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DO 501 Basic Christian Doctrine

Zaida Maldonado Perez

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Contact Information:
Office Hours: Tues. 5:30-7:00 or by appointment
(O) 407-482-7647
(You can also reach me by phone, preferably during office hours, or by email.)
Zaida_Perez@asburyseminary.edu

Course Description:
This is an introductory course that bases the theological formation of students upon biblical data as well as upon the classical Christian tradition, contemporary theology, and Wesleyan theological distinctives with a view to helping students grasp the importance of theology for the practice of ministry.

Objectives:*  
1. To understand and be able to use the basic vocabulary and concepts of systematic theology;
2. To become acquainted with the range of literature related to the study of systematic theology;
3. To understand the classical tradition of systematic theology;
4. To engage the student in contemporary forms of theology;
5. To highlight the doctrinal emphases of Asbury Theological Seminary;
6. To explore the practical implications of systematic theology for the Christian life

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

Required Texts:  
Note: The required texts books as well as other required readings are on RESERVE at the library.


Highly Recommended  
See bibliography below for list of recommended books.

**Abbreviations**
We will be reading chapters from the different books specified below and will refer to them using the following abbreviations:
- CRT: *Christian Readings in Theology* by Hodgson and King
- CTASA: *Christian Theology: A Case Study Approach* by Evans and Parker
- ICT: *Introduction to Christian Theology* by González and Maldonado Pérez
See below for bibliographical information

**Reading Assignments:**
All reading assignments listed below under “Reading Assignments” and “For Reflection Papers” are *required* reading.

**Notebook of Definitions:**
This notebook is for *your* benefit and is part of the task of *taking responsibility for your own learning*. Be smart and make the entries as you go!! You will come across (or have come across) many of these terms in your classes/ministry and it will ease your study if you have a good foundation of meanings now. Include in your notebook any concrete examples that will help you remember/understand the terms. Try using your own words. Notebooks will not be collected.
Basic Christian Doctrine

Modules, Aims, Assignments
Asbury Theological Seminary
Zaida Maldonado Pérez, Professor

Course Schedule

Class 1/ February 8

- Introductions
- Review Syllabus
- What is theology: definition and tasks

Class 2/ February 15

- Doctrine, Tradition and Scripture
- Doctrine and Experience
- Doctrine and identity

Reading Assignment:
1. *An Introduction to Christian Theology* (ICT) pp. 9-31
2. *Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (ICD) pp. 183-203

For Reflection Paper:
4. “Authority and Perspective” and “We Call this Book Good,” in *Santa Biblia: The Bible Through Hispanic Eyes* by J. L. González, pp. 11-21, 115-118.
*5. “A Dynamic Approach to the Inspiration of Scripture,” in *A Future for Truth*, by H. Knight, pp. 125-137

Class 3/ February 22

Work in groups/ Movie

Class 4/ March 1

- Who is God?
- Doctrine of God/ The Trinity

Reading Assignment:
1. ICT pp. 33-54
2. ICD pp. 1-32

For Reflection Paper:
Class 5/ March 8
- What is the World? Who are we?
- Doctrine of Creation and our Responsibility

Reading Assignment:
1. ICT pp. 55-76
2. ICD pp. 25-32

Class 6/ March 15
- Who is Jesus Christ?
- Christology

Reading Assignment:
1. ICT pp. 77-95
2. ICD pp. 33-64

For Reflection Paper:
4. “Jesus Christ, His Only Son, Our Lord,” in CTACSA, pp. 105-132
5. “Contextualization and Incarnation: Communicating Christ amid the Oppressed,” in Christ Outside the Gate, by Orlando E. Costas, p. 3-20. (On reserve at the library).

Class 7/ March 29
- The work of God in Christ
- Soteriology

Reading Assignment:
1. ICT pp. 83-95
2. ICD pp. 65-95

For Reflection Paper: (Remember to read all, choose only one to turn in. The same for the rest of the classes.)
3. ICD pp. 96-110
   Note: readings 4-6 below are from Readings in Christian Theology (RCT) by, Hodgson And King.
Choose two or three from above (Feb-March) or, two or three from below (April-May) to make a total of 5 reflection papers
(Note: you may only choose ONE from each class.)

Class 8/April 5
- Grace and Free Will

Reading Assignment:
1. ICD pp. 204-235

For Reflection Paper:

Class 9/ April 12
- What is the church?
- Ecclesiology

Reading Assignment:
1. ICT pp. 97-118
2. ICD pp. 126-143

For Reflection Paper: (Read all, choose only one to turn in.)
Readings below are from RCT

Class 10/ April 19
- Who is the Holy Spirit?
- Pneumatology
Reading Assignment:
1. ICD pp. 111-125

For Reflection Paper:
Readings below are from The Holy Spirit by A. I. C. Heron
2. “First Sketches: The Second and Third Centuries, pp. 63-73
3. “God’s Love, God’s Gift, the Soul of the Church,” pp. 87-98

Class 11/ April 26
• How does the church live?
• The sacraments/Doctrine of Worship

Reading Assignment:
1. ICT pp. 119-137
2. ICD pp. 155-182

For Reflection Paper:

Class 12/ May 3
• The Christian Life/Ministry
• Diakonology

Reading Assignment:
1. ICD pp. 143-154

For Reflection Paper:

Class 13/ May 10
• What is our hope?
• Eschatology

Reading Assignment:
1. ICT pp. 139-158
2. ICD pp. 236-270
For Reflection:
• Reading of Credos!

Notebook of Definitions:

• systematic theology
• doctrine and dogma
• inspiration
• allegorical
• atonement (know various theories!)
• faith
• fideism
• hamartiology
• prevenient grace
• imputed grace
• limited atonement
• ex opere operato (re: sacraments)
• transubstantiation
• consubstantiation
• homoousios

• homoiousios
• hypostatic union
• adoptionism
• docetism
• monophysitism
• kenosis
• apologetics
• Arianism
• creed (Christian)
• patripassionism
• perichoresis
• aseity
• modalism
• tritheism
• filioque
• anthropocentric
• deism

• theodicy
• sacrament
• oikumene
• eschatology
• soteriology
• Christology
• Universalism
• Nestorianism
• Nicene Creed
• de jure, de facto sovereignty
• hermeneutic
• epistemology
• Others will be added as we go

Bibliography and Recommend Readings:
Barth, Karl. Church Dogmatics. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Thomas Forsyth Torrance, Eds. (Scotland:T& T Clark, 1977)
_____.
Evangelical Theology (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday-Anchor, 1964).
_____.


Gonzalez, Justo L. “Authority and Perspective” and “We Call this Book Good.” In Santa Biblia: The Bible Through Hispanic Eyes. Nashville: Abingdon,1996.


Stone, Howard W. and James O. Duke. ““Vocation.” In How to Think Theologically.

REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESMENT

Basic Christian Doctrine                         DO 501
Asbury Theological Seminary                        Spring 05
Zaida Maldonado Pérez, Professor

1. **Reflection Papers** (45%)
   Each student is required to complete:
   - 5 Reflection Papers from the options indicated in the syllabus. Each reflection paper is valued at 9 points. NOTE: You must choose only ONE from each class.
   Limit reflections to no more than **two double-spaced typed pages** with **one inch margins** and 12 font.
   - **Note:**
     a. At least **two** of the reflections **must** be on material that will be covered from April – May.
     b. Readings marked by an asterix (*) may not be chosen.
     c. These papers will focus on answering the following questions clearly and succinctly:
        - *What is the author(s) saying?* (content)
        - *And, How am I (as individual, as church) to respond?* (E.g. how does it speak to me? How does it challenge me/the church in your community today? In other words, how is it relevant?)
   This is the “So what?” of the summary. It involves a brief analysis and application.
   **Note:** The above two questions may be substituted for other questions (e.g. on your ordination exam) that relate to the reading. Please run them by me first.
   - Reflections will be due before the chosen topic is discussed in class. **No exceptions!**

2. **Reflection Facilitators** (15%)
   Teams of three-four students each will be responsible for facilitating a discussion on one of the readings. The facilitating teams may only choose from readings designated by an asterix (*).
   **Process:**
   The facilitators will:
   a. Give a brief but concise summary of the content of the reading (including its thesis and the argument. Share also any important information regarding the historical/theological context that gave rise to the work being discussed.)
   b. Present their thoughts on how the reading(s) address or does not address (their) ministry(ies) (E.g. Include questions, challenges, critique, etc.) Note, be specific here. Feel free to reflect on the work from the perspective of the needs of your own community.
   Please keep sections “a.” and “b.” within **10-12 minutes**.
   c. Give the class 2 to 3 questions to discuss (in groups or as a class, depending on the amount of available time). Each facilitator will lead a group in discussion.
   **Questions** should be:
Reflective (e.g. How does this speak to me, to us as church or denomination?) and, Critically engaging (E.g. How does this address an African American or Korean context? How is the author using scripture and why is this important?)

Engage the other readings.

Questions will develop from your reading as you engage yourself critically, reflectively with it.

Note: Students in groups will also discuss whether they agree with the facilitator’s interpretation of the reading as well as add their own questions and insights related to the reading. Again, this assumes that students will have read the material and will be prepared to engage each other. I would suggest having someone take notes from their group discussion as these will be shared with the larger group.

Students can feel free to use handouts and/or powerpoint or place handouts in the DO501 icon that will be placed on your First Class Desktop. (I can facilitate copies if given to me with some ample time—not just before class.) Feel free to be creative with your time.

4. Final Paper: A Credo (40%)

This Paper has two parts:

Part One:

a. A one to two page credo. This must be of your own creation.

Purpose: As ministers and teachers, we will often be asked to articulate our faith. We ought to be able to do so—not only with conviction—but also with a degree of theological coherence and depth. This is an opportunity to articulate your faith creatively, prayerfully, reflectively, and responsibly.

Your credo will be a work in progress (as you develop spiritually, theologically). Therefore, it is understandable and expected that your credo will reflect “where you are now” in matters of doctrine and theology. Credos will be shared in the last class.

Part Two:

b. A six page paper that explains the credo in depth. This should include, for instance, your ordering of the statements (e.g. Why you begin and end where you do?); The choice of specific terms (e.g. How do you refer to “God?”); What is most critical? And, why?; How does this credo relate to your context?; What questions might remain for you?

Be sure to engage the readings (including scripture!) to support your position. You may delimit these to your endnotes.

This section is also intended to deepen your grasp of, and engagement with, the various doctrines and theological issues (via the class readings, etc.).

***Note: You can get a jump-start on your credo and its explanation by jotting down your reflections on the Christian doctrines after your readings and class discussions. In other words, work on it as you go.
A summary “Assignment Schedule” follows.

### Assignment Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Reflection Papers</td>
<td>Atleast two of them from material covered April-May!!</td>
<td>45 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Facilitators</td>
<td>Facilitators select date</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credo/Final</td>
<td>May 10!</td>
<td>40 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** 100 points

### FORMAT FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS

- All papers should be **double-spaced, typed**, with **one-inch margins** and **12 font**.
- Papers are due on the day assigned and may be used for class discussion.
- Quotations should be clearly marked and sources must be noted in end/footnotes. Note: quotations should be kept to a minimum.
- No folders or binders please.
- Final papers will be returned to your student box unless you provide a stamped envelope.

**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** and reflection paper # (e.g. #1, #2, #3) are 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 you have made prior arrangement with me and the situation merits it.)

### 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 involvement 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.

### 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, 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 FH)

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. Reflection papers will not be accepted after they have been discussed in class. 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). A letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as “F.”

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.”

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

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.

Inclusive Language
Students are urged to use inclusive language wherever possible both in their oral and written work/participation. This guideline is intended to help sensitize the Asbury Theological Seminary community and to provide help in moving beyond our present habits to more just expressions (FH).
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 (FH). Please make sure any borrowed material is properly documented.