

BSTH 520: Contemporary Approaches to Theology
Foster School of Biblical Studies, Arts & Sciences
Cincinnati Christian University
Fall 2018

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides students with a working knowledge of the key concepts and issues related to contemporary Christian theology. Students will develop skills to think theologically, addressing major cultural and ecclesial issues in contemporary society. A survey of significant theological thought provides students with a broad awareness of the scope of theology in society. Students will engage in discussion, reading, and practical projects to facilitate the learning process.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students who complete *BSTH 520: Contemporary Approaches to Theology* will be able to:

- 1) Examine ways in which theology addresses major the major cultural and ecclesiastical issues of contemporary society.
- 2) Construct a viable living theology from the resources offered by contemporary approaches to theology.
- 3) Implement the concepts of the Pastor Theologian in their respective ministries.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

The course adopts a hybrid model in its implementation, including in-class lectures with discussion and outside coursework, discussion, and reflection. Students will read material pertinent to the course content. As a cohort, students will interact with one another through group work outside of class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In order to successfully complete the course, students need to satisfactorily finish all assignments.

- 1) Reading assignments: Reading assignments assist student awareness of the primary issues involved in the course. There will be two readings for the class. Students will attest that they have interacted with the reading material at the end of the course.
 - a) Students will read the book *Introducing Theological Method* by Mary Veeneman. The book serves as the primary textbook and will be referenced during class (see schedule). Students will read the book in its entirety by the end of the course. Assigned pages will run in tandem with the weekly lectures and discussion groups.
 - b) Students will read the book *Becoming a Pastor Theologian* edited by Todd Wilson and Gerald Hiestand. The book serves as the primary dialogue partner

during the discussion groups (see below). The book will be referred to during the lectures.

2) Cohort Discussion Sessions

- a) Following the in-class section of the course, students will continue to work through material via discussion groups on Canvas (*Introducing Theological Method* and *Becoming a Pastor Theologian* books as resources).
- b) The discussion groups will be guided and overseen by the professor, and will interact with the main themes covered in the class.
- c) Discussion groups are essential for students to acquire and develop working knowledge of the key aspects of contemporary theology and the role of the pastor-theologian in the church.
- d) Students will be expected to interact with one another on the discussion groups.
- e) More information on the discussion groups will be given in class.

3) Pastor-Theologian Synthesis Project

- a) Due to the public nature of theology and the church, students will prepare a project related to the role of the pastor-theologian in the church and society.
- b) The professor will assign project topics areas that are related to individual student's ministerial context.
- c) This assignment is cumulative, as it will be compiled during the weeks of the Discussion Groups. Students will synthesize the material they have been working on and apply it to their particular ministerial or church context.
- d) The project will be a total of 10 content pages (along with a one page Title Page, one to two page Table of Contents, and a Bibliography), double spaced using Times New Roman 12pt font, but can take a variety of iterations. Students are free to be creative in the project, employing social media, other media, interviews, etc.
- e) Students will submit the project to Canvas by the date on which it is due.
- f) The paper should include the following:
 - i) Title Page (one page)
 - ii) Table of Contents (one page)
 - iii) Main Body (ten pages)
 - (1) Introduction
 - (2) Sub-points related to the Table of Contents
 - (a) Depending on the medium used, the main body might contain written research, social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.), other media (videos, interviews, etc.).
 - (b) Students are encouraged to be creative with this project.
 - (3) Conclusion
 - iv) Bibliography: Students are free to expand the bibliography beyond the required and recommended reading. Information on the bibliography will be given the first day of class.

g) More information will be given in class.

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

- 1) Students must submit all work as instructed by the professor (either in class hard copy or on Canvas) by the end of the day in which it is due.
- 2) Students must write in standard university approved format and use 12pt. Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins.
- 3) All work must be submitted to pass the course. If a student does not submit an assignment, that student will fail the course no matter what her/his overall percentage is in the course. Late work will be accepted with grade reduction.
- 4) As the course is part of a cohort model, it is imperative students stay current on their coursework.

POLICIES

- 1) Disability accommodation: Students who require academic accommodations due to a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability should request assistance from the academic support by email at academic.support@ccuniversity.edu.
- 2) The course instructor may alter assignments and dates as the need arises and always in the interests of the student.
- 3) The class attendance policy is described in the student handbook.
- 4) If students are going to be absent, they must alert the professor beforehand (email, phone call, etc.).
- 5) Students are asked to refrain from using their phones during class. Laptops and tablets are acceptable for use, but are to be dedicated for note taking purposes, unless otherwise instructed by the professor.

GRADES

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| 1) Participation/Reading Attestation | 20% |
| 2) Cohort Discussion Groups | 40% |
| 3) Pastor-Theologian Project | 40% |

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Veeneman, Mary M. *Introducing Theological Method: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches Theologians and Approaches*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2017. ISBN 978-0-8010-4949-1

Wilson, Todd and Gerald Hiestand, eds. *Becoming a Pastor Theologian: New Possibilities for Church Leadership*. Downer's Grove, IL: IVP, 2016. ISBN 978-0-8308-5171-3

RECOMMENDED READING

Hiestand, Gerald. *The Pastor Theologian: Resurrecting an Ancient Vision*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-310-51682-8

COURSE SCHEDULE

The following schedule illustrates the hybrid nature of the course. Students will be expected to participate in post-class discussion groups as part of the overall academic experience.

Week 1 (20 hours) - In-class discussion and lectures

- 1) Introducing the Work of Theology (Veeneman, c. 1)
- 2) Contemporary Approaches to Theology
 - a) Ressourcement and Neo-Orthodox Theologies (Veeneman, c. 2)
 - b) Theologies of Correlation (Veeneman, c. 3)
 - c) Postliberal Theologies (Veeneman, c. 4)
 - d) Evangelical Theologies (Veeneman, c. 5)
 - e) Political Theologies (Veeneman, c. 6)
- 3) Becoming a Pastor-Theologian - An Appropriation of Theology Into Ecclesiology
 - a) The Pastor as Biblical Theologian (Wilson, c. 1)
 - b) The Pastor as Ecclesial Theologian (Wilson, c. 4)
 - c) The Pastor as Cruciform Theologian (Wilson, c. 5)
 - d) The Pastor as Public Theologian (Wilson, c. 3)
 - e) The Pastor as Political Theologian (Wilson, c. 2)

Week 3 (5-6 hours) - Online

Discussion Group

Becoming a Pastor-Theologian

The Formulation of the Biblical Pastor-Theologian (Veeneman, cs. 4-5; Wilson, cs. 1, 10-11, 14-15) - Students will not need to read the entire chapters, but sections of it in conversation with discussion questions (see detailed schedule below)

Week 5 (5-6 hours) - Online

Discussion Group

Becoming a Pastor-Theologian

The Formulation of the Ecclesial and Cruciform Pastor-Theologian (Veeneman, c. 3; Wilson, cs. 4-5, 8-9, 12) - Students will not need to read the entire chapters, but sections of it in conversation with discussion questions (see detailed schedule below)

Week 7 (5-6 hours) - Online

Discussion Group

Becoming a Pastor-Theologian

The Formulation of the Public and Political Pastor-Theologian (Veeneman, c. 6; Wilson, cs. 2-3, 13) - Students will not need to read the entire chapters, but sections of it in conversation with discussion questions (see detailed schedule below)

Week 8 (5-6 hours) - Online

Pastor-Theologian Synthesis Project

This is the capstone project for the course and culminates the work completed to this point. Students will compile the information into the project with a contextual emphasis that was developed by the pastor and student during Week 1.

Estimated Weekly Schedule

Weekly Schedule	Topic/Theme/Questions	Book Reference	Estimated Time
Week 1	In-class lecture and discussion		20 Hours
Day 1	Introduction to the course (1 hour) The Work of Theology (1 hour) Ressourcement and Neo-Orthodox Theologies (1.5 hours) Theologies of Correlation (1.5 hours)	Veeneman, <i>Introducing Theological Method</i> (cs. 1-3)	5 Hours
Day 2	Postliberal Theologies (1.5 hours) Evangelical Theologies (1.5 hours) Political Theologies (1.5 hours) Pastor as Biblical Theologian (2 hours) Pastor as Ecclesial Theologian (1.5 hours)	Veeneman (cs. 3-6) Wilson, <i>Becoming a Pastor Theologian</i> (cs. 1, 4)	8 Hours

Day 3	Pastor as Cruciform Theologian (1.5 hours) Pastor as Public Theologian (2 hours) Pastor as Political Theologian (1.5 hours) Concluding Synthetic Reflections Student Project Discussions	Wilson (cs. 2, 3, 5)	7 Hours
Week 3	Discussion Groups – <i>Becoming a Pastor Theologian</i> The Formulation of the Biblical Pastor-Theologian Please submit the answers to your questions below on Canvas under the Discussions tab. You will interact with others during this time as well.	Veeneman (cs. 4-5) Wilson (cs. 1, 10-11, 14-15)	5-6 Hours
	Questions: 1) Question 1 2) Question 2 3) Question 3 Activation Exercise:		Questions (3 hours) Activation Exercise (2-3 hours)
Week 5	Discussion Groups – <i>Becoming a Pastor Theologian</i> The Formulation of the Ecclesial and Cruciform Pastor-Theologian Please submit the answers to your questions below on Canvas under the Discussions tab. You will interact with others during this time as well.	Veeneman (c. 3) Wilson (cs. 4-5, 8-9, 12)	5-6 Hours
	Questions: 1) Question 1 2) Question 2 3) Question 3 Activation Exercise:		Questions (3 hours) Activation Exercise (2-3 hours)

Week 7	<p>Discussion Groups – <i>Becoming a Pastor Theologian</i></p> <p>The Formulation of the Public and Political Pastor-Theologian</p> <p>Please submit the answers to your questions below on Canvas under the Discussions tab. You will interact with others during this time as well.</p>	<p>Veeneman (c. 6)</p> <p>Wilson (cs. 2-3, 13)</p>	<p>5-6 Hours</p>
	<p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Question 1 2) Question 2 3) Question 3 <p>Activation Exercise:</p>		<p>Questions (3 hours)</p> <p>Activation Exercise (2-3 hours)</p>
Week 8	<p>Pastor-Theologian Synthesis Project</p>	<p>Reading Attestation</p>	<p>5-6 Hours</p>
	<p>This project is the culmination and development of the work you have already begun during the course of the class, particularly the Activation Exercises that were contextual in nature.</p>		