



## Course Syllabus

Winter 2018

### THEOLOGY OF THE HUMAN PERSON THEO 0646

JANUARY 10 – APRIL 4

WEDNESDAYS, 2:15 AM – 5:05 PM

**INSTRUCTOR: DENNIS NGIEN, PhD**

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Office Hours: By appointment

To access your course material, please go to <http://classes.tyndale.ca>. Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account. For information how to access and forward emails to your personal account, see <http://www.tyndale.ca/it/live-at-edu>.

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course endeavours to acquaint students with the theology of the human person. It focuses on biblical and doctrinal issues that bear upon such questions as “What does it mean to be a human being?,” “What is meant by the ‘image of God’?,” “How is the Person of God related to the personhood of human beings?”

Prerequisite: THEO 0531 Systematic Theology I

## II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. articulate the importance of “theological anthropology” over against other determinants of anthropology in modern and postmodern society;
2. understand the relationship of major theological topoi (Christology, Trinity, sin, eschatology) to the human person;
3. identify areas of convergence and divergence concerning social scientific and

- theological perspectives on the human person;
4. recognize non-theological anthropologies that students may have absorbed implicitly or that different philosophies, psychologies and psychotherapies endorse explicitly;
  5. explore the nature of gender, finitude, and trauma in theological and biblical perspective;
  6. build bridges between counseling and ministry practice and theological reflection.

### III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### A. REQUIRED TEXTS

Grenz, Stanley J. *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001. ISBN: 0-664-23238-8.

Holeman, Virginia Todd. *Theology for Better Counseling: Trinitarian Reflections for Healing and Formation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012. ISBN: 9780830839728.

#### B. SUPPLEMENTAL READING: On line and on reserve.

Cortez, Marc. *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016. ISBN: 2015024056.

#### C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

##### 1. Class attendance and Participation: 10%

Each class has a set of questions, which help guide reading of the main text (Grenz). From time to time, there will be group discussions based on these questions. Also note that there will be occasional guest lecturers.

##### 2. A Reflection Paper: 35%

Write a brief theological analysis (6 pages, double-spaced) of the portrayal of the human person in a popular cultural 'text' from the last 40 years. This 'text' might be a novel, collection of poetry, TV series, film, or musical album. Ask yourself: what kind of "anthropology" or understanding of the human is assumed or explored in this work? How does it fit with some of the theological models we have explored in class? How does it reflect understandings of "the human" at our current socio-historical moment?

All *potential topics* must be **approved** by the instructor. A brief list of appropriate examples is provided below; investigating the work of a Canadian author, poet,

musician, or filmmaker is especially welcome. Students can use the lecture notes and the texts. Footnoting is not required. However documentation can be done in short form, that is, cite the page number in bracket, e.g., (Endo, 89).

Examples:

Novelists – Margaret Atwood, Robertson Davies, Lawrence Hill, Vincent Lam, Joseph Boyden, Alice Munro, David Adams Richards, Miriam Toews, Ian McEwan, John Updike, Elie Wiesel, J.G. Ballard, Don DeLillo, Shusaku Endo, \*Cormac McCarthy (see sample paper below\*)

Poets/Songwriters – Leonard Cohen, Bruce Cockburn, Seamus Heaney, Czeslaw Milosz, Margaret Avison, Denise Levertov, Bob Dylan

Filmmakers – Atom Egoyan, Sarah Polley, Deepa Mehta, Denys Arcand, Jean-Marc Vallée

\*For a sample paper, see Christine Bieber Lake, “Carrying the Fire, Bearing the Image: Theological Reflections in Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*,” in *The Image of God in an Image Driven Age. Explorations in Theological Anthropology*, eds. Beth Felker Jones & Jeffrey W. Barbeau, 136-54. Illinois: IVP, 2016. [\*posted in course page]

**Due Date: Feb., 16, 2018**

### **3. A major integrative essay (10-12 pages): 55%**

For this paper, you will advocate for one model of theological anthropology as of particular use for a particular context – whether historical, social, or practical. Drawing on at least one major thinker whose work we have explored (e.g. Gregory of Nyssa, Barth, Wesley, Luther, Calvin, Gregory of Nyssa, etc.) you will attempt to build a bridge between anthropology in theological perspective and other doctrines (such as creation or providence or salvation, or church or eschatology, etc.) or problems in contemporary culture and practice (such lament or grief, evil, human sexuality, etc.,)

Papers should be between 10-12 pages (double-spaced, in 12-pt font) and have at least 30 footnotes. They should incorporate at least 12 scholarly sources: 3 academic books, **in addition to 3 course texts**, and 6 journal articles on the topic of your choice.

**Due date: April 04, 2018**

**Suggested topics:** The student should focus on a key theologian, or a major text, and engage theologically on a topic of interest (other topics must be approved by the instructor). Some examples include:

- a. Theological reflections on suffering:

- Key Text: Stanley Hauerwas, *God, Medicine, and Suffering*.
- b. Theological reflection on evil:  
Key Text: Ted Peters, *Radical Evil in Soul and Society*.
  - c. Theological reflections on Worship and Idolatry:  
Key Text: Richard Lints, *Identity and Idolatry* or Beale, G. K. *We Become What We Worship. A Biblical theology of Idolatry*.
  - d. Theological Reflection on Sin and the authentic Self: e.g. Augustine, Luther, Barth, Jüngel.  
Key Text: Matt Jenson, *The Gravity of Sin. Augustine, Luther, and Barth on 'homo incurvatus in se'*.
  - e. Persons In Communion: The Trinitarian relations and human participation, or theological anthropology for the Church  
Key Text: John Zizioulas, *Being in Communion or Communion and Otherness: Studies in Personhood and the Church*. You could also compare this to Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*.
  - f. The human person and the “dialogical” nature of existence  
Key Text: Martin Buber, *I and Thou*.
  - g. Theological commentary on the threat to the human posed by disinformation  
Key Text: Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda*.
  - h. Atonement images appropriate for counseling:  
Key Text: Scot McKnight, *A Community Called Atonement*.
  - i. Theology of the Cross: Lament and Bereavement  
Key Text: Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Lament for a Son*.
  - j. African responses to the problem of Christian identity  
Key Text: Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and in Modern Africa*.
  - k. Theological anthropology and gender in eschatological perspective  
Key Text: Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay 'On the Trinity'*.
  - l. Asian, postcolonial, feminist approach to understanding the human being theologically and in relation to the Other  
Key Text: Grace Ji-Sun Kim, *Embracing the Other: The Transformative Spirit of Love*.
  - m. Theological anthropology for Christian formation and virtue  
Key Text: Nonna Verna Harrison, *God's Many-Splendored Image*
  - n. Emotions and affectivity within theological anthropology  
Key Text: Toth, Beata. *The Heart Has its Reasons: Towards a Theological Anthropology of the Heart*.
  - o. Chinese perspectives on theological anthropology  
Key Text: Alexander Chow, *Theosis, Sino-Christian Theology and the Second Chinese Enlightenment*
  - p. Identity, race, and Christian self-understanding

- Key Text: Willie Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* or James Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*
- q. Feminist theological anthropologies  
Key Text: Ann O'Hara Graff, ed. *In the Embrace of God: Feminist Approaches to Theological Anthropology* or Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*
- r. Theological anthropology and radical community for the Church.  
Key Text: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*
- s. Theological anthropology and disability  
Key Text: Nancy Eiesland, *The Disabled God*
- t. Theological Reflection on The Sacredness of Human Life:  
Key Text: David Gushee. *The Sacredness of Human Life*.
- u. Theological Anthropology in Dialogue with the Social Sciences:  
Key Text: Christian Smith. *What is a Person? Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and the Moral Good from the Person Up*.
- v. Theological Basis of Human Freedom:  
Key Text: Ingolf Dalferth, *Creatures of Possibility*
- w. Theological Anthropology and Evolutionary Science  
Key Text: Celia Deane-Drummond, *The Wisdom of the Liminal: Evolution and Other Animals in Human Becoming*
- x. Christological Grounding of Anthropology:  
Key Text: Ian McFarland, *Difference and Identity*

**For sample papers,** see Marc Cortex, *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective. Ancient and Contemporary Approaches to Theological Anthropology* (Zondervan, 2016). Cortex covers the view of these theologians, ancient and contemporary: Gregory of Nyssa, Julian of Norwich, Martin Luther, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Karl Barth, John Zizioulas, and James Cone. It provides lens to how this paper is done.

### **C. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK**

- Work should be submitted electronically via email before class on the day it is due.
- Strict adherence to the page limits and due dates is required. Penalties will be incurred for failing to adhere to either of these standards.
- All work must be typed, using standard margins, double-spaced, in 12 point type.
- In keeping with Tyndale's ethos, please use gender-inclusive language in your papers. For example, use "We are made in the image of God" rather than "Men are made in the image of God."

Your work should demonstrate the following characteristics:

#### **Proper Reference and Citation Style**

For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer

to sections [10.46 to 10.51](#) and [14.253 to 14.254](#).

### **Academic Integrity**

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students should consult the current Academic Calendar for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System. The Academic Calendar is posted at <http://tyndale.ca/registrar/calendar>.

**NOTE:** Unless directed otherwise, papers will be submitted electronically through the course website in both word and pdf format by 11:59 PM (Eastern Time) on the assigned due date. Papers submitted after 11:59 PM on the due date will receive a 1/3 grade deduction (i.e., B+ to B) for each day (or part thereof) following the due date. This late policy will apply to all assignments for which no extension has been granted. Extensions will be granted only for serious personal, family, or health situations.

### **D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Interactive Questions	25%
Reflection Paper	25 %
Major Integrative Paper	50 %
Total Grade	100 %

### **F. COURSE EVALUATION**

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

#### **IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT, AND REQUIRED READINGS**

##### **Week 1 (Jan. 10)– Introduction: Who am I? Some “Experimental” Theology**

Holeman, *Theology for Better Counseling*, ch. 1: “Is All This Fuss About Theology Really Necessary?” (pp. 9-36).

##### **Questions:**

- What does the author mean by a “theological cognitive dissonance,” and why was this an issue in her therapeutic practice?
- What did John Wesley mean by “experimental” theology? Is there anything in your own church tradition/denomination that parallels this idea?
- The author distinguishes between “strong-sense theological thinking” and “weak-sense theological thinking.” What is meant by this, and how might it help us as we move into the course?

##### **Week 2 (Jan. 17) – Trinitarian Theology and the Self (Part I)**

Grenz, *The Social God*, “Introduction” (1-20)

Holeman, *Theology for Better Counseling*, ch. 3 “A Theologically Reflective Counseling Relationship: The Triune God and Therapeutic Common Factors” (62-79).

##### **Questions:**

- What are some major social factors affecting the formation of our souls today? You might want to think about the factors as they affect different generations, as well as in different parts of the globe.
- Trinitarian theology as it has developed historically is tied closely to the term “person.” What kinds of things do we need to keep in mind when employing this term for both human persons and the Trinity?
- Walt Whitman once famously wrote, “I am large; I contain multitudes.” How might we, as Christians, think about the “multiplicity” of the self, particularly in light of contemporary society and technology?

##### **Week 3 (Jan. 24)– Trinitarian Theology and the Self (Part II)**

Grenz, *The Social God*, ch. 1: “From the One subject to the Three Persons: The Renewal of Trinitarian Theology” (23-57)

### Questions:

- What, briefly stated, do we mean by referring to the Trinity as “one substance” and “three Persons”? How would you explain this doctrine in a way that avoids both tritheism (three gods) and modalism (one God who puts on different ‘masks’)?
- How does Karl Barth’s “revelational” understanding of the Trinity – where “the triune God stands behind and within the actual event of revelation” – help move us away from overly abstract models of the Trinity?
- “The economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity.” Why did Karl Rahner say this, and how has this idea been both affirmed and re-thought by Catherine LaCugna?
- Zizioulas roots his social vision of the Trinity in the idea of “communion.” If you were going to write a Trinitarian theology, what word would you place as central?

### Week 4 (Jan. 31) – The Turn Inward and Interiority of Self

Grenz, *The Social God*, ch. 2: “From Interiority to Psychotherapy: An Archeology of the Self” (58-97)

#### Questions

- How did Augustine alter our concept of the “self”?
- Are the words “person” and “individual” different in meaning?
- Have you ever experienced (or interacted with believers who have experienced) profound inward anxiety over “full assurance” of salvation? How does Grenz explain the rise of this self-focused/self-mastering model?
- In the story of the “self” outlined in this chapter, we journey from Augustine through Kant all the way to modern psychotherapy. How might Augustine, from the beginning of the story, see or respond to modern iterations of the “self”?

### Week 5 (Feb. 07) – The Undermining of Self and the Postmodern Self

Grenz, *The Social God*, ch. 3: “From Autobiography to Preference: The Undermining of the Self” (98-137)

#### Questions

- How are Rousseau’s *Confessions* different in tone and approach to Augustine’s *Confessions*?
- Some theorists have suggested that postmodernism plays a similar role to Romanticism in working against a too-narrow understanding of reason and mastery. Do you think this is a helpful comparison?
- Are there elements of Michel Foucault’s study of the history of the self which might be of particular interest for Christians?



- What does it mean to say postmodernism is characterized by not only “psychic fragmentation” (Jameson) but a “celebrative response to the dissolution of the self”?

### **Week 6 (Feb. 14) – The Imago Dei in Trinitarian Perspective (Part I)**

Grenz, *The Social God*, ch. 4: “From Structure to Destiny: The *Imago Dei* in Christian Theology” (141-182): These two lectures will focus on Christological visions of the human person in the history of theology: Athanasius, Irenaeus, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther & Calvin.

#### **Questions**

- Though we often say we are made in the image of God (*imago Dei*), what do we actually mean by this? What kinds of qualities or values do you associate with this doctrine?
- How does Irenaeus (along with the other patristic authors) refine our understanding of “image” and “likeness”?

### **Week 7 (Feb. 28) – The Imago Dei in Trinitarian Perspective (Part II)**

**Supplemental Readings:** (online)

See Marc Cortez, *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective. Ancient and Contemporary Approaches to Theological Anthropology* (Zondervan, 2016).

See especially Cortez’s Introduction: “A Christ-Centered Lens. What does it Mean for Anthropology to be ‘Christological’?” (pp. 17-29).

#### **Questions**

- Why did Luther want to move away from a structural view of the *imago Dei* towards what we might term a relational understanding?
- Does Calvin’s understanding of the *imago Dei* put too much, too little, or just enough emphasis on the fallen state of mankind?
- The relational understanding of the *imago Dei* was compared by Calvin to a mirror. Are there any other visual images we could employ to describe this idea as understood by the Reformers?

### **Week 8 (Mar. 07) – From Humankind to the True Human: Biblical Sources**

Grenz, *The Social God*, ch. 5: “The Imago Dei and Biblical Christo-Anthropology” (183-222).

#### **Questions**

- A very literal reading of Genesis might be to read the “image of God” as pure anthropomorphism – that humans physically resemble God. Why did Old Testament scholars move away from this interpretation?

- One way of understanding Genesis is through the “representational motif.” From your own biblical knowledge, is this an idea that carries through the OT and NT?
- If Christ is the glory of God in human flesh, to be likened to an “impress” (think of an imprint on a wax seal) and a perfect “reflection,” what does it mean for us to be “conformed to his image”? In other words, how can we understand ourselves in light of Christ as the ultimate image (*eikon*) of God?

## **Week 9 (Mar. 14): Eschatology and the New Humanity**

### **Required Reading:**

Grenz, *The Social God*, ch. 6: “The Eschatological Hope to Ongoing task: The Imago Dei and the New Humanity” (223-264).

### **Supplemental Reading:**

Cortez, *Christological Anthropology*, ch. 8: “Developing Christological Visions of the Human Person” (218-233).

### **Questions**

- Paul writes about being changed “from glory to glory.” How can we understand this both *christologically* and *eschatologically* with reference to the imago Dei?
- What is the role of the Spirit in conforming us to the image of Christ?
- N.T. Wright talks about believers in the church as being mirrors who reflect divine glory to each other. Grenz agrees, reminding us that the true mirror of Christ. What do you think of this metaphor? How might it change the way we relate to each other in community?

## **Week 10 (Mar. 21): Gender, Sexuality, and Divine Relationality**

### **Required Reading:**

Grenz, *The Social God*, ch.7: “From the Eternal City to Primordial Garden. The Imago Dei and Human Sexuality” (267-303).

### **Supplemental Reading:**

Cortez, *Christological Anthropology*, ch. 1: “Beyond Genitalia: Gregory of Nyssa’s Transformative Christology and the (Re)orientation of Sexuality” (31-55).

### **Questions**

- Does the contemporary church suffer from an over- or under-emphasis on sexuality and gender?

- “Sexuality, understood as the sense of incompleteness and the corresponding drive for wholeness, forms the dynamic that not only seeks human relationships but also motivates the quest for God.” (Grenz) “You complete me.” (from the movie *Jerry Maguire*) Are these quotes fundamentally opposed? How can our idea of sexual relationships in terms of wholeness and fulfillment co-exist with the idea that our satisfaction is ultimately only found in the triune God?
- What is the *analogia relationis*, and is it by itself an adequate basis for anthropology?

### **Week 11 (Mar. 28) – The Reconstruction of the Self-in-Community: Relational Personhood**

Grenz, *The Social God*, ch. 8 “From the Many to the One” (pp. 304-336).

#### **Questions**

- How do Lewis’ concepts of the “four loves” translate into a counselling perspective?
- What is the “ecclesial self” and how would you explain the concept to people in your church?

### **Week 12 (Apr. 04)– Sin and Suffering (Group Discussions)**

#### **Required Readings:**

- a) Forgiveness and Atonement

Holeman, *Theology for Better Counseling*, ch. 6: “Just Forgive? The Atonement and Theologically Reflective Counseling,” (131-155).

- b) Eschatology and Theologically Reflective Counseling

Holeman, *Theology for Better Counseling*, ch. 7: “Seeing Now in the Light of the Not Yet” (158-181).

#### **Questions**

- Why are suffering/sin and eschatology linked?
- How can we respond to questions of theodicy when they come up in our counselling practice? Or in churches?
- Think back to your “metamodel” of counselling from weeks 1 and 2. How would what you have since read about in the course change or add to the model you proposed?

## **V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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**B. Journal Articles:**

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