

**CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY  
COS #522**

**COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL OF OHIO  
West Virginia Extension  
Spring Heights Education Center  
Summer Term B, 2020**

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## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

*Critical reflection upon significant individuals, movements, decisive events, and fundamental tenants of the Christian faith which in the past century, or so, have shaped contemporary theologies. Through study of varied theological expressions in modern decades, the student enters into the church's enduring task of interpreting, articulating, and enacting the gospel for contemporary life. Attention will be given to selected primary sources.*

*\*Students will be able to:*

- *Understand the origins and theological tenets of liberalism from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, including its influence on ecumenism and process theology.*
- *Understand and distinguish reactions to liberalism, including Fundamentalism, Neo-Orthodoxy, and Evangelicalism.*
- *Understand the historical development and theology of the Holiness Movement, Pentecostalism, and the Charismatic Movement.*
- *Understand the origins and tenets of Liberation and Contextual theologies*

(from COS Spring Heights, Student Handbook &  
\* Objectives, COS Revised Curriculum-2014)

## II. TEXTBOOKS:

### **Required Reading:**

Caputo, John, *What Would Jesus Deconstruct?*, Baker Book House, 2007;  
ISBN:9780801031366.

Migliore, Daniel, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, Wm.B.Eerdmans, 2014  
ISBN: 9780802871855.

Hordern, William E., *A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology (revised edition)*,  
Wipf/Stock Publishers,Oregon, 2002, (originally MacMillan, 1955); ISBN: 157910925X

Miller, Ed. L & Grenz, Stanley J., *Fortress Introduction to Contemporary Theologies*,  
Augsburg/Fortress, Minneapolis, 1998; ISBN: 9780800629816.

### **Reference: (Recommended)**

Bettenson, Henry & Maunder, Chris: *Documents of the Christian Church*, Oxford  
University Press, 2011; ISBN: 9780199568987.

## **REQUIRED SELECTIONS:**

**NOTE:** Student will select **one** of the following to review, reflect, and analyze in a paper:  
(**selection of one is required reading, others supplemental**)

Cone, James, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, Orbis Books, New York, 1986 (original 1970); ISBN: 9781570758959.

Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schussler, *In Memory of Her (A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins)*, Crossroad, New York, 1990 (original 1983); ISBN: 0824506677

Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation – History, Politics, and Salvation*, Orbis Books, New York, 1988 (original 1973); ISBN: 0883445425

## **III. GOAL OF COURSE:**

This course will seek to assist the student to understand significant individuals, movements, events and theological developments from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present. The intention will be to integrate learnings into the student's context of ministry, and assist in developing theological thinking in light of the integration. The course asks why, what is involved, what is learned from contemporary theologies that form and inform the work of professional ministry.

## **IV. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:**

- The class will examine and discuss the significant individuals, movements, events and theological developments from the nineteenth century to the present.
- Students will improve their theological skills through biblical reflection, formative reading, focused dialogue and discussion, critical reflection, and discussion of contextual integration.
- The student will explore a variety of contemporary theologies, and specifically select one theology to review, reflect, examine analytically, and show how integrated into their own theology & practice of ministry.

V. CALENDAR OF CLASS & TOPICS AND READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS:

**August 21-23, 2020**

**ASSIGNMENTS prior to the weekend:**

**A. Introduction-Theological Autobiography (ITA) -- (due Friday, August 21)**

*(see detail of assignment – syllabus page 7, section VII.B)*

**B. Reflection paper #1 - “theology, revelation, Scripture” (due Friday, August 21)**

Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding, Prefaces & pp.1-65

*(see detail of assignment – syllabus page 7-8 , section VII.C)*

**C. READ prior to this weekend:**

- Hordern, A Layman’s Guide to Protestant Theology - Intro & pp. 1-149
- Miller/Grenz, Intro to Contemporary Theologies - pp. 1-34
- Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding – Prefaces & pp. 1-66, 66-94; & Appendix B: pp. 390-403.

**Friday – August 21**

- Class Session 1 (evening)

Introductions  
Syllabus review/assignments  
Contemporary theology?  
“theological method”

**Saturday – August 22**

- Class Session 2 (morning)

Orthodoxy –Growth & threats

- Class Session 3 (afternoon)

Defense of Orthodoxy  
Conservative  
Pentecostal & Holiness movements

**Sunday – August 23**

- Class Session 4 (morning)

Liberalism  
Karl Barth  
Paul Tillich

**Written assignments due (before next class):**

Reflection paper #2 - “pluralism and hope” **(due by mail/ or email, October 1)**

Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding, pp.314-374

*(see detail of assignment – syllabus page 8, section VII.C)*

**ASSIGNMENTS prior to the weekend:**

- A. Reflection paper #2 - “pluralism & hope” (due by mail/email October 1)**  
Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding, pp.314-374
- B. Reflection paper #3 - Caputo’s book (due Friday at class, October 23)**  
Caputo, John D. What Would Jesus Deconstruct?  
(see detail of assignment – syllabus page 8 , section VII.C)
- C. READ prior to this weekend:**
- Hordern, A Layman’s Guide to Protestant Theology - pp. 150-258
  - Miller/Grenz, Intro to Contemporary Theologies - pp. 87-123; 142-176
  - Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding, “new community”, pp. 259-285;  
“pluralism and hope”, pp. 314-374

**Friday – October 23**

- Class Session 1 (evening) Review Karl Barth  
Neo-orthodoxy  
Reinhold Niebuhr  
“rediscovery of orthodoxy”

**Saturday – October 24**

- Class Session 2 (morning) The World  
Dietrich Bonhoeffer  
Ecumenism
- Class Session 3 (afternoon) Feminist Theology  
Liberation Theology

**Sunday – October 25**

- Class Session 4 (morning) Post modernism  
Where are we?  
Our task as theologians?

**NOTE: Final paper due to instructor by *Sunday, November 8 (11:59pm)* mail or email.**

**PROVIDE A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE FOR RETURN TO YOU**

(see page 8, syllabus for instructions regarding the Final paper)

## VI. CLASS STANDARDS:

### A. Wesleyan “Rule of Life”:

- Do no harm
- Do good
- Attend to ordinances of God (spiritual discipline).

*(General Rules, Discipline 2012)*

### B. Inclusive language

It is expected that students be committed to equality for women and men of every racial and ethnic background. Students and instructor are to use language which exemplifies respect, dignity and equality in conversations with colleagues, in public discourse, in classroom discussions and in writings. Class participants will be expected to use inclusive language in all writings and during class discussion & participation. If you have specific questions, please see the instructor. (Helpful resource, *Words that Hurt, Words that Heal (new edition)* (Cokesbury.com download, original 1980 resource)

### C. Academic Integrity

Student integrity regarding all work assigned in this class is a basic expectation of the learning community. (see page 31, *COS Student Handbook, 2013* – “Academic responsibility”) Also, guidelines for writing, page 25, *COS Handbook*.

### D. Attendance

Instructor expects timely participation of students; tardiness is a sign of disrespect to others. Extenuating circumstances should be reported to instructor and COS Dean immediately. (see COS Attendance Policy – page 15, *COS Student Handbook, 2013*)

### E Confidentiality

It is imperative that students do not share information that is confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature. In addition, students are expected to honor the privacy and confidentiality of their classmates by not disclosing conversations with those outside of the classroom.

## VII. ASSIGNMENTS, GRADING, AND EVALUATION:

**Note: All assignments are due and expected on time. (If because of some extenuating circumstances you are unable to meet a given deadline, you must contact the instructor before the deadline in question is expected. Failure to do so will result in a lower grade for the assignment.)** **No Incomplete grade can be granted in this class.**

*Helpful hint - make a copy of all written work mailed and turned in to instructor.*

- A. **Class participation (25% of final grade)** COS requires that students attend all class sessions in order to receive credit for the course. No “cuts” or “excused absences” are allowed for church, community, family or other business. In extreme cases, such as serious illness or a family emergency, an additional paper on the reading material of the missed session will be required and negotiated with the instructor.

- a) Timely, careful reading and completion of assignments in preparation for class participation is expected.
- b) Class discussion through verbal contributions including any small group is expected; respectful and hospitable listening to contributions by others is a class norm. It is the duty of each class member to contribute regularly to discussions without monopolizing the time.

**B. Introduction-Theological Autobiography (ITA) (20% of final grade) -- (due Friday, August 21)**

An autobiography (ITA) must be submitted on the first day of class (Friday, March 20). The paper must be 6-8 pages long, double spaced. No more than 8 pages. The following guidelines are provided to help organize your thoughts: *(you do not need to use this order, but your paper must include these themes; be creative; those with an asterisk \* must be answered)*

- What is briefly your family history? Family of origin?
- Describe succinctly any significant central events in your life.
- When were you first aware of God? How and who invited you to become a disciple of Jesus Christ? How did it happen? What have been a few of the major events in your walk with Christ?
- \*What significant religious, spiritual, theological concepts have formed your calling into ministry?
- What influence has Scripture and the Church had on your life?
- \*How would you describe your present basic theological position or stance?
- \*Can you name individuals, movements, theologies and doctrines that have formed you to the present?
- \*What theological & cultural biases, prejudices, and assumptions do you bring to this class?
- What are the growing edges of your life? How have your growing edges, and areas of change impacted your entry into and experience of ministry?

**C. Reading reflection papers (three) (30% of final grade) - each paper 10%**

**Required reading:** Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding;  
Caputo, What Would Jesus Deconstruct?

**1. All three papers are to be individually 3-5 pages in length – no more than 5 pages;**

**2. Two will be based on reading, Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding;**

NOTE: Based on the assigned reading, these two papers should address the following questions:

- State a brief review of the topic of the assigned reading;
- What issue or issues are raised for you from the reading?
- What do you agree with in Migliore's writing?
- What do you disagree with and why?
- What one learning, for you, can you lift up from the assigned reading?

**Reflection paper #1 - “theology, revelation, Scripture” (due Friday at class, August 21)**

Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding, Prefaces & pp.1-65

**Reflection paper #2 - “pluralism & hope” (due by mail/ or email, October 1)**

Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding, pp.314 – 374

3. The third reflection paper will be based on Caputo, What Would Jesus Deconstruct?

**Reflection paper #3 - Caputo book (due Friday at class, October 23)**

- Give a brief overview summary of the assigned reading; ( this no more than 1 page)
- What issue or issues are raised for you from the reading?
- What do you agree with in Caputo’s writing?
- What do you disagree with and why?
- What one learning, for you, can you lift up from the assigned reading?

**D. Final Paper – Book Review & Theological Overview (25% of final grade)**

**Paper due by mail or email to instructor by Sunday, November 8 (11:59pm) mail or email** NOTE: Provide a self addressed stamped envelope for paper to be returned to you if mailed.

- 1) Student is to select one of the following books to read, review, report and reflect by a report:

Cone, James, A Black Theology of Liberation, Orbis Books, New York, 1986 (original 1970); ISBN: 9781570758959.

Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schussler, In Memory of Her (A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins), Crossroad, New York, 1990 (original 1983); ISBN: 0824506677

Gutierrez, Gustavo, A Theology of Liberation – History, Politics, and Salvation, Orbis Books, New York, 1988 (original 1973); ISBN: 0883445425

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