

CT 249  
Spring 2008  
Instructor: Sarah Lancaster

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I am available to see students by appointment.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

An examination of issues traditionally associated with the doctrine of the person and work of Jesus Christ through study of classic and modern texts, and a critical exploration of contemporary Christological options.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) To explore various images of Jesus Christ in the Bible and Christian history
- 2) To understand Christian doctrine regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ
- 3) To become familiar with some contemporary expressions of Christology
- 4) To prepare a constructive statement of the doctrine of Christ
- 5) To continue to develop critical thinking skills
- 6) To continue to develop writing skills.

**TEXTS:**

Inbody, Tyron L., *The Many Faces of Christology*

Keck, Leander E., *Who Is Jesus? History in Perfect Tense*

Young, Frances, *The Making of the Creeds*

Norris, Richard A., *The Christological Controversy*

Wiley, Tatha, ed., *Thinking of Christ: Proclamation, Explanation, Meaning*

Green, Joel B and Baker, Mark D., *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Context*

Sharepoint Reading:

Bloesch, Donald G., "The Deity of Jesus Christ," in *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, vol. 1 (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 120-147.

Ogden, Schubert M., "The Point of Christology" in *Journal of Religion* 55: 375-395

Schleiermacher, Friedrich, "On the Meaning of Christmas," in *Christmas Eve: Dialogue on the Incarnation* (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1967), 69-86

Sobrino, Jon, "Systematic Christology: Jesus Christ, the Absolute Mediator of the Reign of God," in *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 440-461

Grant, Jacquelyn, "Womanist Jesus and the Mutual Struggle for Liberation," in *The Recovery of Black Presence: An Interdisciplinary Exploration* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 129-142

Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*

Dabru Emet

Neusner, Jacob, "There Never Has Been a Judaeo-Christian Dialogue—But There Can Be One"

Haight, Roger, "Pluralist Christology as Orthodox" in *The Myth of Religious Superiority*, 151-161

Hellwig, Monika K., "Christology in the Wider Ecumenism," in *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered*, 107-116

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

Each student will be required to do the following:

Write two short papers, four to five pages in length.

Write one paper six to eight pages in length.

Prepare for and attend class regularly.

Participate in class discussion.

*First paper* (due February 19): Frances Young argues that there are issues of "truth and identity" that were involved in the formation of the understandings of Jesus Christ represented in the creeds (see page 103). In this paper, first explain what Young understands these issues of truth and identity to be. Second, give your own brief (and tentative) answer to her question, "Should the credal productions at the end of this process be treated as determinative of belief today?"

*Second paper* (due April 8): Green and Baker make the claim that "no one model of the atonement will fit all sizes and shapes, all needs and contexts where the church is growing and active in mission" (p. 221). In this paper, first explain how the authors can support this claim. Second, state your own view regarding whether it is important for Christian faith to have a single or at least dominant model of the atonement that is shared across times and cultures.

*Third paper* (due May 13, seniors must have final papers turned in by May 6): Write your own constructive understanding of Jesus Christ's person and work. (Note: This paper is not to be about what Jesus has done in your own life. It is instead to be a theological explanation of who Jesus Christ is and what Jesus Christ does that engages the issues we have covered in class.)

### **GRADING:**

First paper: 25%

Second paper: 25%.

Third paper: 35%.

Class participation: 15%.

*(You will be asked to do some self-evaluation of your preparedness for and participation in class and discussions.)*

Missing more than 25% of the course will result in a failing grade. Unless an extension has been arranged in advance, late papers will not be accepted.

### **SCHEDULE:**

**January 29: Introduction to the course and Images of Christ**

**February 5: The Quest for the Historical Jesus**

Reading: Inbody, preface and chapter 1; Keck, preface and chapters 1-5 (recommended reading: Wiley, chapter 2, "Jesus of Nazareth in Historical Research" by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza)

**February 12: The Person of Christ**

Reading: Young, Introduction and chapters 1-4; Norris, Introduction (pages 1-21) and chapters 2-6

**February 19: The Person of Christ, cont.**

Reading: Young, chapters 5-6 and concluding reflections; Norris, Introduction (pages 21-31) and chapters 7-9 (recommended reading: Wiley, chapter 3, “Classical Christology,” by William P. Loewe)

*Bring a United Methodist Hymnal, if you have one.*

*First paper due.*

**February 26: Interpretations of the Doctrine (Evangelical)**

Reading: Inbody, chapters 2-3; Bloesch, “The Deity of Jesus Christ” (on reserve)

**March 4: Interpretation of the Doctrine (Liberal and Postliberal)**

Reading: Inbody, chapter 4; Schleiermacher, “On the Meaning of Christmas” (on reserve); Ogden, “The Point of Christology” (on reserve); Sobrino, “Systematic Christology: Jesus Christ, the Absolute Mediator of the Reign of God” (on reserve)

**March 11: Interpretation of the Doctrine (Feminist)**

Reading: Inbody, chapter 5; Wiley, chapter 7 (“Christology and Patriarchy” by Rosemary Radford Ruether); Grant, “Womanist Jesus and the Mutual Struggle for Liberation” (on reserve)

**March 18: Mid-term recess**

**March 25: The Work of Christ**

Reading: Inbody, chapter 6; Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*

**April 1: The Work of Christ, cont.**

Green and Baker, chapters 1-5

**April 8: The Work of Christ, cont.**

Green and Baker, chapters 6-9; Wiley, chapter 4 (“Christ and Redemption,” by Gerard S. Sloyan)

*Second paper due*

**April 15: Jesus Christ and Judaism**

Reading: Inbody, chapter 7; Wiley, chapter 6 (“The Christ Event and the Jewish People,” by John T. Pawlikowski, O.S.M.); “Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity” (on Sharepoint); Neusner, “There Never Has Been a Judaeo-Christian Dialogue—But There Can Be One” (on Sharepoint)

**April 22: Mid-Term recess**

**April 29: Jesus Christ and Religious Pluralism**

Reading: Inbody, chapter 8; Wiley, chapter 5 (“Jesus Christ and Religious Pluralism,” by Roger Haight, S.J.); Haight, “Pluralist Christology as Orthodox”; Hellwig, “Christology in the Wider Ecumenism”

**May 6: Jesus Christ and Social Transformation**

Reading: Wiley, chapters 8-11 (“A Postcolonial Christ,” by Robert Lassalle-Klein; “Christ in *Mujerista* Theology,” by Ada María Isasi-Díaz, “The Cross of Christ and Discipleship,” by M. Shawn Copeland, and “Christology, Ethics, and Spirituality,” by Lisa Sowle Cahill)

*Final paper due May 13 (seniors must have final papers turned in by May 6)*

**INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE:**

I expect language regarding human beings to be inclusive of women and men. If, for instance, you intend to refer to human beings as such, I expect to read “humankind” instead of “mankind.” I encourage language about God to be inclusive.