

**ST. NORBERT COLLEGE  
DE PERE, WI  
FALL 2018**



**COURSE: Christology**

**DATES:** Sept 1 (online), Sept 8, Sept 29, Oct 13, Oct 27, Nov 10, Dec 1

**TIME:** 8:30a-12:30p

**LOCATION:** Mulva Library 218

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Kathleen Gallagher Elkins

**EMAIL:** kathleen.gallagherelkins@snc.edu

**PHONE:** 920-403-3207 (but I'm much faster by email than by phone!)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The central question of all Christian theology is Jesus' challenge, "Who do you say that I am?" The Christian community in every age has explored the question and attempted to answer it in light of Scripture and human experience. The course will study both past answers and contemporary positions.

The first unit is an introduction to significant categories and questions of Christology and raises, in a preliminary fashion, several central methodological issues that emerge in contemporary discussions. It also begins to introduce the scriptural testimonies regarding the person of Jesus and attempts to present the major elements of his message, life, death, and resurrection. The second unit investigates the ancient context in which Jesus lived and continues to engage the scriptural testimonies. The third unit examines the development of particular formulations and understandings of the Jesus event that have become normative for, or have exerted a great deal of influence on the Christian tradition. The final unit surveys contemporary global responses to the question of who is Jesus and examines specific current questions in Christology.

This course is structured primarily along the lines of a seminar. Active participation of all students is required. The emphasis on discussion in this class is meant to provide a forum for critical analyses and for student interaction with both the instructor and other students. Though infrequent, there will be several lectures. The purpose of these lectures will be to introduce, contextualize, clarify, explain, and to summarize particular topics.

### **REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS**

Jacques Dupuis, S.J., *Who Do You Say That I Am? Introduction to Christology* (Orbis, 1994).  
Philip Jenkins, *Jesus Wars: How Four Patriarchs, Three Queens, and Two Emperors Decided What Christians Would Believe for the Next 1,500 Years* (Harper Collins, 2010).  
Elizabeth Johnson, *Consider Jesus: Waves of Renewal in Christology* (Crossroad, 1990).  
Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (Harper Collins, 2006).  
Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology* (Continuum, 1994).  
Jon Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator* (Orbis, 2001).

## RECOMMENDED COURSE TEXTS

Some of these are books that we will read in part, but you are strongly encouraged to read beyond our assignment. Others are significant works on Christology that could help in your research. Moreover, these are all books that would be helpful in the rest of your MTS program, for your thesis research, in ministry, and beyond.

Henry Knight, *Confessing Christ in a Post-Holocaust World: A Midrashic Experiment* (Wipf & Stock, 2000).

Robert Bannon, *The Priority of Christ: Toward a Postliberal Catholicism* (Brazos, 2007).

Wonhee Anne Joh, *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology* (Westminster John Knox, 2006).

John Dominic Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus? Exposing the Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Gospel Story of the Death of Jesus* (Harper Collins, 1995).

Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Scholars Press, 1989).

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation* (Continuum, 2000).

Frank Matera, *New Testament Christology* (Westminster John Knox, 1999).

Marcus Borg and N.T. Wright, *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions* (Harper Collins, 1999).

Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003).

James Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Orbis, 1975).

## COURSE OBJECTIVES:

If you successfully complete this course, you will be able to:

- understand the basic shape of New Testament Christology and the methodological issues that inform contemporary readings and uses of New Testament Christology;
- identify the patterns in classic Christological doctrines;
- analyze and evaluate the Christological position of a modern theologian;
- undertake further research on a 20th/21st century Christological project.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- **Class Attendance and Participation:**  
The seminar nature of the course requires regular attendance. Active participation (e.g., raising questions, contributing to class discussions, etc.) in all discussions is also expected. The necessary prerequisite for a fruitful discussion is a careful, critical reading of the assigned texts by all class members. It is simply assumed that all participants of this course will be honest, open and respectful of diverse beliefs and views.
- **Class preparation:**  
Careful, reflective, critical reading of assigned texts is essential.

- Discussion starters:

For each class session, you will prepare a brief response paper. It should a) summarize the main insights and arguments from the week's reading (in about a paragraph) and b) include a list of five to seven times that you see as important in the readings and worthy of our consideration. These might be questions for discussion, provocative quotations, or summary statements that are based on our current readings. Please bring copies of these response papers for yourself and for the instructor. We will use these to facilitate our discussions of the readings for that class.

All papers must follow the format outlined in Chicago Style. Please note that all formal writing assignments must bear the signature of the student. As noted in the St. Norbert College Academic Honor Code, "this signature shall signify that the student has fully conformed to the honor code" (III. 2).

- Research paper

Each student will write a graduate level paper – which makes use of secondary sources, argues an original thesis, and is characterized by a sophisticated analysis of the subject matter. More detailed instructions will be given in class.

- Examination

The midterm exam will be a take-home essay in nature and based on lectures, presentations, class discussions and assigned readings.

- Self-evaluations

This course will require you to engage in metacognition, that is, thinking about your own thinking. Brief self-evaluation forms will be distributed on Moodle, which will give you an opportunity to evaluate your learning experience in this course.

## **EVALUATIONS AND GRADING:**

Participation 25%

Discussion starters 15%

Research Paper 30%

Examination 20%

Self-evaluations 10%

**Late assignments will be docked a half-letter grade per day** (that is, if the assignment was due on Monday by 6p and it is any time on Monday after 6p or Tuesday before 6p, it will be docked one half-letter grade. After Tuesday at 6p, it will be docked one full letter grade). I do not accept assignments that are more than one week late.

**Students must complete all assignments in order to pass this class.** If you require an extension, please contact me at least a week in advance to request additional time.

### ***Grade Equivalents***

**A: 93-100   AB: 88-92   B: 83-87   BC: 78-82   C: 73-77   CD: 68-72**

### **ACADEMIC HONOR CODE**

The learning process proceeds only when Students perform honestly on assignments and examinations. All students are expected to abide by the Academic Honor code. It defines academic dishonesty and sets forth the responsibilities of faculty and students in the event of alleged dishonesty. Possible penalties for dishonesty include reduction of a grade, failure in the course, failure and suspension, or failure and dismissal. Please refer to the current *St. Norbert College Student Handbook* for the text of the Academic Honor Code.

### **SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

In keeping with the St. Norbert College mission to help students develop their full potential, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the College provides supportive services to students with disabilities. For inquiries and further details, please visit the Academic Support Services Office located in Todd Wehr Hall, Room 211, call at 403-1321, or visit the website [www.snc.edu/academicsupport/disabilities.html](http://www.snc.edu/academicsupport/disabilities.html).

### **COURSE SCHEDULE:** (Subject to change with advanced notice)

Please bring the assigned text with you to class. You do not need to bring all of your books to every class – just the one(s) you read for that class.

### **UNIT 1**

#### ***September 1 (online): Introducing Christology***

We will not meet in person today, because of the Labor Day holiday. Instead, see detailed instructions on Moodle *before* you do the reading listed below.

Johnson ix-17

Dupuis 1-56

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 and Philippians 2:5-11

Gospels of Mark and John

### **UNIT 2**

#### ***September 8: Jesus's ancient context***

Roland Deines, "Galilee and the Historical Jesus in Recent Research," in *Galilee: The Late Second Temple and Mishnaic Period*, Vol. 1: *Life, Culture, and Society*, ed. David A. Fiensy and James Riley Strange (Fortress, 2014), 11-50.

Levine (entire)

### **UNIT 3**

#### ***September 29: The early developments of Christology, Christological controversies***

Johnson 19-47

Dupuis 77-110

Jenkins (entire)

### **UNIT 4**

#### ***October 13: Modern Christological reflections – liberationist perspectives***

Johnson 83-95

Sobrino (entire)

#### ***October 27: Modern Christological reflections – feminist perspectives***

Johnson 97-113

Schüssler Fiorenza (entire)

#### ***November 10: Modern Christological reflections – Black and postcolonial perspectives***

James Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Orbis, 1975), selections.

Wonhee Anne Joh, *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology* (Westminster John Knox, 2006), 91-128.

Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Scholars Press, 1989), selections.

Clara Sue Kidwell, Homer Noley, and Tink Tinker, *A Native American Theology* (Orbis, 2001), 62-84.

#### ***December 1: Modern Christological Reflections – pluralist perspectives and perspectives in conversation with other religious traditions***

Johnson 129-143

DuPuis 140-167

*Dominus Iesus*

Henry Knight, *Confessing Christ in a Post-Holocaust World: A Midrashic Experiment* (Wipf & Stock, 2000) 64-84.

Robert Bannon, *The Priority of Christ: Toward a Postliberal Catholicism* (Brazos, 2007), selections.