. 6-8 (151-258).
* *Recommended*: *Theology and Down Syndrome*, Chs. 1-2 (1-42).

**Week 9 – Challenges of Religious Pluralism**

* *Many Faces*, Chs. 7-8 (165-212).
* *Contemporary Christologies*, Ch. 5 (99-126).
* Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, "Christian Redemption between Colonialism and Pluralism” (269-302).

**Week 10 – Ends and Endings**
NOTE: Discussion forum closes Friday, November 16, the official end of Fall classes

* *Contemporary Christologies*, Conclusion (127-142).
* Theology and Down Syndrome, Ch. 9 & Epilogue (259-295).

Constructive Proposal on Christology Due by **11:59 pm MT (1:59 am ET) on Monday, October 29th**.