

1-1-2008

CH 755 Theology of Martin Luther

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Recommended Citation

O'Malley, J. Steven, "CH 755 Theology of Martin Luther" (2008). *Syllabi*. Book 2526.
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**A Syllabus and General Guide
for
CH 755
THEOLOGY OF MARTIN LUTHER
Spring 2008**

**Prepared by
J. Steven O'Malley, Ph.D.**

I. Course Description

This course will investigate the life and thought of Martin Luther, with emphasis upon a first-hand analysis of major theological issues and confessional documents of his ministry. Lectures, reading and discussion will constitute the main substance of our learning.

II. LEARNING GOALS

1. Identify the main features in the historical context of Luther's era and explore their influence upon his life and thought.
2. Understand the major events in the life of Martin Luther and their influence upon his thought.
3. Evidence an understanding of major historiographical considerations in the life and thought of Martin Luther, including the relative merits of different schools of interpreting his thought.
4. Evaluate the major doctrinal emphases in Luther's thought, in the context of his theological method and historical context
5. Understand Luther's theological contribution to the Protestant Reformation, in light of other major expressions of Reformation thought.
6. Clarify the implications of Luther's theology for the practice of ministry in the contemporary world.

III. PREREQUISITES

Church History 501, or its equivalent.

IV. TEXTBOOKS

For purchase:

Althaus, Paul, Theology of Martin Luther (Fortress)

Bainton, Roland, Here I Stand (biography, in paper)

Dillenberger, John, ed., Martin Luther (Doubleday Anchor paper)

Lull, Timothy, Martin Luther's Basis Theological Writings (Fortress, paper)

Collateral text:

Luther's Letters of Spiritual Counsel, in Library of Christian Classics

(Westminster)

V. TOPIC LISTING AND SEQUENCE

Dates	Themes:	Readings: (L=Lull, Martin Luther) (D=Dillenberger)
(1) 2/14	Introduction Reformation Europe Luther: DVD	Bainton, 1-3 (chapters)
(2) 2/21	Luther's Spiritual Struggle and Early Development as an Evangelical Theologian Luther the Man	Bainton, 4-6 L, Part I, 1-32 (pp) D, 403-431 Althaus, 1-5 (chapters)
(3) 2/28	Context: Luther in Controversy over the New Theology (1518-1536) The Task of Theology: the Mature Position Exercise 1 Exercise 2	Bainton, 7-9 Althaus, 6-8 L, Part II, 33-74, D, 432-485
(4) 3/6	The Power of the Word of God: Discovering the Gospel Exercise 3 Exercise 4	L, Part III, 75-132 D, 35-41 Althaus, 9, 19 complete reading of Bainton by 3/15

- (6)3/13 The Righteousness of God in Christ L, Part IV, 133-164
 Exercise 5
 Exercise 6 Althaus, 15-18
- (7).3/20 The Righteousness of God in Christ: The L, Part IV, 165-207
 The Bondage of the Will D, 166-203
 Althaus, 12-14
 Exercise 7
 Exercise 8
- (8) 3/27 The Promise of the Sacraments: Early Position L, Part V, 209-238
 Exercise 10 D: Babylonian Captivity,
 291-359
 Baptism
 Exercise 11 Althaus, 25-26
- (9) 4/10 The Promise of the Sacraments: Eucharist-- L, Part V, 239-280,
 Later Position
 Exercise 12 Althaus, 27
 Exercise 13
- (10)4/17 The Reform of the Church: Early Position L. Part VI, 281-316
 Exercise 14
 Exercise 15 Althaus, 21,22, 23
- (11) 4/24 The Reform of the Church: Later Position L, VI, 317-383.
 D, 240-248
 Exercise 16
 Exercise 17
- (12) 5/1 Living and Dying as a Christian: Early Position L, VII, 385-428
 Althaus, 28
 Exercise 18
 Exercise 19

(13) 5/8 Living and Dying as a Christian: Obedience to the State

L, VII, 429-459
Althaus, 24

Exercise 20
Exercise 21

(14) 5/15 Living and Dying as a Christian: Social Ethics; The Measure of the Man

L, VII, 460-478
D, 99-165
Althaus, pp.304-318

Exercise 22
Exercise 23

VI. COURSE PROCEDURES

1. Our aim will be a first-hand investigation of issues and a critical understanding of Luther's theology. Lectures on the life and ministry of Martin Luther will be given and these will be interspersed with discussion sessions devoted to class discussion and interaction with lectures and readings. Students are required to attend all class sessions and complete all assigned readings (for personal and pastoral emergencies, contact the instructor in advance, where possible; letter grade reduction for non-authorized absences). A reading report is to be submitted on the last day of class. [20 points for attendance and completion of required readings and supplemental readings appropriate to individual research selected (minimum: 1500 pages total).]

2. Two individual briefs (or position papers) will be selected and prepared in relation to the list of pro/contra exercises (5-7 pages, double-spaced, and documented where appropriate*). They will be presented in class according to the schedule below, with copies to class members. (20 pts each)

Evaluation of briefs will reflect these aspects: (a) clearly and adequately addressing the pro or contra aspect of the topic, (b) use of pertinent primary sources from Luther, (c) discussion built upon interaction with existing historiographical literature, (d) conclusions that are supported by the data presented, and (e) correct style and grammar.

3. Develop one of your two class briefs, or a different theme, into a 15-20 page research paper, reflecting the definition of a research problem, and a structure for

addressing the problem, as well as aspects b-d listed for the briefs in #3 above. Follow Campbell/Slade/Ballou research style, as found in the Bookstore. One-page proposal to be submitted by April 15. Paper is due by May 15.* (40 points)
*there will be a penalty for lack of conformity to length or late submission.
(note: all papers to be based on primary sources, not from Althaus; secondary sources are to be cited to assist interpretation of those sources.)

Total possible points: 100

Grading scale:

90-100 A (90-100 %)
80-89 B (80-90%)
70-79 C (70-80%)
60-69 D (60-70%)
below 59 = F

EXERCISES:

1. Luther's distinction of the God Hidden from the God Revealed has strategic advantages/liabilities for developing an evangelical theology.

Pro _____/contra: _____

[alternative:

1.a. Luther's doctrine of God "as He exists for me" is justifiable in its neglect of an ontological understanding of the existence of God.

Pro _____/contra _____]

2. Unlike Calvin, Luther's strict contradistinction between the proper and general knowledge of God is consistent with a robust doctrine of creation.

Pro _____/contra _____

3. Luther's distinction of the general vs the proper knowledge of God is convincingly demonstrated through his biblical hermeneutic of law and gospel.

Pro _____/contra _____

4. Luther's understanding of "sola Scriptura" is not compromised by his preferential handling of the books of the biblical canon.

Pro _____/contra _____

5. Luther explains alien righteousness with adequate safeguards against the dangers of an antinomian view of grace.

Pro _____/contra _____.

6. Luther's doctrine of Christ's atonement maintains a balance between the wrath of God and the role of Satan in the problem of evil.

Pro _____/contra _____

7. The bondage of the will is an unavoidable implication for Luther's theology of the cross.

Pro _____/contra _____

8. Luther's understanding of humanity as fallen is expressed in a way that does not undermine the doctrine of humanity's creation in the image of God.

Pro _____/contra _____

9. Luther's understanding of sacrament reflects a materialistic view of sacramental grace that is inconsistent with his solafideism.

Pro _____/contra _____

10. Luther offers a compelling defense of infant baptism, against both Roman Catholic and Anabaptist views of this doctrine.

Pro _____/contra _____

11. Luther is not evasive in his refusal to give rational explanations for the objective real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Pro _____/contra _____

12. The development of Luther's Eucharistic theology indicates that his pastoral concerns became overruled by more exclusively theological concerns.

Pro _____/contra _____

13. Luther's emphasis upon the invisible marks of the church give adequate basis for the renewal of the institutional (visible) church on earth.

Pro _____/contra _____

14. Luther's view of that liturgy was an "indifferent matter" (adiaphora) did not mean that he was indifferent to the need for liturgical reform of worship in the church.

Pro _____/contra _____

15. Luther's understanding of the office of the keys (Matthew 16) contributes to a decline in the importance of ordained ministry rather than providing foundation for an alternative view of ordination, different from the Roman position.

Pro _____/contra _____

16. Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms lays the basis for the secularization rather than the sacralization of the workplace in a medieval Roman Catholic society.

Pro _____/contra _____

17. What is the relationship between Christ's atonement and the priesthood of believers for Luther?

Pro _____/contra _____

18. The "objective/subjective" dichotomy in Luther's understanding of what constitutes a "holy Christian people" gives adequate place for personal sanctification in the Christian life.

Pro _____/contra _____

19. Luther's understanding of the place of Christian witness in the office of the civil magistrate offers a clear program for the political strategy of the Christian prince.

Pro _____/contra _____

20. Luther is a skillful and convincing advocate of the just war theory.

Pro _____/contra _____

21. Luther's theology of marriage (or) death offers a model for guiding effective pastoral counseling.

Pro _____/contra _____

22. Luther's advice in civil affairs (such as education, care for the poor) reflects an optimistic view of history

Pro _____/contra _____

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Texts for Purchase

1. Dillenberger, John, ed., Martin Luther (Doubleday Anchor paperback)
2. Bainton, Roland, Here I Stand
3. Althaus, Paul, Theology of Martin Luther (Fortress)
4. Lull, Timothy F, Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings (Fortress)

C. Optional (Collateral) Texts:

1. Lohse, Bernhard, Martin Luther: An Introduction to his Life and Thought (Fortress)
2. Steinmetz, David, Luther in Context (Oxford)
3. * Tappert, Theodore, ed., Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel (Westminster, LCC)

B. Reserve List

1. Baillie, John, et al, eds., The Library of Christian Classics, Volumes XV-XXVI.
2. Thompson, Bard, ed., Liturgies of the Western Church (Meridian Books, World; paperback)
3. Pelikan, J, and Lehmann, H.T., Luther's Works (Fortress), 55 volumes

C. An Abridged Bibliography on the Protestant Reformation

1. General Studies

A. Documents

Baillie, John, et al, general ed., The Library of Christian Classics, Vols. 15-26

Hillerbrand, Hans, eds., The Reformation

Schaff, Philip, ed., The Creeds of Christendom, Vols. 2, 3

Thompson, Bard, Liturgies of the Western Church

B. Interpretations

Bainton, Roland, The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century

Dillenberger, John, and Welch, Claude, Protestant Christianity

Forell, George W., the Protestant Faith

Schaff, Philip, The Creeds of Christendom, Vol. 1

Whale, J. S., The Protestant Tradition

2. Luther

A. Documents

- Hazlitt, William, ed., Table-Talk of Martin Luther Luther's Large Catechism, published by Augsburg Press
- Pelikan, J., and Lehmann, H.T., Luther's Works, 55 vols
- Rupp, E.G., ed., Luther and Erasmus on Free Will: Library of Christian Classics, XVIII
- Tappert, T.G., ed., Letters of Spiritual Counsel: Library of Christian Classics
- Torrance, T.F., ed., Early Theological Works: Library of Christian Classics, XVI

B. Interpretations of Luther's career

- Atkinson, James, Martin Luther, Prophet to the Church Catholic (focus on Luther's contribution to Catholic-Protestant dialogue, 200 pp.)
- Atkinson, James, The Trial of Martin Luther (200 pp.)
- Bainton, Roland, Here I Stand (insightful biography, 400 pp.)
- Boehmer, H., Road to Reformation (an examination of Luther's personality in its formation, 400 pp.)
- Bornkamm, H., Luther and the Old Testament (300 pp.)
- Bornkamm, H., Luther's World of Thought (300 pp.)
- Bornkamm, H., Martin Luther in Mid-Career (650 pp. 1979)
- Brecht, M., Martin Luther, His Road to Reformation (early Career to 1521, 476 pp.)
- Brecht, M., Martin Luther, Shaping and Defining the Reformation (later career, 450 pp.)
- Brendle, G., Martin Luther, Theology and Revolution (Marxist analysis, 376 pp.)
- Edwards, M. U., Luther and the False Brethren (his evangelical opponents, 1975, 200 pp.)
- Edwards, M.U., Martin Luther's Last Battle (300 pp.)

Erikson, E., Young Martin Luther (psycho-social study)
 Gensichen, H., We Condemn (how Martin Luther
 condemned heresies, 200 pp.)
 Gerrish, B.A., Grace and Reason (170 pp.)
 Hail, H. G., Martin Luther, An Experiment in Biography
 (later years, 360 pp)
 Headley, J., Luther's View of Church History (280 pp.)
 Hoffman, B., Luther and the Mystics (270 pp.)
 Hyma, A., New Light on Martin Luther (examines the
 charges of Martin Luther's similarity to Hitler, based on
 later career, 275 pp.)
 Lage, D., Martin Luther's Christology and Ethics (recent, 170
 pp.)
 Lazareth, W. , Luther on the Christian Home (social ethics,
 230 pp.)
 Lohse, B., Martin Luther, An Introduction to His Life and
Work (identifies major problems in Luther studies, 270 pp.)
 Obermann, H., Luther and the Jews (ca 300 pp., recent study)
 Prenter, R., Spiritus Creator, Martin Luther's Doctrine of the
Holy Spirit (300 pp.)
 Steinmetz, D., Luther and Staupitz (150 pp.)
 Volkmor, L., Response to Violence (150 pp.)
 Von Loewenich, W., Martin Luther, The Man and His Work
 (serious study of theological development, 380 pp.)

C. Theological Interpretations of Luther

Althaus, Paul, The Theology of Martin Luther
 Cranz, F. Edward, An Essay on the Development of Luther's
Thought on Justice, Law, and Society
 Dillenberger, John, God Hidden and Revealed
 Figgs, J. N., Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius
 Forell, George W., Faith Active in Love: An Investigation of
the Principles Underlying Luther's Social Ethics
 Gerrish, B. A., Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology
of Luther
 McDonough, T. M., The Law and Gospel in Luther
 Mueller, William A., Church and State in Luther and Calvin
 Ozment, Stephen, Homo Spiritualis (on Luther's anthropology
 in comparison with Tauler's)

Pelikan, J., Luther the Expositor
Prenter, Regin, Spiritus Creator
Rupp, Gordon, The Righteousness of God: Luther Studies
Trigg, J. D., Baptism in the Theology of Luther
Vajta, Vilmos, Luther on Worship
Wingren, Gustaf, Luther on Vocation

3. Melanchthon

Hill, C. H., Loci Communes
Manschreck, C. L., ed., Melanchthon on Christian Doctrine:
Library of Protestant Thought

Taylor, F. J., ed., Melanchthon and Bucer: Library of Christian
Classics, XIX

4. Zwingli

Courvoisier, Jacques, Zwingli: A Reformed Theologian

5. Periodicals (In Reference)

Church History
Harvard Theological Review
Journal of Religion
(Others to be selected at discretion of instructor)

6. Bibliography

Bainton, R. H., Bibliography of the Continental Reformation (1935)

Case, S. J., et al, Bibliographical guide to the History of Christianity
(1935)
Pauck, W., “Historiography of the German Reformation,” Church
History, IX, (1940), 305-340

