

Course Syllabus

Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary
3535 Indian Trail
Orchard Lake, Michigan 48324

I. Course Number and Title: ST 541 Fundamental Theology

II. Instructor: Gregory A. Banazak

III. Semester: Fall, 2017

IV. Day, Time, and Place: Wednesdays, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m., Maida Alumni Library; Aug. 30 to Dec. 13.

There will be no class on the following dates: Nov. 1 (All Saints' Day), Nov. 22 (Thanksgiving break); and Nov. 29 (instructor will be attending professional conventions)

V. Credit Hours: 3

VI. Delivery System: This course will be "presential" in that the members of the class will meet weekly in person.

VII. Course Description: Introduction to theology, its nature, and its sources. Revelation, and the transmission of Revelation in Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium. Study of the history of theological method as well as contemporary methods.

VIII. Student Learning Objectives: By the end of the course, the student should have achieved or begun to achieve the following objectives:

1. Demonstrate the ability to engage in theological thinking
2. Understand the nature of theology and theological method
3. Comprehend the sources of theology from philosophical, historical, and apologetic perspectives
4. Be conversant with the most significant figures and methods in Christian theology
5. Explicate and evaluate the theological method employed by theologians
6. Explicate and evaluate their own tacit understanding of theology and theological method

IX. General Thematic Outline of The Course

0. Overview of Course

1. Introduction

1.1. The Nature of Theology

1.2 The Nature of Fundamental Theology

2. Fundamental Theology

2.1 Revelation

2.1.1 History of Revelation: Reality and Concept

2.1.2 Credibility of Revelation: Is there a God? Can God Speak With Us? Does God Speak With Us?

2.2 The Church as Bearer of Revelation

2.2.1 Scripture

2.2.1.1 History of Scripture as a Bearer of Revelation

2.2.1.2 The Credibility of Scripture as a Bearer of Revelation

2.2.2 Tradition

2.2.2.1 History of Tradition as A Bearer of Revelation

2.2.2.2 The Credibility of Tradition as a Bearer of Revelation

2.2.3 Magisterium

2.2.3.1 History of Magisterium as A Bearer of Revelation

2.2.3.2 The Credibility of Magisterium as a Bearer of Revelation

2.3 Faith as Correlate to Revelation

2.3.1 Faith as Response or Pre-Requisite for Revelation?

2.3.2 History of the Concept of Faith

2.3.3 Faith (with excursus on “faith and reason”)

3. Theological Method

3.1 Introduction to Theological Method

3.2 Patristic Method: Origen

3.3 Scholastic Method: Thomas Aquinas

3.4 Modern and Contemporary Methods

3.4.1 Liberal Theology: Friedrich Schleiermacher

3.4.2 Neo-Orthodoxy: Karl Barth

3.4.3 Transcendental Theology: Karl Rahner

3.4.4 Liberation Theology

3.4.5 Postmodern Theologies

4. Drawing Conclusions: The Final Exam

X. Required Texts:

Gerald O’Collins. Fundamental Theology. Reprint edition. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001. ISBN: 9781579106768

O’Collins, Gerald and Edward Farrugia. A Concise Dictionary of Theology. 3rd edition. New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-080914827.

Denzinger, Heinrich and Peter Hünerman, eds. Enchiridion Symbolorum: A Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations of the Catholic Church. 43rd ed. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012. ISBN: 978-0898707465

N.B. *I assume that all students have a copy of the Vatican II documents. We will be focusing especially on one document in particular, “The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation” (Dei Verbum).*

XI. Magisterial Documents Read in This Course:

The Council of Trent, “Decree of Reception of the Sacred Books and Apostolic Tradition”

First Vatican Council, "Dogmatic Constitution on Catholic Faith (Dei Filius)"

Second Vatican Council, "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum)"

John Paul II, "Encyclical Letter on the Relationship Between Faith and Reason (Fides et ratio)"

XII. Learning Methodologies: A set of notes will be distributed for each lesson. These notes will usually be a summary, explanation, and contextualization of the main points of the assigned reading(s) with additional insights from other sources. With these notes I hope to accomplish a number of goals: create a relaxed environment in which students can be relieved of the need to take copious notes and can concentrate instead on comprehension; introduce the students to different methodologies and terminologies by allowing authors quoted in the notes to speak for themselves; give clarity and order to class discussions; ease the efforts of international students to understand the class material. However, if the notes do not serve these goals and instead become a substitute for reading or an inducement to passivity I will immediately discontinue them. In addition, it should be understood that the instructor's notes are not to be given to persons who are not registered in this class during this semester; serious repercussions will result from a violation of this understanding. The instructor's notes are a tool of instruction and not an obligation contracted with the student.

The instructor will be attentive to the diverse learning styles of the students and will adapt his teaching style to accommodate them.

XIII. General Guidelines

1. **Guidelines for Academic Study:** Students are expected to devote at least 2 to 3 hours of study per week, per credit hour. A normal reading load is about 500 pages per credit.

2. **Standards for Written Assignments:** Class assignments must be submitted electronically and in hard copy. They must be proofread for proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, and form. In preparing research papers requiring documentation, students are to follow the guidelines in Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (latest edition). The manual is available in the Library. Students are required to reference the *Student Writing Guide* posted on the Seminary Web Site. The Writing Center is available to aid students in preparing written and/or oral assignments.

3. **Submission of Assignments in both Printed and Digital Form:** According to seminary policy, all written work for this class must be submitted to the instructor in digital form. They should be sent to his email address which is listed on the first page of this syllabus.

In addition, the instructor would also like a hard copy of all written work.

4. **Disabilities Accommodation:** Students enrolled in this course who have documented disabilities should notify the professor at the first class session. Reasonable accommodations will be made to ensure that students with disabilities have access to course material and interaction in modes in which they can receive them.

5. **Class Recording:** Tape recorders or any other device intended to register the discussion and activities of students or the instructor in this course are strictly prohibited. Laptop computers may be used in class so long as they do not disturb other students and are not used for purposes other than participation and work in the class session.

6. **Class Presence and Participation:** Students are expected to attend all class sessions. I understand "attendance" to mean that you are ready to begin class on time and remain until class is finished. If you anticipate an unavoidable absence from class, please consult with me first. Frequent and unreasonable absences from class may result in an academic penalty and / or a failing grade in the course according to the instructor's discretion. Students themselves are responsible for obtaining materials distributed during a class session from which they were absent. The instructor cannot offer make-up class sessions and/or a private review of his teaching notes. The instructor will mail materials to students if they have first provided him with a self-addressed stamped envelope or an email address to which he can send materials in digital form (to be mailed the first business day after the class

session is held). However, students should understand that this course has a site on the Populi platform and that the instructor will post his notes for all classes on that site the day after the respective class has finished.

In order to participate actively, students should bring this syllabus and copies of that day's required reading(s) / texts to class.

No one may attend class other than students registered in this course in this semester.

7. Respect For Others: As a matter of course, the students and instructor are expected to show respect for all members of the class at all times. In particular, the instructor will tolerate absolutely no language or behavior, during class and/or in written assignments, which disparages race, color, religion, national origin, handicap, or sex. Christian charity would seem to require that problems regarding this matter should be brought directly to the attention of the offending party. If this is ineffective or impossible, please call the instructor's attention to the matter and he will talk with the matter to the offending party. Failure to respond to repeated requests may result in a conference with higher authorities and / or an academic penalty. In addition, students are urged to use inclusive language in speaking and writing as a means of expressing and fostering respect for the dignity of all persons.

8. Academic Integrity: Students are expected to maintain personal honesty and professional integrity in examinations, assigned papers, and research projects. Source materials and citations used in the preparation of papers are to be indicated by proper documentation. Copyright laws should be honored when duplicating materials. Plagiarism and cheating are a breach of academic integrity. Plagiarism is defined as: "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own : use (a created production) without crediting the source vi: to commit literary theft: present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary 9th ed, Springfield, MA: Merriam, 1981, p. 870). Violations in this area are considered a serious offense. If a student is suspected of plagiarism, the following procedure is to be followed:

1. When the instructor *suspects* a student has plagiarized an assignment, the instructor may confront the student.
2. If the instructor has *evidence* that a student has plagiarized an assignment, the instructor should confront the student with the evidence. The student has an opportunity to explain what happened.
3. If the instructor is convinced that plagiarism has occurred, the instructor may suggest a course of action: e.g. rewrite the assignment and receive a grade or the student may take a "0" for the assignment and not rewrite the assignment.
4. The Academic Dean should be informed of the outcome of this discussion and a note will be placed in the student's file. The respective formation mentor is informed by the Academic Dean.
5. If there are repeated offenses, the student will fail the course.
6. The student who fails a required course must repeat it.
7. A student who plagiarizes or cheats consistently in the academic program will be dismissed from the program.
8. For dismissal from the academic program, a board consisting of the Rector, Academic Dean, the student's mentor, the faculty member(s) affected by the student's plagiarism and a faculty member of the student's choosing will be convened and a decision rendered. This decision will be communicated to the student by the Rector.

Cheating is defined as "to deprive of something valuable by the use of deceit or fraud; to influence or lead by deceit, trick, or artifice; to elude or thwart by or as if by outwitting <cheat death> intransitive verb: to practice fraud or trickery; to violate rules dishonestly <cheat at cards> <cheating on a test> ("cheat." Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. 2010. Merriam-Webster Online. 5 May, 2010.<http://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/cheat>). In short, "cheating is defined as the intentional act of breaking the rules, or attempting to achieve personal gain through fraud or deceit. With children, cheating usually refers to academic fraud, such as copying answers from another student while taking an exam, or breaking the rules in a game" (Dianne K. Daeg de Mott, Thomson Gale, Detroit, Gale Encyclopedia of Childhood and Adolescence, 1998).

Examples of cheating in an academic setting include, but are not limited to:

- a. copying answers for an exam from another student;
- b. writing out the answers to an exam beforehand and turning them in at the time of the exam;
- c. obtaining the answers to an exam prior to the exam and using them during the exam in some way;
- d. having another person take an exam or write a paper for you;
- e. continuing to write answers to an exam after the time has expired (timed examinations);
- f. obtaining copies of an exam or answer key to aid in studying for the exam;
- g. passing notes to another student during an exam;

- h. asking another student for help during the writing of an exam;
 - i. using another person's paper, presentation, reflection, etc. and handing it in as your own work;
 - j. using electronic devices such as computers or mobile phones to obtain answers during an exam.
- (The term "exam" may be substituted with "quiz," "paper," or "presentation" as the case may be.)

XIV. Assignments

1 **Readings:** Readings will be assigned for all class sessions. Since they form the basis for class lectures and discussion, and since they are intended to focus the students' intellectual horizons and questions before a class session, such readings are essential. You are expected to *finish* the readings assigned to you *before* the date on which they are due. As an aid to students' planning, I've listed assigned readings for the semester in a course calendar to be distributed in class.

I suggest that you read in order to find main ideas rather than to memorize all details. For instance, after reading an assigned text, try to express to yourself, briefly and simply, the main ideas the author attempted to communicate. You might also express to yourself, briefly and simply, your opinion on those ideas.

2. **Review of Notes:** Students are urged to review regularly the notes distributed by the instructor during class, the notes they might take during class discussions, and notes from their reading. Such review can greatly aid in the comprehension and synthesis of course material.

3. **Research Paper:** In order to develop your interests in course material, your ability to do research on the graduate level, and your practice of theology, you are required to write a research paper for this course.

The subject of the research paper will be any topic directly related to course material. Your paper may cover any aspect of such a topic (Scriptural, historical, dogmatic, liturgical, ecumenical, interreligious, etc...) but it must be a work of systematic theology. It must argue for a thesis (= a complete sentence) which is debatable (and not simply a statement of fact, a re-statement of the obvious, or an exclusively or primarily personal reflection). It is imperative that the topic of the paper be of interest to you.

Here are some examples of possible topics (note that these are *not* thesis statements). You could explore a concept (e.g. revelation in other religions; praxis as faith; prayer and the theologian; art and music as theology; is the canon of Scripture really closed? etc...) conduct a historical study (e.g. the double magisterium of bishops and theologians in the Middle Ages; the formation of the first creeds; women theologians throughout the history of the Church), or research one particular theologian who is of interest to you and who will either not be covered in class or is not usually considered a professional theologian (e.g. Woody Allen, The Simpsons, St. Therese of Lisieux, Michelangelo, M. Scott Peck). You could compare and contrast two authors regarding a topic connected to this class (e.g. John Paul II and Jacques Derrida on faith and reason).

At various points throughout the semester you will submit the written items evincing progress in research. The form for all foot/end notes and bibliographical entries (or parenthetical references and reference list) in all these written items must be taken from Kate Turabian's Manual, 8th edition. Here are the items and the dates for their submission.

On **September 27**, at the beginning of class, you will submit your thesis statement typed on a sheet of paper (put your name and the date at the top); the same statement should be attached to an email and sent to me before class starts. This statement will be a *brief but complete sentence* which expresses the *topic* of your paper and your *position* on the topic (note that this is not the same as the title of your paper). The thesis statement should be broad enough for you to find resources but specific enough for you to be able to discuss it within the limits of the final copy. As soon as possible (perhaps during class) I will return this thesis statement to you with comments.

On **October 11**, at the beginning of class, you will submit a typed and no more than one-page tentative outline (an example will be distributed in class) along with a typed and no more than one-page tentative bibliography of sources you think may be found for the paper (this bibliography will include at least three books and three journal articles); the same outline and bibliography should be attached to an email and sent to me before class starts. As soon as possible (perhaps during class) I will return this outline and bibliography to you with comments.

On **November 8**, at the beginning of class, you will submit a rough draft of your paper; the same rough draft should be attached to an email and sent to me before class starts. This rough draft must be the complete paper and follow all the above requirements for the paper. That is, it must be approximately 15 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, on clean typing / computer paper, paginated, and characterized by perfect spelling, grammar, and

punctuation. It will have end/foot notes and bibliography (or parenthetical references and a reference list) formatted according to the style presented in Kate Turabian's Manual, 8th edition. The only difference between the rough draft and the final copy of the paper is that this rough draft may be changed after the instructor has read it and offered his comments. *Both* an electronic *and* a hard copy of this rough draft must be submitted must be given to the instructor. The electronic copy must be in MS Word 2007 or earlier (it must end in the extensions .doc or .docx.). As soon as possible, I will return this rough draft to you with comments.

On **December 6**, you will submit the final copy of your paper. *Both* a digital *and* a hard copy of this paper must be given to the instructor: the digital copy should be an attachment to an email sent to me and the hard copy of the paper must be handed to the instructor at the beginning of class. The electronic copy must be in MS Word 2007 or earlier (it must end in the extensions .doc or .docx.) This final copy must incorporate corrections made the rough draft, must be approximately 10 to 15 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, on clean typing / computer paper, paginated, and characterized by perfect spelling, grammar, and punctuation. It will have end/foot notes and bibliography (or parenthetical references and a reference list) formatted according to the style presented in Kate Turabian's Manual, 8th edition (if the form of the notes / bibliography or parenthetical references/reference does not closely follow Turabian form, the grade of the paper will fall one entire grade; e.g. from an original B+ to C+). Remember to keep a copy of the final paper for yourself. I will return the paper to you at the final exam with a grade and comments.

Your paper will be graded on the following five criteria: (1) Regarding the thesis statement: it must be plausible, insightful, clear, and arguable (not obvious, a statement of fact, or a personal statement); (2) Regarding the argumentation: The argumentation should be clear, coherent, and logical, should display critical thinking, should avoid simple description, and should diffuse counter arguments; (3) Regarding content and sources: The content should have depth, engage the issues, recognize the presuppositions, and be relevant to the course. The amount and kind of sources should reflect the perspectives found in the theological community; (4) Regarding organization and structure: The paper should be well organized. There should be clear and paragraphs; it should have strong topic sentences and transitions. (5) Regarding mechanics: Grammar, punctuation and spelling should be perfectly correct. The Turabian style for bibliography and foot/endnotes or reference list and parenthetical references must be followed flawlessly.

The grade for the paper will count for 30% of your final grade.

4. EXAM: In order to have the opportunity to summarize and synthesize the material of the course as well as to have your comprehension assessed by an attentive listener/reader, you will be given a final exam. This final exam will be focused on comprehension and synthesis of all course material. It will count for 60% of your final grade. Further details on this exam will be given as we approach the official date of the exam, **December 13**. As a way of assisting students to prepare for the exam, questions will regularly be given the week after the class to which the questions are directed. I anticipate the exam being offered in either oral or written form, according to the individual student's choice.

XV. Grading: Your final grade will be calculated according to this breakdown of percentages:

30% Research Paper
70% Final Exam

XVI. Notice of Change: The information in this syllabus is subject to change. The professor reserves the right to make any necessary changes.