



**Hartford International**  
UNIVERSITY FOR RELIGION & PEACE



## **TH 505 Investigating Christian Theology: a dialogical and interreligious approach**

**Spring 2025**

**Synchronous Online Mode**

**Tuesdays: 5:00 – 6:50 PM**

**plus weekly asynchronous activities**

**Syllabus**

### **Instructors:**

Lucinda Mosher, MA, STM, Th.D., Professor of Interreligious Studies;  
Director, MA in Interreligious Studies program  
Senior Editor of the Journal of Interreligious Studies  
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Both instructors are HIU alumni: Dr Mosher: MA 1992; Dr Watts: D.Min 1995

### **Office Hours:**

Dr Mosher's office is in northeast Florida. She may be "visited" via Zoom or phone. Dr Watts's office is on campus: 76 Sherman Street. He may be visited in person or by phone. Office hours will be formalized and posted by mid-January.

### **Course Description:**

Whether we think of it as "faith seeking understanding" (Anselm of Canterbury) or "the study of God and God's ways" (Frederick Buechner) or "the discovery, understanding, and transformation of the convictions of a convictional community, including the discovery and critical revision of their relation to one another *and to whatever else there is*" (James Wm. McClendon Jr), Christian theology is complex—complicated as it is by the sheer manyness of the forms Christianity now takes. Taught collaboratively by two scholar-practitioners who embrace radically different expressions of this faith, who delight in the resulting intricacy, and who have deep experience in multifaith contexts, this course provides an opportunity for

dialogical investigation of core Christian doctrines. It facilitates exploration of multiple perspectives of thinkers and exemplars from the early church to the present—among them, a few non-Christian scholars of Christian scripture, belief, and practice. This course will help students connect “theology” to their own beliefs and practices, ecclesial ministry, service as a chaplain, or social activism—whatever their orientation toward “religion” or their prior experience with formal study of Christian doctrines may be.

### **Outcomes:**

As a result of completing TH 505, students will be able (both orally and in written form appropriate for graduate-level scholarship) to:

1. Explain several Christian doctrines.
2. Demonstrate appreciation of the complexity and nuances of diverse theological positions between and within several Christian branches or denominations.
3. Connect “theology” to their own beliefs and practices, ecclesial ministry, service as a chaplain, or social activism.

TH 505 fulfills requirements or outcomes (the details of which are spelled out on this course’s Canvas site under “Preliminary Matters”) for the following programs:

MAIRS: Elective; Religious Pluralism (Islamic Studies)

COOP MDIV PATHWAY: Foundations of the Christian Faith

MAC: Meaning-making

PhD and DMin: Doctoral students may enroll in this course if its content is relevant to their focus.

### **Required Reading**

McGrath, Alister. *Theology: The Basics*, fourth edition. Wiley Blackwell, 2018. ISBN 9781119158080

McGrath, Alister. *Theology: The Basic Readings*, Third Edition. Wiley Blackwell, 2018. ISBN: 9781119158158

Items provided on the course Canvas site.

### **Recommended Reading**

Anderson, William P. and Richard L. Diesslin. *A Journey Through Christian Theology with Texts from the First to the Twenty-First Century*. Fortress Press, 2000. ISBN 0-8006-3220-6

Barker, Gregory A. and Stephen E. Gregg. *Jesus Beyond Christianity: The Classic Texts*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

Berkey, Robert F. and Sarah A. Edwards, eds. *Christology in Dialogue*. The Pilgrim Press, 1993.

Dulles, Avery, SJ. *The Assurance of Things Hoped For: A Theology of Christian Faith*, Oxford University Press, 1994.

Levine, Amy-Jill and Marc Zvi Brettler. *The Bible With and Without Jesus: How Jews and Christians Read the Same Stories Differently*. HarperOne, 2020.

Lyman, Rebecca. *Early Christian Traditions*. Cowley Publications, 1999.

Macquarrie, John. *Christology Revisited*. Trinity Press International, 1998.

Macquarrie, John. *Principles of Christian Theology*, second edition. Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1977.

McFague, Sallie. *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age*. Fortress Press, 1987.

McGrath, Alister. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sixth Edition. Wiley Blackwell, 2017.

McGrath, Alister, ed. *The Christian Theology Reader*, sixth edition. Wiley Blackwell, 2016.

Migliore, Daniel L. *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Wm B. Eerdmans, 1991. ISBN 0-8028-0601-5

Morse, Christopher. *Not Every Spirit: A Dogmatics of Christian Disbelief*, second edition. Continuum, 1999, Fifth edition.

Placher, William C. *A History of Christian Theology: An Introduction*. Westminster, 1983.

Polkinghorne, John. *Quarks, Chaos, & Christianity: Questions to Science and Religion*. Crossroad, 2004.

Polkinghorne, John. *Faith, Science & Understanding*. Yale University Press, 2000.

Polkinghorne, John and Nicholas Beale. *Questions of Truth: Fifty-one Responses to Questions about God, Science, and Belief*. WJK, 2009.

Polkinghorne, John. *The Faith of a Physicist: Reflections of a Bottom-Up Thinker*. Fortress Press, 1996.

[...and many other wonderful possibilities!]

**Course format and structure:**

**How we will proceed:** Each content module examines a particular aspect of Christian Theology. Weekly Zoom sessions provide an opportunity to process what you have been studying for the previous six days. Here is the plan:

<b>Module</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Interval</b>	<b>Zoom</b>
Preliminaries	Theology's Task; the Apostles' Creed	N/A	January 21
Module 1:	Faith	1/22 – 1/27	January 28
Module 2:	God	1/29 – 2/3	February 4
Module 3:	Creation	2/5 – 2/10	February 11
Module 4:	Jesus (Christology; Incarnation)	2/12 – 2/17	February 18
Module 5:	Salvation (Soteriology)	2/19 – 2/24	February 25
Module 6:	Spirit (Pneumatology)	2/26 – 3/3	March 4
<i>2/28: Ramadan begins; 3/10 – 3/14: Reading Week – no class meeting on 3/11</i>			
Module 7:	Trinity	3/5 – 3/17	March 18
Module 8:	Church (Ecclesiology)	3/19 – 3/24	March 25
Module 9:	Sacraments/Practices [Note: 3/29 = Eid al-Fitr]	3/26 – 3/31	April 1
Module 10:	Heaven (Eschatology)	4/2 – 4/7	April 8
<i>4/12 – 4/20: Passover; 4/13 – 4/20: Holy Week and Easter. No class meeting on 4/15</i>			
Module 11:	Recapitulation (reviewing)	4/9 – 4/21	April 22
Pause	Writing Week (preparation of summary essay)	4/23–4/28	April 29
Module 12:	Sharing and Synthesis	4/30–May 6	May 7

**What “synchronous online” means:** The requirement for a semester-long, three-credit course is participation in a weekly two-hour Zoom meeting, complemented by a third hour of asynchronous online (or some other sort of experiential) learning each week. On Tuesday at 5:00 PM (Eastern), students are to be in a secure location that has adequate microphone, camera, and sound capabilities. Students can expect to spend approximately six hours in preparation (through reading and writing) for each Zoom meeting. Students are to use Canvas to access to syllabi, reading materials, instructions, assignments, grades, and some discussions.

## **Assignments and Assessment**

**Preparation and Participation:** Attention to (and journaling about) weekly reading assignments; presence on Canvas and Zoom; response to prompts that fall outside the categories below. (15% of final grade)

**Written Reflection:** Prior to most Tuesday late-afternoon Zoom meetings, students will be asked to post observations about the material assigned for that module and may also be asked to comment on observations posted by classmates. (30% of final grade)

**Oral Reflection:** At least three times during the term, understanding of key vocabulary and concepts will be evaluated by means of an oral “quiz”. (10% of final grade)

**Asynchronous lecture-watching:** Most modules include prerecorded lectures that are to be watched independently. Most of these are provided on Canvas via VoiceThread—a tool that invites (and awards points for) a response to the video. (10% of final grade)

**Formal Essays:** These assignments encourage synthesis (in 500–1250 words) of learnings from three or more modules. The final essay in this series will demonstrate your learning about Christian doctrine generally. The final essay will be archived for accreditation reviews in the future. (30% of final grade)

## **HIU Grading Scale**

A (95-100)	Demonstrates excellent mastery of the subject matter, a superior ability to articulate this, and provides helpful connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.
A- (90-94)	Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, ability to articulate this well, and makes connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations.
B+ (87-89)	Demonstrates a very good understanding of the subject matter, able to articulate lessons learned in the assignment well. Meets course expectations.
B (83-86)	Demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter and the ability to articulate lessons learned. Meets expectations of the course.
B- (80-82)	Demonstrates an understanding of the material at hand, has some difficulty articulating this, and basic connection of the material to daily life or contemporary issues/life. Meets basic expectations for the course.
C+ (77-79)	Demonstrates a basic comprehension of the subject matter, weak articulation and connections. Barely meets expectations for the course.
C (70-76)	Demonstrates a minimal comprehension of the subject matter and has difficulty making connections—or is egregiously late in submitting homework. Barely expectations of the course. {minimal connection}
F	(below 70) Is unable to meet the basic requirements of the course.

## **HIU Values for Collaborative Teaching and Learning**

In collaboratively taught courses, HIU expects that instructors and students alike will strive to:

- Show mutual appreciation and respect for others—modeling the privilege to learn from and partner with each other.
- Engage in cross-disciplinary content and teaching
- Pay attention to the whole personhood of another—history, race, religion, knowledge, gender, and rank
- Demonstrate how to disagree respectfully and well
- Embody mutuality—learning to construct ideas and skills and experiences together

## **Email Policy**

The instructor will use the official HIU student email addresses for all course communications. Please check your *hartfordinternational.edu* email account regularly.

## **Inclusive Language**

Hartford International University for Religion and Peace is committed to a policy of inclusion in its academic life and mission. All members of the community are expected to communicate in language that reflects the equality of genders, openness to diverse cultural and theological perspectives, and sensitivity to one another's understandings of God.

## **Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, Use of Artificial Intelligence**

Academic honesty and integrity are expected of all students. **Plagiarism** exists when: a) the work submitted was done, in whole or in part, by anyone other than the one submitting the work, b) parts of the work, whether direct quotations, ideas, or data, are taken from another source without acknowledgement, c) the whole work is copied from another source [especially a web based source], or d) significant portions of one's own previous work used in another course. **Artificial Intelligence** must be used judiciously; your academic integrity depends on that. AI can be helpful to use it as a research assistant; but take care! Don't let it overwhelm your own voice. If you use any form of AI, you *must* acknowledge that in your work.

## **Accommodations**

The Americans with Disabilities Act ensures equal access to qualified individuals with disabilities, and prevents discrimination on the basis of a disability. It is HIU policy to provide reasonable accommodations on a case-by-case basis, which may mean working with outside social and governmental agencies to provide the necessary range of services for student success. Students with disabilities who wish to receive accommodations must contact the Student Services Coordinator. Students with disabilities are eligible for disability support services when they are enrolled in courses and they have disclosed their disability and requested related accommodations during enrollment and/or before the start of each semester. All students seeking accommodation must fill out the Request for Disability Accommodations form.

## **Official Handbooks**

For questions you might have regarding policies or procedures, please check the student handbook and university policies at hartfordinternational.edu. Academic policies are listed on the HIU website.

## **Communication and Technology**

Students will be expected to use their Hartford International email for communication regarding the course. In addition, all students will need to log into the course site several times per week in order to take part in discussions and to access readings, videos, mini-lectures and other course materials. Students must also create a free account with VoiceThread and have access via the VoiceThread app. Within Canvas, the *Announcements* feature will be used to convey information "for the good of the order."

## **About CANVAS:**

The TH 505 Canvas website is your primary roadmap for this course. It provides the most accurate and up-to-date instructions. Be sure to explore the site thoroughly before you begin. If you have difficulty navigating or operating any aspect of the site, do take advantage of the "Help" button (indicated by a question-mark). The "live chat" feature works very well; you can expect prompt and clear responses to your questions. You may also phone the Canvas Support Hotline: (877) 249-4494. If you have questions about course content (or you tried Canvas Help but are still mystified), please email or text-message one of your instructors right away.

## **Attendance**

Active attendance (that is, "camera on") in Zoom class is required. If you know you will be unable to attend a class session, please inform your professors in advance. They may give you an alternate assignment. Active use of the Canvas site is also required. Failure to log on for seven consecutive days is tantamount to absence from class and may incur a penalty.

