REFLECTIONS ON GOD: EXERCISES IN ANALYTIC THEOLOGY

Syllabus:

This course consists in a study of the methods and insights of analytic theology. It aims to provide the student the opportunity to reflect upon and develop his or her own thought with respect to the nature and action of God, through engagement with other students and a wide range of thinkers writing in the analytic mode.

We will proceed through a series of theological loci relating to language about and knowledge of God, as well as various conceptions and analyses of God’s existence, nature, attributes, and action.

Requirements and Expectations:

Each student is expected to attend each class on time, having completed the assigned reading prior to class and prepared to contribute to class discussion. Each student is also expected to fulfill the following written requirements:

1. Two reflection papers, 5-6 pages in length, designed to initiate discussion of a given set of assigned readings (dates to be submitted during the second class session with no more than one student per reading assignment). Each paper should be submitted to the entire class at least 48 hours before the scheduled class presentation. Papers should be revised in light of class discussion and instructor feedback, and the final version returned no later than one week following the presentation. The bulk of each paper should consist not in summary but in critical reflection, focusing on one or at most two central ideas: what did the writer get right? What might you challenge and why? What avenues are available in terms of trying to resolve any of these issues?

2. Two response papers, 2-3 pages in length, reflecting critically and constructively upon another student’s reflection paper.

3. The class will be divided into three groups. Each group will be responsible for an outline designed to initiate discussion during one of the “Systematic Theology Workshop” sessions. To that end, the group is expected to work together outside of class, prior to their session, comparing and contrasting the assigned reading for the “workshop” with that from the preceding session(s) on the given topic, and asking what the former (the assigned reading for the “workshop”) might have to say to the Analytic thinkers.

4. A term paper on a topic selected by the student in consultation with the instructor. The paper should be 18-20 pages in length. A summary of the proposed topic and a preliminary bibliography will be due on Sept. 22.

Required Texts:


• All other readings will be available on blackboard, elsewhere on the internet, or on reserve at the library.

Schedule:
January 10: Prolegomena I: Introduction and overview of the course; Lecture: Analytic Philosophy and Theology; Religious Belief and Reason.


January 17: Prolegomena II: Religious Belief and Reason; Analytic Reflection and Theology


January 24: Systematic Theology Workshop I: Aquinas and Barth on Analytic Theology; Reflections on Divine Being and Nature.


Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogium*, preface, chs. I-III. [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anselm/basic_works.iii.i.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anselm/basic_works.iii.i.html)

**Jan. 31:** Reflections on the Trinity: Persons, Substance, and (Tri-)Unity

**Reading:** William P. Alston, “Substance and the Trinity,” in *The Trinity* (1999), 179-201


**Feb. 7:** Divine Attributes I: Necessity and Simplicity


Brian Davies, “Simplicity,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Philosophical Theology*, 31-45


**Feb. 14:** Divine Attributes II: God, Time, and Space

**Reading:**


**Feb. 21:** Divine Attributes IV: God, Power, and Divine Action

**Reading:**

**Feb. 28:** Divine Attributes V: Divine Knowledge and the Future; Foreknowledge and Freedom
Reading: Alan Rhoda, “The Philosophical Case for Open Theism,” *Philosophia* 35 (2007), 301-311;

“Timelessness, Freedom and Foreknowledge.”

March 6: Creation: Providence, Freedom and Evil


March 13: Systematic Theology Workshop II: Augustine on Analytic Theology and God's Nature
Reading: Augustine, *Confessions*, bks. VII, XI, XII, XIII.(1)-(12);

Optional: Augustine, *City of God*, bk. XI.10, 21;

March 20: Divine Action and Creation; Divine Action and Modern Science


**EASTER BREAK—March 26-April 6**

**April 10:** Divine Love and Goodness; Divine Revelation


William Abraham, *Crossing the Threshold of Divine Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2006), chs. 5 (p. 79-94);


**April 17:** Reflections on God and Incarnation; Faith and Reason
**Reading:** Marilyn McCord Adams, “Christ as God-Man, Metaphysically Construed,” in *Oxford Readings in Philosophical Theology, Volume 1*, ed. Michael Rea (Oxford University Press, 2009), 239-266;


Howard Snyder, “Was Jesus Mad, Bad, or God?...or Merely Mistaken?” in *Oxford Readings in Philosophical Theology, Volume 1*, ed. Michael Rea (Oxford University Press, 2009), 186-210;


**April 24:** Systematic Theology Workshop III: Athanasius on Analytical Theology: Divine Nature and the Incarnation

**Reading:** Athanasius, *Discourses Against the Arians*, Discourse I.§1-36 (ch. I-X). ([link](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf204.xxi.ii.i.html));

________, *On the Incarnation of the Word*. §1-32 ([link](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf204.vii.ii.i.html))

**May 1:** Pneumatology, Faith and Reason


**May 8:** God and *Telos*; Analytic Theology: Where do we go from here?


________, “Universalism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology* (2008), 446-461;


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**Term Paper due May 15th.**