



Introduction to Theology

Course Syllabus – Fall 2020

Basic Information

Class meetings: Mondays, 18:30 – 21:30 EEST; after 25 October: Mondays, 18:30 – 21:30 EET

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Charles Lloyd Cortright, located in Riga, Latvia

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Introduction to Theology

Description:

INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY. A study of the basic principles of Christian theology in the confessional Lutheran tradition, including surveys of biblical, historical, systematic, and applied theology.

Introduction to Theology is a free, online course that provides an overview of confessional Lutheran theology for individuals interested in exploring further study in Lutheran theology. There is no tuition; the course is offered for free and is designed to help students assess their interest and aptitude for theology and for exploring Lutheran ministry.

Goals and Objectives

Participants in this course will . . .

- ✠ review or become acquainted with theology as an academic discipline along with its various divisions.
- ✠ review or become broadly acquainted with the books and contents of both the Old and New Testaments (= “isagogics”).
- ✠ become broadly acquainted with the history of the interpretation of Scripture in the Christian church and gain an appreciation for the method of interpretation (= “hermeneutics”) used in confessional Lutheranism.
- ✠ become broadly acquainted with the history of the Christian church with emphasis on the western church.
- ✠ understand the basics and specialized vocabulary by which the Lutheran church expresses the truths of Scripture (= “dogmatics”).
- ✠ survey the major doctrines of the orthodox Christian faith, the terms by which they are expressed, and their impact in the life and worship of the church.
- ✠ read and apply the insights of Bo Giertz’s *The Hammer of God* as an expression of Lutheran Christocentricity and Luther’s “theology of the cross.”

Course Procedure

This course emphasizes reading and mastery of the basic concepts and terminology of theology in English. The online sessions will use presentations by the instructor, discussions, etc. The course is organized in five units of material. Each unit stresses a particular area of theological study. Units one and two stress *biblical studies*; unit three focuses on *historical theology*; unit four examines *dogmatic theology*; and unit five is a capstone unit that integrates the course's material via reading Bo Giertz's novel, *The Hammer of God*.

PREPARING FOR CLASS/ CLASS COMMUNICATION

Preparation for class will involve reading assigned material taken from the Bible, the course texts, or collateral readings. These reading assignments are listed in the course schedule below and on a "Session page" which will guide each session. These reading assignments will serve to introduce material that will be discussed in class, illustrate concepts, and introduce you to material from the Holy Scriptures, etc. You should stay current in your reading and preparation for the class.

All class handouts, collateral readings, etc. will be placed on **Canvas** the course's "Learning Management System [LMS]." Canvas is a free service that will host our course's materials, handouts, etc. All materials used in the course (except for the course's books) will be housed on Canvas and will be accessible to you. Instruction on how to access and use Canvas will be done as part of the opening session of the class.

The website: www.thelivonianlutheranproject.com will also be used in connection with the class. Always check your email and the website to stay current with course communications.

DURING CLASS SESSIONS

Our online sessions will use **Zoom** as the platform on which the class meetings and presentations will be made. An invitation link will be sent to you to join the class session in your time zone.

Most of our sessions will include some or all of the following:

- ✦ an online reading quiz to be completed at home before class to check your understanding of material
- ✦ a presentation by the professor
- ✦ class questions and discussion

Reading quizzes/Study guides

Since our course does not carry academic credit, you will not receive a "grade" for the course. However, **Reading quizzes** on assigned readings will be given for many of the individual sessions. Not all sessions will include a reading quiz. The reading quizzes are for you to use to check your understanding of reading material. First, read the assigned material; then take the quiz without referring back to the reading. Use the results to review your grasp of the material. Ask questions about material that is not clear to you.

For some sessions, assigned readings will include a Study Guide [SG] for you to prepare before

class. Study guides and quizzes are indicated in the Course Schedule below. They will be posted on the course LMS, **Canvas**.

Instructor presentation

The course schedule below outlines the daily focus of my presentation for each class meeting. These presentations are made via power-point and are the primary source of instruction for the course. Presentations will be accompanied by a handout posted on **Canvas**—called a **Session page**—for your guidance. Make your own notes in addition.

Questions and discussion

This is YOUR class and is meant to serve YOU. Your questions are encouraged. While time and format may limit what we are able to do together, we want to engage the course's material as fully as possible.

REVIEW EXAMINATIONS

Four unit review examinations will be available for you to use test your overall comprehension. Why take these examinations? These are purely for you to be able to check your understanding of each unit's material and you ability to function in English in the course. The review examinations will be placed on **Canvas** for you to use along with an "answer key" to check your results. I am interested in your results and will be happy to discuss them with you.

Technology and Texts

You will need a stable, high-speed internet connection and the ability to operate in an online environment. You will need to register to use **Canvas**. Instructions for using the LMS and **Zoom** will be given.

The course will use the following English texts:

Electronic (Kindle) versions of the required texts are easiest to obtain via an account with www.amazon.com. The Kindle versions will be the texts used for reference purposes by the instructor. Note: Amazon.com provides an electronic book reader program for download for free.

The Lutheran Study Bible [LSB]. Kindle edition. The LSB uses the Evangelical Standard Version (ESV) translation of the Bible. The ESV will be the English translation used throughout the course. The notes, introductions, and other features of the LSB will also be referenced in the course. (Note: the LSB will also be used in the Luther Academy-Rīga English-language Bachelor of Theology program.)

Please do not substitute other English translations or study Bible versions for the Lutheran Study Bible.

Giertz, Bo. **The Hammer of God: A Novel about the Cure of Souls**. Revised edition. Clifford A. Nelson, trsl. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2005. Kindle edition available. Please be sure to obtain the revised edition.

González, Justo L. **Church History: An Essential Guide**. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996. Kindle edition available.

Veith, Gene Edward, Jr. **The Spirituality of the Cross: The Way of the First Evangelicals**. Revised edition. St. Louis: Concordia, 2010. Kindle edition available. Please be sure to obtain the revised edition.

Students are responsible for purchasing their own texts. Students may apply to the Eurasia LCMS Region for financial assistance for book purchases. Contact the instructor for information.

Policies

Participants (hereafter, “students”) taking Introduction to Theology agree to the following understandings and conditions of the course:

- ✦ The course is offered “live” at the time scheduled by the instructor.
- ✦ Students agree to faithfully complete all readings and assignments. Students may withdraw at any time from the course; please notify the instructor of your withdrawal.
- ✦ Students agree to take examinations as described and scheduled in this course syllabus.
- ✦ Students must supply their own computer or other suitable device and high-speed internet connection for the course.
- ✦ Students are expected to obtain all required texts at their own cost; students needing assistance in purchasing texts may apply for it by contacting the instructor. Such assistance will be given at the sole decision of the Eurasia Mission Region-LCMS leadership.

Copyright of materials:

This syllabus and all handouts, power-point slides, test-prep materials, tests, etc. connected with this course are copyrighted intellectual property. By enrolling in **Introduction to Theology** you have permission to download for your use this copyrighted material. However, all rights are reserved, and this material may not be further copied, posted online, sold, or otherwise provided to any third party without express permission of the various copyright holders. Copyright laws and fair use policies protect the rights of those who have produced the materials used in this course. The copies in this course have been provided for private study, scholarship, or research. Other uses may require permission from the individual copyright holders. The user of this work is responsible for adhering to copyright law of the United States (Title 17, U.S. Code). The instructor assumes no responsibility for individuals who improperly use copyrighted material.

Course Schedule and Outline

Every effort will be made to adhere to the schedule below. However, the schedule is subject to adjustment as necessary. Changes will be announced in class and online; please keep informed of announced changes and adjustments.

Reading assignments are listed for you in the schedule below and also at the bottom of the “Session Page” you will receive the week before each class day.

Date	Topics, Exams, Reading assignments
Unit I: Introduction; Biblical Theology – The Old Testament	
Monday September 21	
Session 1: 18:30-19:20 (All times are GMT +2)	TOPICS: Introductions; orientation; review of course syllabus PREPARE: read the course syllabus
Session 2: 19:30-20:20	TOPIC: Introductions; orientation; review of course syllabus, continued.
Session 3: 20:30-21:20	TOPIC: Introducing the study of Theology PREPARE: read “The Task of Theology” (posted on Canvas); take Quiz 1
Monday September 28	
Session 4: 18:30-19:20	TOPICS: Biblical Theology: text, versions, translations... PREPARE: read “Texts and Versions” (posted on Canvas); take Quiz 2
Session 5: 19:30-20:20	TOPIC: Biblical Theology: hermeneutics (interpretation) PREPARE: read “Understanding and Handling Scripture Authentically”; take Quiz 3
Session 6: 20:30-21:20	TOPIC: Moses and the Torah PREPARE: <i>Lutheran Study Bible [LSB]</i> Introduction to Genesis, pages 8-11; Genesis 1 – 3; 12; 15; 22; Exodus 1:16-6:12; 11:1 – 14:31; 19:16 – 20:17; take Quiz 4
Monday October 05	
Session 7: 18:30-19:20	TOPIC: The History of Israel PREPARE: read “The History of Israel”; also Psalms 105, 106; Acts 7:1 – 8:1; take Quiz 5
Session 8: 19:30-20:20	TOPIC: The poetic and wisdom literature of Israel PREPARE: read Job 1 – 3; Psalms 1, 51, 95, 103; Ecclesiastes 3:1-14; 12:1-14; take Quiz 6
Session 9: 20:30-21:20	TOPIC: The Prophets PREPARE: read Isaiah 1:1-20; 52:13 – 53:12; Jeremiah 23; Ezekiel 37:1-14; Micah 6:1-8; Habakkuk (entire); take Quiz 7
	“Flex session”- we will use this session to complete Unit 1 and review
Monday October 05	
Session 10: 18:30-19:20	“Flex session”- we will use this session to complete Unit 1 and review TAKE REVIEW EXAMINATION ONE at home
Unit II: Biblical Theology – The New Testament	
Monday October 05	
Session 11: 19:30-20:20	TOPIC: New Testament Introduction (Isagogics): The Gospel PREPARE: read Matthew 1, 2; Luke 1, 2; take Quiz 8
Session 12: 20:30-21:20	TOPIC: The Life of Christ PREPARE: Read Mark (entire); take Quiz 9
Monday October 12	
Session 13: 18:30-19:20	TOPIC: The Apostolic Age PREPARE: Acts 1 -12; take Quiz 10

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- Session 14: 19:30-20:20** **TOPIC:** The Epistles of Paul
PREPARE: read Acts 13; Galatians (entire); take Quiz 11
- Session 15: 20:30-21:20** **TOPIC:** The General (“Catholic”) Epistles
PREPARE: read Hebrews 1-5; 2 Peter (entire); take Quiz 12

Monday October 19

- Session 16: 18:30-19:20** **TOPIC:** Book of Revelation
PREPARE: read Revelation (entire); take Quiz 13
- Session 17: 19:30-20:20** **TOPIC:** Closing of the canon; the Intertestamental era
PREPARE: read “The Time Between the Testaments”; take Quiz 14
- Session 18: 20:30-21:20** “Flex session”- we will use this session to complete Unit 2 and review
TAKE REVIEW EXAMINATION TWO at home

Unit III: Historical Theology

Monday October 26 **NOTE: EEDT moves to standard time (EET) on 25 October; check for any adjustment to synchronizing with your local time zone.**

- Session 19: 18:30-19:20** **TOPIC:** Introduction to the eras of Church History
READ: Gonzalez, “Overview”; prepare Gonzalez Study Guide [SG] #1
- Session 20: 19:30-20:20** **TOPIC:** The Ancient Church
READ: Gonzalez, “The Ancient Church”; prepare SG 2
- Session 21: 20:30-21:20** **TOPIC:** The Empire Church
READ: Gonzalez, “The Christian Empire”; prepare SG 3

Monday November 02

- Session 22: 18:30-19:20** **TOPIC:** The Early Middle Ages
READ: Gonzalez, “The Early Middle Ages”; prepare SG 4
- Session 23: 19:30-20:20** **TOPIC:** The High and Late Middle Ages
READ: Gonzalez, “The High Point of the Middle Ages” and “The Late Middle Ages”; prepare SG 5
- Session 24: 20:30-21:20** **TOPIC:** Exploration and Reformation
READ: Gonzalez, “Conquest and Reformation”; prepare SG 6

Monday November 09

- Session 25: 18:30-19:20** **TOPIC:** Exploration and Reformation (continued)
READ: Gonzalez, “Conquest and Reformation”; prepare SG 6
- Session 26: 19:30-20:20** **TOPIC:** The Modern Era, 1600 – 1914
READ : Gonzalez, “The 17th and 18th Centuries” and “The 19th Century”;
prepare SG 6
- Session 27: 20:30-21:20** “Flex session”- we will use this session to complete Unit 3 and review
TAKE REVIEW EXAMINATION THREE at home

Unit IV: Dogmatic Theology

Monday November 16

Session 28: 18:30-19:20 **TOPICS:** Formal principle; confessional principle
READ: Veith, *Spirituality of the Cross*, pages 15-22; “The Lutheran Confessions,” take Quiz 15

Session 29: 19:30-20:20 **TOPIC:** Theology proper (God)
READ: “The Ecumenical Creeds”; take Quiz 16

Session 30: 20:30-21:20 **TOPIC:** Theological anthropology (man)
READ: “On Original Sin”; take Quiz 17

Monday November 23

Session 31: 18:30-19:20 **TOPIC:** Sin and grace
READ: “Law and Gospel”; take Quiz 18

Session 32: 19:30-20:20 **TOPIC:** Christology
READ: “Towards Chalcedon”; take Quiz 19

Session 33: 20:30-21:20 **TOPIC:** Christology (continued)

Monday November 30

Session 34: 18:30-19:20 **TOPIC:** Conversion and justification
READ: Veith, *Spirituality of the Cross*, chapter 1; prepare Veith SG 1

Session 35: 19:30-20:20 **TOPIC:** The Means of Grace I
READ: Veith, *Spirituality of the Cross*, chapter 2; prepare Veith SG 2

Session 36: 20:30-21:20 **TOPIC:** The Means of Grace II
READ: Veith, *Spirituality of the Cross*, chapter 3; prepare Veith SG 3

Monday December 07

Session 37: 18:30-19:20 **TOPIC:** The Church and her Ministry
READ: “The Church”; take Quiz 20

Session 38: 19:30-20:20 **TOPIC:** The civil estate, vocation, marriage
READ: Veith, *Spirituality of the Cross*, chapter 4; take Quiz 21

(No 3rd session) **TAKE REVIEW EXAMINATION FOUR at home**

Unit V: The Hammer of God (Novellas I & II)

Monday December 14

Session 39: 18:30-19:20 **TOPIC:** *Hammer of God* Introduction; Pietism
READ: *Hammer of God*, pages xi-xxxii

Session 40: 19:30-20:20 **DISCUSSION:** *Hammer of God* 1
READ: *Hammer of God*, pages 3 – 42; prepare SG 1

Session 41: 18:30-19:20 **DISCUSSION:** *Hammer of God* 2
READ: *Hammer of God*, pages 43-110; prepare SG 2

Monday December 21

Session 42: 18:30-19:20 **DISCUSSION:** *Hammer of God 3*
READ: *Hammer of God*, pages 113-151; prepare SG 3

Session 43: 19:30-20:20 **DISCUSSION:** *Hammer of God 4*
READ: *Hammer of God*, pages 153-192; prepare SG 4

COURSE CLOSURE

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