

1-1-2008

ST 501 Method and Praxis in Theology

Zaida Maldonado Perez

Follow this and additional works at: <http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi>

Recommended Citation

Perez, Zaida Maldonado, "ST 501 Method and Praxis in Theology" (2008). *Syllabi*. Book 2196.
<http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi/2196>

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the eCommons at ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. For more information, please contact thad.horner@asburyseminary.edu.

ST501 Method and Praxis in Theology



Asbury Theological Seminary
Spring 2008

Dr. Zaida Maldonado Pérez

Picture¹

Contact Information:

Office Hours:

Office Phone: (O) 407-482-7647

Email: Zaida_Perez@asburyseminary.edu

Course Description:

This is an introductory course relating method to practice in theology. This course will involve an examination of different ways in which the Christian tradition has understood the sources, norms, and criteria for the development of church doctrine. Special attention is given to a critical analysis of contemporary theological methods and the influence of postmodern science. The connection between theological method and Christian doctrine, especially the doctrine of divine revelation, will serve as the center point for developing an Evangelical/Wesleyan theology in the postmodern world. This class is designed for beginning students, and serves as preparatory study for all course offerings in theology.

Overview:

“Why am I doing what I am doing the way I am doing it (and not another way)?” In the 12th century, Anselm of Canterbury expressed the desire to deepen his knowledge and therefore also his relationship to God as “faith seeking understanding.” Others have stated it by asking, “what would Jesus do?” or, “how can I be faithful in this time and place?” All of these questions have a key common denominator--a conscious effort to understand our faith in order to better our service and our relationship to God, to our communities, to the world. This conscious effort demands that we explore the variety of methods that have often led to very different responses to the same question. These responses, articulated in the corpus of Christian doctrine, reflect the differing theologies that not only vie for our attention but point to the role of reflection, understanding and judgment in the task of theology. In this sense, the title of our course may be somewhat misleading as it suggests that there might be one method or praxis in theology. Our readings covering a variety of topics and methods in the Christian faith will prove that this is not the case. Though questions may remain the same, our differing contexts and historical situations may call for a reexamination of previous responses and often, a reformulation of the very questions themselves.

In short, the task of theology is not a finished process. It is our calling as leaders and ministers to attend to this process with the utmost diligence and prayer.

¹ This picture is from an article by the Palm Beach Post entitled “The Real Cost”. See http://www.palmbeachpost.com/hp/content/moderndayslavery/reports/migrant_part3.html; accessed February 1, 2008

As stated in the catalog, this is an introductory course that will help prepare you for all course offerings in theology. Thus, the content may seem basic for those of you who are almost at the end of your seminary journey or have taken such a course elsewhere. Use it as a review and to continue to explore your own theological growth, etc. In any case, there is always something new to be learned!

Course Objectives:

(These objectives are taken from the core course description and are normative for the Wilmore and Orlando campuses)

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will have an introductory knowledge of critical theological method, enabling them to:

1. Describe how classical Greek\Roman philosophy influenced the manner in which the Early Christian Apologists and the Early Church Fathers did theology;
2. Articulate the impact of the Enlightenment upon modern theology, particularly the influence of Kant's philosophy and its contribution to such movements as liberalism, existentialism, and neo-orthodoxy.
3. Describe the rise of the modern historical consciousness, particularly the relation between critical history and Christian faith;
4. Understand the significance of the transition from premodern to modern and postmodern thought, with special reference to the shift from ontology (premodern) to epistemology (modern) to hermeneutics (postmodern);
5. Identify the key points in the transition from modern to postmodern paradigms, especially hermeneutical phenomenology, postliberalism, and deconstructionism;
6. Articulate the influence of postmodern science upon theological method;
7. Appreciate Wesley's methodical use of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience;
8. Apply critical theological method to the effective practice of Christian ministry in the postmodern age.

Course Texts:

1. González, Justo L. *Christian Thought Revisited: Three Types of Theology*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989.
2. González, Justo L. and Zaida Maldonado Pérez. *An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002.
3. Grenz, J. Stanley & Roger E. Olson. *Who Needs Theology: An Invitation to the Study of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.
4. Placher, William C., editor. *Essentials of Christian Theology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003.
5. A Theological Dictionary(ies) of choice. (For a small paperback version see: Grenz, Stanley J., David Guretzki, and C. F. Nordling, eds. *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Downers Grove, ILL: InterVarsity, 1999.) Or, see recommendation below.
6. A list of other required readings (e.g. for book reviews, group work, etc.) will be made available to you.

Highly Recommended:

1. Core, Deborah. *The Seminary Student Writes*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000. (This little book will be worth your while!)
2. Gonzalez, Justo L. *Essential Theological Terms*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.
3. Grenz, Stanley. *Theology for the Community of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.

Some Recommended Web Resources:

- Christian Classics Ethereal Library: <http://www.ccel.org/>
- The Ecole Initiative: <http://www2.evansville.edu/coleweb/>
- The New Advent Catholic Web site: <http://www.newadvent.org/>
- Wabash Center Guide to Internet Resources:
http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/resources/guide_headings.aspx
- Christian Classics Ethereal Library <http://www.ccel.org>
- Concise Dictionary of Religion, <<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/relig/hadden/>>.
- The Electronic Church, <<http://www.electronicchurch.org/YBlisting.html#TOP>>

Abbreviations used:

An Introduction to Christian Theology (AITCT)
Christian Thought Revisited (CTR)
The Christian Theology Reader (TCTR)
Who Needs Theology: An Invitation to the Study of God (WMT)
 Class Handout (CH)

COURSE APPENDICES

Appendix A: Explanation of Categories for Readings Reports
 Appendix B: Grid for Readings Report (Presenter)
 Appendix C: Comments Grid for Readings Report (Audience)
 Appendix D: Study Questions for Quiz
 Appendix E: Toward My Theological Matrix
 Appendix F: Working Bibliography
 Appendix G: Other Recommended Readings

"The badge of intellect is a question mark."
 Arnold Glasglow

Course Schedule:

The course schedule is below. You will note that it says **TENTATIVE**. This allows us to discern and follow the Spirit as needed. There may be times that it will be best to take some time to delve into or review something at length for the benefit of the class, etc. This may mean altering the schedule to accommodate such needs. It also means that you need to stay on top of the reading.

You are required to read **all** of the material that is assigned in the reading list. Most of the material in *The Christian Theology Reader*—Chapters 3-10—will be used by you to create your own theological matrix (see section on “Assignments” below). We will consider some of the readings in (TCTR) more in depth as we move along. I will be gleaning from *An Introduction to*

Christian Theology, especially for our first class. The book will also be helpful for the creation of your matrix.

Course Structure:

The course is divided into three sections.

Section One will introduce you to the overall task of theology. It is divided into modules one and two.

Section Two will explore methods and sources in theology. It contains module three.

Section Three will consider postmodernity and the theological endeavor. It contains modules four and five.

Course Assignments:

There are reading assignments for each class. See Requirement and Assessment for a calendar of written assignments.

It is not the answer that enlightens, but the question.

Eugene Ionesco (1912-1994) Romanian-French dramatist from *Découvertes*, 1969
(Is this true? What do you think? And, why?)

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE TASK OF THEOLOGY

Module 1

Class 1/ Introduction

February 14 Review syllabus and requirements
Begin definitions

Class 2

Readings for February 21

1. *Who Needs Theology?* (WNT): pp. 1-49
2. *An Introduction to Christian Theology* (AITCT): 9-31
3. *Essentials of Christian Theology* (ECT): pp. 1-10

Class 3

Readings for February 28

1. Grenz and Olson, WNT: pp. 50-148
2. González and Maldonado Pérez, AITCT: pp. 33-54
3. Placher, ECT: Chapter 1, pp. 11-49

SECTION TWO

THE THEOLOGICAL TASK: ITS METHODS AND SOURCES

"Truth fears no questions." (author unknown)

Module 2

Class 4

Readings for March 6

González, *Christian Thought Revisited* (CTR): pp. 19-90

Class 5

Readings for March 13

1. Wesley's Sermon 63 "On the General Spread of the Gospel" (see <http://gbgm-umc.org/umhistory/wesley/sermons/serm-063.stm>).
2. Sermon 70, John Wesley, "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered" See: <http://gbgm-umc.org/umhistory/wesley/sermons/serm-070.stm>

Class 6

Readings for March 20

1. "Eternal Election, or God's Predestination of Some to Salvation, and of Others to Destruction," by John Calvin, in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 2, Book Three, Ch. XXI trans. by J. Allen, pp. 170-181. Or, see: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.v.xxii.html>
2. "The Election of God: The Problem of a Correct Doctrine of the Election of Grace,"

- by K. Barth, in *The Doctrine of God* (Vol. II, Part 2 of *Church Dogmatics*), pp. 3-14
3. "Free Grace," sermon by John Wesley, in *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. by A. C. Outler and R. P. Heitzenrater, pp. 50-60
Or see: <http://gbgm-umc.org/UMhistory/Wesley/sermons/serm-128.stm>
 4. Placher, ECT: Chapter 2; pp. 51-92

"No man [*sic.*] ever looks at the world with pristine eyes. He sees it edited by a definite set of customs and institutions and ways of thinking." Ruth Benedict (1887-1948) American cultural anthropologist

Module 3

Class 7

Readings for March 27

1. González and Maldonado Pérez, AITCT: Chapter 3; pp. 55-76
2. Placher, ECT: chapter 3; pp. 93-132
3. González and Maldonado Pérez, AITCT: Chapter 5, pp. 97-118
4. Placher, ECT: Chapter 6, pp. 221-255

"The badge of intellect is a question mark."
Arnold Glasglow

Reading



Week, March 31 - April 4

Class 8

Readings for April 10

Movie: *Memento*

Module 4

Class 9

Readings for April 17

No Class

Work on Theological Matrix

Class 10

Readings for April 24

1. González and Maldonado Pérez, AITCT: chapter 4; pp. 77-96
2. Placher, ECT: chapter 5, pp. 183-219
3. González and Maldonado Pérez, AITCT: chapters 6; pp. 119-138
4. Placher, ECT: chapter 7; pp. 257-296

SECTION THREE

POSTMODERNITY AND THE THEOLOGICAL ENDEAVOR

"Good questions outrank easy answers."

Paul Anthony Samuelson (1915-) US economist, 1970 Nobel prize for economics

Module 5

Class 11

Readings for May 1

1. González and Maldonado Pérez, AITCT: chapter 7; pp. 139-158
2. Placher, ECT: chapter 9; pp. 327-365

Class 12

Due: May 8

Presentations

Class 13

Due: May 15

Presentations



ojo: My style of teaching is dialogical. My role is to *facilitate* your learning. This means that I consider it my task to help you understand and process the material and to do this in relation to Christian faith and ministry. I believe that students learn best when they take the time to think critically through the material and articulate their thoughts, questions, concerns, etc.

This means that:

- I will promote and expect discussion on the materials read.
(This assumes that you have read it.) Discussions will focus on content as well as on application from your various contexts.
- You must be involved in your own learning.
Think through the material, look up any terms, authors about which you have questions, etc. Work to fill in knowledge gaps as we go. (This is why I am recommending a theological dictionary. Your book *Essentials of Christian Theology* has a Glossary of Names and Terms and *An Introduction to Christian Theology* has an annotated list of Authors cited. Make sure you go over it.) A good way to do this is to keep a notebook or journal of such terms, thoughts, questions, etc.

Some of the reading may be challenging—theologically—as well as intellectually. This is *normal*. Indeed, most of your “aha” moments may come *after* the course is over and you have been able to make connections, etc. This is expected with any course you take. So, relax, learn, and enjoy the challenge.

- **Assignments:**

Calendar of Assignments

Note: You have reading assignments for *every* class. The following reflects **only** those assignments that will be **turned in**. Assignments are to be turned in on the due date.

#	Due Date	Assignment	Pages	Weighting
1.	See Appendix A for dates	 Reading Reports by Teams: Presentation and facilitation of discussion of assigned readings	See Appendices A, B, C	30
2.	May 8 or May 15	 Toward my Theological Matrix / Appendix and presentation	Appendix E	35
3.	May 23	“What is...?”: Exploring Topics in Theology” Submit as: Firstname+lastname, Topics in Theology (E.g. LuisLopez, Topics in Theology)	3 Topics, 3 pages each and Bibliography	30
4.	May 23	“I read all of the assigned readings!” Submit as: Firstname+lastname, I Read	Appendix	5
			Total:	100

Important: Assignments will be turned in at the beginning of class and are to be placed in the “Assignment Folder.” Make sure your name, date and assignment topic/title is indicated (note: I have had papers turned in with no name). I will **only** accept papers at this time. *Please do not send me assignments via email unless I have requested it and /or you have made prior arrangement with me and the situation merits it.* Emailed assignments are to be sent to **My Office icon only**. Make sure it is sent

1. **READING REPORTS by TEAMS**



Aim: This assignment builds upon previous ones. Its aim goes beyond those I mention below.

1. To introduce students to the views and methods of different theologians through sample works.
2. To practice reading with a critical appreciation by adhering to the categories below.
3. To appreciate, through critical analysis, the role of context in theology. This includes articulating what the implications of the author’s work might look like in the student’s context.
5. To relate theological interpretation and method to an evangelical understanding of scripture as the norming norm.

Although I am looking for quality work and reflection, don’t let the word “report” or “presentation” make you panic. This is to be done within your teams, among your peers.

Process:

1. Students will form teams of two (or three, depending on class size). The team will be responsible for reading and reporting on the reading they have chosen from the list provided in the Appendix. Readings and reporting dates are included in the list.
2. The class will be divided into two groups (or three, depending on class and team size) and each team member will give a reading report to her/his respective group. (One team member per group).
3. Each team member will report on the following:
 - a. Background information on the author (note only include relevant information). Include especially any information on the author's school of thought (E.g. Is s/he a "process theologian"? Eco-feminist?)
 - b. Problem being addressed
 - c. The thesis (central claim)
 - d. The argument and how s/he builds it.
 - e. Presupposition
 - f. Critique
 - From Wesleyan perspective and/or other tradition
 - g. Application
 - How might this inform/challenge your ministry?
 - How does it speak to the church? To the world?
 - h. Group discussion
 - Comments and questions from the group
4. Go to **Appendix A** for an explanation of each of the categories stated above.
5. In order to facilitate the presentation, team members will prepare a chart (**See Appendix B**) with the information (in abbreviated fashion) that will accompany the oral report and that will be distributed to the groups. This means that at the end of the course, each student will have a summary report (along with their own notes) on the specified readings.
6. A copy of each report will also be turned in to the professor.

Note: All students are to read *all* of the readings but report only on the ones assigned.

Length of Presentations:



Each team member will have a total of 20-30 minutes to present and facilitate discussion.

2. TOWARD MY THEOLOGICAL MATRIX



Aim: To engage the students in the process of discerning their theological lenses. At the end of the assignment the student will have a concrete sense of where s/he is theologically in relation to the categories delineated in the chart, how s/he has arrived there and, how and why this impacts her/his thought and praxis. Note: The assignment's title indicates a journey not yet completed!

Note: You may use this assignment for your Formation Portfolio.

Process: The assignment consists of three parts.

Note: It is expected that each student research another theologian(s) that will provide them with other perspectives along with the ones provided in the assigned reading (*Christian Thought Revisited*). The readings in *The Christian Theology Reader* are also meant to help you with this assignment. I recommend, for instance, *The Apostles' Creed: In the Light of Today's Questions* by Wolfhart Pannenberg (SCM Press LTD, 1972); Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000; Placher, William C., editor. *Essentials of Christian Theology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003 and, a helpful dictionary. E.g. Gonzalez, Justo L. *Essential Theological Terms*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005 is a handy one and very readable. Or, Grenz, Stanley J., David Guretzki, and C. F. Nordling, eds. *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Downers Grove, ILL: InterVarsity, 1999.)

Part 1:

- A. Choose a systematic theology book, other than the ones assigned. Turn in the name of the name of the book (publication information) to the professor.
- B. The chart (see [Appendix E](#)) will serve as your "outline." Download it and fill it in with key terms or short sentences that describe your own interpretation of these. If you are unsure where you stand regarding one of the categories in theology, state where you feel you are now. However, responses such as, "I don't know any philosophy" will not be accepted. You must take the time to research the particular category about which you are unsure and give an adequate response. (E.g. Your response might go something like: "I am unsure if I fall within the Aristotelian camp. While I believe, for instance, that knowledge is had through the senses (Aristotle) and that that knowledge corresponds to reality, I also understand the role of interpretation, presuppositions and overall conditioning. This lead me, however, to an uncomfortable place where I feel forced to admit the relativity of what we call 'reality'—which brings to the fore the question of the nature of 'revelation'. By the same token, I realize that this makes the role of faith and community all the more real and necessary...(etc.)" Or, address the role of philosophy in general, its overall contribution to theology and to your own endeavor. Again, I want to see that you did some research here.

Part 2:

In class be prepared to explain a) your chart and b) your central motif. Why this and not another? c) Show how the rest of the matrix builds on this central motif. In other words, the matrix ought to "cohere" around what you deem is your central motif or paradigm; it ought to show consistency. The typologies from the book, CTR will give you some example of this. This is why you want to make sure you read it closely. The readings and those recommended above

may also spark some insights about where you think you stand in relation to the categories on the Matrix. Make sure you explore these. Note, however, that you will need to create your *own* responses to the categories! Do not give me the ones in CTR! Should you relate strongly to any of the responses explored in CTR, be ready to state why.

Note: I will be expecting you to be intentional and explicit in your integration of the readings including any of the suggested above

Part 3:

NOT TO BE TURNED IN/ I realize that we do not have a lot of time, thus, I am including this section *only for your own future reflection*. Think about the following as you continue to develop and live out your theology: 1) Do you see any connections between your context (tradition, economic, etc.) and where you stand theologically (at this point in your journey)? What might these be? Be specific. 2) How do you see your context impacting/informing your method/or approach to a theological problem? 5) Having considered your theological views, context, method and ministry (or call to ministry), where do you see your areas of growth? Name at least two areas and explain why. E.g. Do I understand what it means to be physically challenged and what that means for ministry? 6) Finally, give serious theological reflection on how your central motif informs and shapes your life and ministry to and with others. (Include matters such as: worship, pastoral counseling, preaching, social justice, politics, etc.)

Length of Presentation:



Each student will have (*minutes to be decided depending on class size*) to make their presentation with (*to be decided*) minutes for questions and answers for a total of (*to be decided*) minutes. Students **cannot** go beyond this time or they will infringe on another student's time and points will be deducted.

Comment Grid for Presentation:

Students will contribute to each other's presentations through a Comments Grid (See [Appendix C](#)). This exercise is aimed at further helping you understand/review the role of an integrative motif, the value of a constructive theology and the elements used to assess it.

3. WHAT IS...?: EXPLORING VARIOUS THEOLOGIES

Aim: To further the student's knowledge concerning various theologies, their methods and how they may impact practice.

Students will research and report on THREE of the following:

1. Process Theology
2. Open-Theism
3. Liberal Theology
4. Paleo-Orthodoxy
5. Eco-Feminist Theology
6. Womanist Theology
7. Mujerista Theology
8. Liberation Theology
9. Minjung Theology (E.g.):
 - [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?asian/korbib:@field\(SUBJ+@band\(Han,+Theology+\)\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?asian/korbib:@field(SUBJ+@band(Han,+Theology+)))
 - <http://theologytoday.ptsem.edu/jan1985/v41-4-tabletalk2.htm>
10. Black Theology
11. Neo-Orthodox Theology
12. Other (one of your choice not on this list)

The resources *must* include:

1. A theological dictionary and,
2. Two articles from religious journals. Make sure you explore these early on.
(Note: Some of these can be found on-line. They must be *scholarly essays*.)

For Locating Journals:

See the **ATLA Religion Index**. You can access it by going to Asbury's "Information Commons (Library)" and then going to "Asbury Scholar" on campus or, login if you are off campus. The ATLA gives you an array of national and international journals and magazines in religion, including some chapters in books and also includes the full text for some.

Process:

1. Respond to the following questions:
 - a. How is the particular theology defined?
 - b. What problem does the theology seek to address and, how?
 - c. Major contributors
 - d. Major works on the topic (include a maximum of three). Include why.
 - e. Read a primary work (an essay, for example) in this school of thought. Include the bibliography in your work.
 - f. Your critique.
 - Include presuppositions (What is assumed?)
 - From the perspective of your tradition
 - From the perspective of your ministry (e.g. possible impact)**Note:** feel free to search out other critiques and add your voice to them. Just make sure you cite your sources!
2. **Pages:** 3 pages *per topic* chosen excluding bibliography (Observe the style guideline in the syllabus).
3. Include the sources (bibliography) at the end of each report.
4. Remember also to cite your sources anytime you use a quote. Because this is a brief report, make sure you keep quotes to a minimum!

FORMAT FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS:

All papers should be double-spaced, typed, with one-inch margins and 12 font.

Quotations should be clearly marked and sources must be noted in end/footnotes

No folders, title pages or binders please

Final papers will be returned to your student box unless you provide a stamped envelope

ASSESSMENT:

• Grading

Grading must reflect graduate level work. This implies competency in such areas as*:

- focus on the subject at hand
- discovery of data
- ability to question, analyze, integrate, to reconsider and synthesize
- capacity to integrate old and new data
- depth and maturity of knowledge
- skills to make growth in ministry possible
- originality and creativity
 - (*From Faculty Handbook)

All work is expected on time and as completed as indicated in the assignment. Extensions are not given except for the kind of medical and family emergencies that merit the Dean's approval. An extension implies lateness without penalty. Note: It is your responsibility to communicate with me if you need an extension before the due date of an assignment. Otherwise, I will have no recourse but to penalize you for your late work. A late Final Paper will have an automatic grade deduction and will not be accepted after the end of the semester (unless you have applied for an extension.

• Incomplete Work:

See ATS 2007-08 Online Catalog, page 31.

A grade of "I" denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to an unavoidable emergency, which does not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment. If the work of a course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as "F."

A	(95-) Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives
A-	(90-94) Fine work
B+	(87-89) Good, solid work: substantial achievement of course objectives
B	(83-86) Good work
B-	(80-82) Verging between good and acceptable.
C+	(77-79) Acceptable work: essential achievement of course objectives
C	(73-76) Acceptable work; significant gaps
C-	(70-72) Serious gaps in achievement of course objectives
D+	(67-69) Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives
D	(63-66) Barely acceptable
F	Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives.

Please note: A “B/B+” stands for good, solid work. To get an “A-/A” you must go beyond good, solid work to work that is outstanding, exceptional.

Things that might potentially result in a reduction in total score:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| -Poor or non-engagement with material | -Poor analysis of material |
| -Presentation of a weak conclusion or argument | -Misspellings |
| -Lack of, or poor use of dialogue between authors | -Poor syntax |
| -Answering a different question | -Lack of inclusive language |
| -Incorrect citation of sources and bibliography | -Improper sources |

Following is a list of the sorts of things that would evidence going beyond the basic assignment and would, therefore, warrant a higher total score.

- Writing that is particularly articulate and/or worded with exceptional clarity and concision.
- Particularly insightful interaction with the material, including exceptional criticisms or the recognition of the more profound implications of certain positions.
- Presentation that moves beyond mere repetition of the arguments of others.
- Evidence of research that goes beyond what is required for the assignment.
- Conclusions that effectively summarize criticisms and that propose solutions.
- Critical interaction that probes deeply into the arguments at hand.

Other :

Online Databases

To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm> and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0's to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXX where XXXXX = your student id).

Timely and Substantive Feedback

I am committed to marking, grading, and returning student work within one week of its submission; in the case of classes enrolling more than 40 students, two weeks. Longer assignments are often due at the end of term, and are not subject to this definition. Work that is turned in after the due date *may not* receive substantive feedback. Reflection papers (due to their more personal nature) may not receive “substantive feedback.”

Participation:

Discussions are an important part of this course. They provide opportunities for further theological reflection and conversation at the communal level and across denominational lines. Students are expected to a) *be present at each class and*, b) *read the assigned material and come prepared to discuss it.* **Active, thoughtful participation in class will be taken into account in determining final grades.**

Attendance:

More than one unexcused absence will affect the student's grade and can lead to failing the course. Excused absences refer to unavoidable emergencies that do not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment.



Technology policy

Cell phone usage, internet surfing, instant messaging, emailing or similar activities are strictly prohibited during class time. Students must turn off cell phones during class, unless employment or emergency family obligations necessitate the student be on call. Such students must ensure that their cell phones are on “vibrate” and must inform me of their situation during the first week of class.

Academic Integrity:

The standards of conduct that are articulated in the Asbury Theological Seminary's Student Handbook concerning academic matters are important to the integrity of our community and the high ethical standards we expect of those who are preparing for Christian ministry. Abuse of these policies will be handled as stipulated in the handbook.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the presenting of another's ideas or writings as one's own; this includes both written and oral discourse presentations. Response to plagiarism may include requiring an assignment to be redone, automatic failure of a course or, in some extreme cases, recommended dismissal from the Seminary (Faculty Handbook). Please make sure any borrowed material is properly documented.

Windows and Icons

Every student will have a class Icon on their desktop. I will often post material that I cover in class or other material that I deem helpful. Information on how navigate the icon, etc. is available on the Asbury website under “Tutorials” → Virtual Campus Tutorial or see: <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/tutorials/virtual-campus>

Appendix A

TEAMS

1. *Purpose:*
 - a. *Problem:* What is the problem/issue being addressed? Place the issue (and the author) in the larger theological (this may include, if applicable, the socio-political, economic, etc.) context of its time. This will give you further insights into the issue(s) and why the author addresses it/them the way s/he does.
 - b. *Thesis:* What is the author's main point, or major claim (thesis)? This is usually found in the author's introduction. You should find the main concepts in the thesis.
2. *Content:* What does the author say? This refers to the author's arguments, that is, the body of evidence that supports/grounds the author's thesis/beliefs/position. Summarize what the author says in your own words. This process is also called an "Abstract" (I have adapted section on "abstract" from Drs. Joy, Seamands and Chilcote)

A B S T R A C T

- Do not add personal commentary or evaluate the content of the material.
 - Include as many of the author's key concepts and ideas as needed for clarity.
 - Be comprehensive yet concise.
 - Be (stylistically) correct, coherent and clear.
 - Quotations should be minimal, if at all. However, when you quote directly from the source, use explicit and visible quotation marks and state the source in the endnotes.
3. *Method:* Describe **how** the author builds/argues her/his thesis; E.g. What "grounds" does he use to support his case? What are the "warrants" that support the "grounds"? (Refer to the CH on *How to Build an Argument*). Define the *sources* the author uses/relies on to argue her/his thesis; From your reading, which of these sources seems *normative*? Note: this is not the place to offer a critique. You are still *describing* at this point in your paper.
 4. *Critique:*
 - a. Critique the argument: Is it coherent? (E.g. Do the grounds support the claim? Are the warrants credible – authoritative? Why? Why not? Note: An argument can be coherent but invalid.) What are the *presuppositions*? Look for flaws in the argument; might there be an alternative argument not foreseen by the author? Might a different method contradict or question the evidence? What sources/voices are missing that would change the outcome? What are some relevant objections to the argument? Feel free to consult other sources for help (e.g. book reviews) but only *after* you have engaged the author for yourself! Make sure you cite your sources!!! Bring other theologians into the discussion.
 - b. Then, include *also* a critique from your particular theological perspective/tradition [E.g. Wesleyan]. You can include where the group agreed or disagreed.
 5. *Application:* Finally, reflect critically on why and how the author's work impacts ministry. Since you all represent various contexts and backgrounds, try to choose a scenario to which you all pretty much feel the team can relate. Then, respond as a group:
E.g. In what ways might the author's understanding of, for instance, suffering, sin, or Jesus be important for ministry with and to the homeless? To Latino immigrants? To soldiers coming back from Iraq? The shut-ins? Child-abuse? Or, with the victims of ??? (e.g. 9/11, domestic violence, Katrina) who are coming to you, their pastor, for spiritual and practical help? Or, with a city church's discussion [whose members commute from the suburbs] on whether or not to purchase new hymnals? **In other words, be as specific as possible!!!**

Appendix B

Method and Praxis

Professor Zaida Maldonado Pérez

Reading Report GRID

To be used by the Presenter

Name of Presenter: _____

Title of Reading: _____

CONTEXT : Problem being addressed (and anything else that allows you to place the argument in its wider context)
THESIS:
ABSTRACT (summary of content/argument):
METHOD: (The argument and how it is constructed)
CRITIQUE OF ARGUMENT: (presuppositions, etc).
CRITIQUE FROM A PARTICULAR PERSPECTIVE (Tradition):
APPLICATION:

Other Comments on the reading:

Appendix C

Method and Praxis

Professor Zaida Maldonado Pérez

Comment Grid for Reading Report

Weighting 30pts

Turn in to the professor.

This grid will be kept confidential!

Name of Presenter: _____

Title of Reading: _____

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CONTEXT : Problem and Thesis You articulated the problem and the thesis clearly and concisely. You placed the issue in its larger context. 4 pts. 	Pts earned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABSTRACT (summary of content/argument): You articulated the content intelligibly, clearly, concisely. • Did not add personal commentary or evaluate the content of the material. • Included as many of the author's key concepts and ideas as needed for clarity. 5 pts. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • METHOD: You are able to analyze the author's method and how it relates to her/his argument/conclusion 3 pts. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRITIQUE OF ARGUMENT: You are able to critique the argument (e.g. look for flaws in the argument; note what questions are assumed or not asked; what voices are missing and, how does this affect the argument or thesis?) 4 pts 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRITIQUE FROM A PARTICULAR PERSPECTIVE (Tradition): You are able to articulate the critique from a Wesleyan (or own tradition) perspective (Include where the group agreed or disagreed and why.) 4 pts 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APPLICATION: You are able to apply what you have learned to your praxis (this may include using it to reflect on your group experience) • Significance 4 pts. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other: You used Inclusive language. You incorporated other learnings/materials. The outline was concise. See syllabus under "Assessment" for other criteria 2 pts. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was clear that the presenter was well prepared and explained the material well. I learned a lot from her/his presentation of the material 4 pts. 	

Please **Total Score:**

Comments: (use the back if needed)

Appendix D

Roger E. Olson. *Who Needs Theology: An Invitation to the Study of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

Questions to guide your reading:

Chapter 1: “Everyone is a Theologian”

According to Stanley and Olson:

1. What is theology? Who is a theologian? And, What is Christian Theology?
2. What is the definition of faith (pp. 17, 24)
3. What is the difference between Christian theology and a “worldviewish” theology?
4. Is theology a threat to faith? Yes? No? Why? How?

Chapter 2: “Not all Theologies are Equal”

According to Stanley and Olson:

1. What is the meaning of reflection?
2. The word “assumption” can be defined as: “a hypothesis that is taken for granted; “any society is built upon certain assumptions” see: wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn or, “an axiom or statement, not necessarily true but put forward and taken to be true to enable further analysis of a hypothesis, or for the purposes of investigating what follows in relation to a theory. 2. A presupposition, or the basis of an assertion, required to be true for the assertion to be true. Assumptions are often unstated or even unknown, but implied by the associated theory or argument. Almost all thought processes and knowledge are based upon some assumptions” see: www.biol.tsukuba.ac.jp/~macer/biodict.htm.
3. Why might being aware of one’s assumptions, presuppositions be important?
4. Identify and explain the different theologies identified by Stanley and Olson.
5. Do you agree with the way Stanley and Olson have identified and explained these?
6. What is the value of each of these theologies?
7. What might be the downside of each?

Chapter 3: “Defining Theology”

According to Stanley and Olson:

1. Why might the following definition of theology be inadequate?
 - *It seeks to answer general and personal questions about God, ultimate meaning, purpose and truth.*
2. Explain the various components of the following definition:
 - Thus, “Christian theology is reflecting on and articulating the God-centered life and beliefs that Christians share as followers of Jesus Christ, and it is done in order that God may be glorified in all Christians dare and do.
3. What role does Jesus play in Christian theology?
4. What are some of the topics in theology? Or, what does theology study?
5. How does good theology assist Christians? And, who do the authors call “good theologians”?
6. What does “anthropocentric” mean? What does “theocentric” mean? How do these affect theology?
7. What is the final goal of theological reflection?

Chapter 4: “Defending Theology”

According to Stanley and Olson:

1. What are some of the reasons for the antipathy against theology?
2. Why is theology controversial?
3. To what do the “Killjoy Objections,” the “Divisiveness Charge,” the “Speculation Accusation,” and the “Stalemate Indictment” refer and, why? Or, why the expression “Happy is the Christian who has never met a theologian”?
4. Do you agree with Martin Luther’s slogan “Peace if possible, but truth at any cost”? Why or why not?

Chapter 5: “Theology’s Tasks and Traditions”

According to Stanley and Olson:

1. What are theology’s two major tasks?
2. What do you think about the “litmus test” proposed on page? Do you agree? Why? Why not?
Questions?
3. Theology’s critical task involves:
 - a.
 - b.
4. Theology’s Constructive task involves:
 - a.
 - b.
5. What is the difference between dogma, doctrine and opinion?
6. Name 3 major historical traditions of Christianity.
7. Define “natural theology”.
8. What do the branches of tradition hold in common?

Chapter 6: “The Theologian’s Tools”

According to Stanley and Olson:

1. Why can’t we just go to the Bible for our theology?
2. Can we have an “objective” reading of Scripture?
3. Explain “Theology is not so much a science in the modern sense of the term, as an art”.
4. What is a “norm”?
5. Why is tradition important?
6. What three aspects help to make theology relevant?
7. The theological art involves an interplay among what three tools?

Chapter 7: “Constructing Theology in Context”

According to Stanley and Olson:

1. How do we construct a contextual theology?
2. Note the different articulations of what Jesus did for us. How might you explain this in *your* context, for *today*?
3. How does theology become systematic?
4. What is an “integrative motif”?
5. What does a helpful integrative motif do?
6. Must you be a believing, practicing Christian to be a theologian?

Chapter 8: “Bringing Theology into Life”

According to Stanley and Olson:

1. Watch a sitcom or movie and apply the listening skills referred to on pp. 127-8. What do you come up with?
2. What might this mean for doing theology today?

Appendix E

TOWARD MY THEOLOGICAL MATRIX

Professor Zaida Maldonado Pérez

Context	////////////////////////////////////
Area (geographical)	
Gender and age group	
Ethnicity	Be specific
Denomination	
Impacting Experience	
Values	
Other? (not mentioned here but important to your formation? E.g. education, experience abroad, etc.)	
Main Category/Central Motif →	
Philosophical Orientation (see instructions in syllabus)	Take some time to look up Plato, Neoplatonism, Aristotle, Epicurius and/or others. See http://www.philosophyclass.com/ for a good, brief introduction. Follow links.
Forerunners/ Influential Theologians <i>Include at least one early and one modern/postmodern</i>	There are many theologians and samples of their work in your readings. For a quick overview see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Christian_theologians Note: Take time to explore their primary writings throughout your seminary journey.
God	Who is God? What metaphor would you use to describe God? Why?
Creation	
Sin	Include your understanding of sin. Source? Etc.
Human Predicament	
Person and work of Christ	
Person and work of the Holy Spirit (e.g. sanctification, other)	
The church	What/who is it? Purpose?
Sacraments	What are they? What is their nature? Role?
Final Consummation/Eschatology	
Scripture and Interpretation	What is Scripture for you? Why? How do you interpret it? Why?

Appendix F

ST501 Method and Praxis in Theology, SP 08

Professor Zaida Maldonado Pérez

Teams and topic	Team Member Names Please print!	Doctrine	Author	Pages	Due Date
1. Team Revelation	1. 2.	Revelation and Authority, Chapter 1	Erskine	33-49	Feb. 28
2. Team Godly	1. 2.	The Doctrine of God Chapter 2	Cunningham	76-91	March 20
3. Team Creative	1. 2.	Creation and Providence Chapter 3	Tanner	116-132	March 27
4. Team Faithful	1. 2.	The Church and its Worship, Chapter 6	Old	229-240	March 27
5. Team Fellowship	1. 2.	The Person and Work of Jesus Christ, Chapter 5	Van Dyk	205-219	April 24
6. Team Unity	1. 2.	The Christian Life Chapter 7	Battle	280-296	April 24
7. Team Glory	1. 2.	Eschatology Chapter 9	Ted Peters	347-365	May 1
8. Team Communal	1. 2.	Human Nature and Human Sin, Chapter 4	Williamson	158-182	
9 Team Neighbor	1. 2.	Christians and Non-Christians, Chapter 8	DiNoia	318-327	