

DR501Q: GREAT THINKERS IN THEOLOGICAL ETHICS

30 Credits, 11 Weeks Duration

PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:

The full set of school regulations and procedures is contained in the Postgraduate Student Handbook which is available online at your MyAberdeen page. Students are expected to familiarise themselves not only with the contents of this leaflet but also with the contents of the Handbook. Therefore, ignorance of the contents of the Handbook will not excuse the breach of any School regulation or procedure.

You must familiarise yourself with this important information at the earliest opportunity.

COURSE CO-ORDINATOR/COURSE TEAM

Dr. Michael Mawson

Office: KCF 11, King's College

Hours: By appointment

Phone: 01224 272521 [or ext. 2521]

Email: m.mawson@abdn.ac.uk

Discipline Administration:

Mrs Lisa Evans

50-52 College Bounds

Room CB001

01224 273986

divrs@abdn.ac.uk

Students are asked to make themselves familiar with the information on key institutional policies which been made available within MyAberdeen (<https://abdn.blackboard.com/bbcswebdav/institution/Policies>). These policies are relevant to all students and will be useful to you throughout your studies. They contain important information and address issues such as what to do if you are absent, how to raise an appeal or a complaint and how seriously the University takes your feedback.

These institutional policies should be read in conjunction with this course guide, in which School specific policies are detailed. Further information can be found on the [University's Infohub webpage](#) or by visiting the Infohub.

TIMETABLE

Fridays, 14.00-16.00, KCS 11, King's College

Students can view their university timetable

at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/timetables-550.php>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Can properly theological ways of thinking and acting allow us to attend and respond to concrete challenges and problems confronting the world today? Or does such thinking and action continually (and inherently) tempt us to look above and beyond reality and its claims?

This course will be organised around a series of engagements with prominent modern theological ethicists and their texts. In particular, we will engage this material with a particular view to questions of concreteness, embodiment, and identity. Furthermore, we will consider and discuss what theological thinking and action might offer in light of the contemporary political situations in the UK and USA.

INTENDED AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

- to become familiar with important works of theologians and ethicists through a close reading and discussion of their texts

- to begin to understand the main theological motives, intentions and moves in these thinkers, and how these fit together
- to begin to grasp the significance and relevance of theological claims and convictions for ongoing ethical thought and action

SEMINARS

Students are required to prepare for seminar meetings in advance. This includes carefully reading the indicated texts and preparing questions and points for discussion.

TIMETABLES AND READINGS

Week 1 (14th Sept)

Ta-Nehesi Coates, *Between the World and Me*

D Stephen Long, 'Protestant Social Ethics', [PDF]

*(**Note: Please read the Coates memoir and Long article in advance of the first meeting**)*

Week 2 (21st Sept)

Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, pp. 1-22, 69-94, 131-66, 240-79

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 'Memorandum: The Social Gospel,' *DBWE* 12, pp.236-43 [PDF]

Week 3 (28th Sept)

Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (Westminster John Knox, 2013), pp.1-61, 103-136

Week 4 (5th Oct)

Karl Barth, 'Church and State', pp. 303-315. [PDF]

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 'State and Church, DBWE 16, pp. 502-28 [PDF]

Week 5 (12 Oct)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 'Thy Kingdom Come', DBWE 12, pp. 285-97 [PDF]

Bonhoeffer, 'Ethics as Formation', DBWE 6, *Ethics*, pp.76-102 [PDF]

Recommended:

Bonhoeffer, 'Christ, Reality and the Good, DBWE 6, *Ethics*, 47-75 [PDF]

Week 6 (19th Oct)

Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, pp. 12-46, 116-38 [PDF]

Week 7 (26th Oct)

Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1983), **pp.ix-72**

Week 8 (2nd Nov)

Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom*, **pp.73-152**

Week 9 (9th Nov)

William Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination* (London: T&T Clark, 2002), pp.1-122

Week 10 (16th Nov)

Stephen Pope, 'Reason and Natural Law', pp. 149. [PDF]

Jean Porter, 'Virtue', pp. 205-219. [PDF]

Week 11 (23rd Nov)

John Webster, “‘Where Christ Is’: Christology and Ethics’, pp.32-55 [PDF]

Webster, ‘Hope’, pp 291-305 [PDF]

ACCESSING READINGS

All PDFs will be available through MyAberdeen/Blackboard. In addition, there are five books that will be required for this course. These can be purchased, and are also available (and on Heavy Demand) in both the Duncan Rice Library and the Divinity library:

- Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (Text Publishing Company, 2015)
- Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology of the Social Gospel* (WJK or any other edition)
- Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (WJK or any other edition)
- Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1983)
- William Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination* (London: T&T Clark, 2002)

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Book review of 1000-1200 words (20% of grade)

Two 15 minute oral presentations (10% of grade each [i.e. total 20%])

A 5000-5500 word essays (60% of grade)

BOOK REVIEW

The book review is due on **Monday 22nd October**. This will be on a book on (or in the area of) Christian ethics. It will not be one of the books read in the course (but it could be another book by or about one of the thinkers who we are covering). All books must be approved by the course coordinator no later than **Friday 12th October**.

CLASS PRESENTATIONS:

The dates of the class presentations will be organised at the beginning of the semester. These will be fifteen minutes and provide an overview of the readings for the week in question. Please prepare a two page handout for your presentations.

ESSAYS

The 5,000-5,500 word essay will be on a topic worked out in agreement with the course coordinator. It must in some way engage thinkers or material covered in the course. All essay topics must be approved by the course coordinator by **Friday 23rd November**

ASSESSMENT DEADLINES

Book review due Monday 22nd October, 3pm

Final essay due Monday 3rd December, 3pm

NOTE REGARDING ASSESSMENT

PLEASE NOTE: In order to pass a course on the first attempt, a student must attain a Common Grading Scale (CGS) mark of at least E3 on each element of course assessment. Failure to do so will result in a grade of no greater than CGS E1 for the course as a whole.

If you submit your work on time, you can expect that feedback will **normally be provided within three working weeks** (excluding vacation periods) of the submission deadline.

To view the CGS Descriptors please go to **MyAberdeen- Organisations- Divinity, History, & Philosophy Student Information for Taught Postgraduates**. The link to the CGS Descriptors is on the left hand menu.

SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Submit **one paper copy** with a completed essay cover sheet to the **drop boxes in CB008 in 50-52 College Bounds** and **one official electronic copy** to **TurnitinUK via MyAberdeen**. Both copies to be submitted by 3.00pm on the due date.

Paper Copy: One paper copy, typed and double spaced, together with an **Assessment cover sheet** – this should have your ID number **clearly** written on the cover sheet, with **NO** name or signature but **EVERYTHING ELSE** completed, including tutor's name – and should be delivered to the drop boxes in CB008, 50-52 College Bounds.

Electronic Copy: One copy submitted through Turnitin via [MyAberdeen](#). (for instructions please see <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/eLearning/turnitinuk/students/>)

Students are asked to retain the Turnitin receipt so they are able to provide proof of submission at a later date if required.

In advance of uploading, please save the assignment with your student ID number listed in the filename, i.e. 59999999 DRxxxx Essay 1.

When asked to enter a title for the assignment, please enter a title identical to the name of your saved assignment, i.e. DRxxxx Essay 1.

Both copies to be submitted by 3.00pm on the due date.

Please note: Failure to submit both an electronic copy to TurnitinUK, and an identical paper copy, will result in a deduction of marks. Failure to submit to TurnitinUK will result in a zero mark.

Distance Learning Students Only – Please note that to submit a hard copy is not necessary; an electronic submission will suffice.

N.B Turnitin doesn't accept Mac documents in Pages. If using a Mac please go to File and export work as a Word document.