

Being Human

(TS6202: Theological Anthropology)

This course has required pre-reading and assignments due on or before the first day of class.

October 3-7, 2016

(Modular)

9am-4pm (finish Friday noon)

Professor: Patrick S. Franklin, BA, MDiv, ThM, PhD

I. Course Description

What is a human being? What does it mean to be a human person? Is there a purpose to human life? Do human beings have intrinsic dignity? Does human life extend beyond death? This course will explore these and other important questions concerning human existence. We will survey various approaches to understanding human nature and personhood and then reflect on what it means to be human from a theological point of view. Along the way, we will draw out connections between theological anthropology and other fields, such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, and ethics, noticing how every viewpoint, discipline, or system presupposes a certain understanding of the human being. Throughout the course, we will relate our subject matter and discussions to practical issues in spirituality, counselling, pastoral care, and vocation/work. (3 credits).

II. Course Objectives

This course is designed to help students:

- Gain a deeper appreciation for the wonder, dignity, and mystery of every human person (Psalm 8)
- Grow in personal self awareness as a human person created in the image of God
- Learn to identify presuppositions about human personhood in various theologies, philosophies, ideologies, and approaches to community/sociality
- Develop awareness of contemporary issues in understanding the human person in theology, the sciences and social sciences
- Understand the implications one's view of personhood for theology, spirituality, and ethics
- Reflect on the relationship between theological anthropology and basic human rights
- Reflect on the implications of theological anthropology for one's discipline of study and vocation

III. Course Requirements

A. Required Texts

- *On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology* by Ray S. Anderson (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010).
- *Being Human, Being Church: The Significance of Theological Anthropology for Ecclesiology* by Patrick S. Franklin (Paternoster, 2016). Available for \$45 from the Professor.

One of the Following (see below, Assignments: C.d):

- *What is a Person? Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and the Moral Good from the Person Up*, by Christian Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).
- *Human Significance in Theology and the Natural Sciences* by Christopher L. Fisher (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010).

B. Assignments

	Weighting	Due Date
Course reading summaries	20%	September 30, via email
Paper on personhood, community, & ethics	25%	Oct. 3, in class
Pop culture paper	20%	Oct. 31, via email
The human person in your discipline of study	35%	Nov. 30, via email
TOTAL	100%	

C. Assignments and Grading

- a. **Reading Summaries (20%; Due Sept. 30 by email).** This assignment is designed to help you understand, track, and quickly recall the central arguments and themes in Anderson's *On Being Human*. For each of the book's 13 chapters, submit brief answers (3-4 sentences) to the questions provided (the list of questions will be available via email and/or on Blackbaud).

Please **bring a copy of your assignment to class**, in order to contribute thoughtfully to class discussions. (So, submit it to me via email by Sept. 30, then bring your own copy to class).

- b. **Personhood, Community, and Ethics (25%; Due Oct. 3 in class):** Write a paper (8-10 pp.) on the connection between human personhood, community, and ethics, informed by your reading of *Being Human, Being Church* (by Franklin). You have a limited amount of space, so be sure to focus on what seems most pertinent to you (don't try to address every theme and connection; identify what is most important and demonstrate why).
- c. **Pop Culture Paper (20%; Due Oct. 31 via email).** Write a brief theological analysis (6 pages) of the portrayal of the human person in a popular cultural 'text.' This 'text' might be a novel, a TV show (or series), a film or documentary, a music video, song (or several songs from a single artist or band), or some other cultural 'text' (approved in consultation with the professor). You will receive a list of examples on the first day of class.

Your analysis should address the following questions:*

- (i) What does it mean to be human according to this 'text'? (What is human existence?) What does it mean to be a 'good' human person according to the 'text's' narrative?
- (ii) What theological and philosophical assumptions about human personhood are stated (explicitly) or taken for granted (implicitly) by the 'text' and its portrayal of (i)?
- (iii) What theological questions and themes does the 'text' raise, illumine, or challenge?
- (iv) Analyze and evaluate the 'text's' portrayal of (i)-(iii), in light of your theology of being human. Limit your discussion to 1 key issue.
- (v) Reflect personally on the significance of the 'text' for your understanding of human personhood. What practical issues are at stake, given your theological analysis? E.g., human identity, meaning and purpose, personal and social ethics, etc.

* In terms of space, allot 3 pages to (i – iii), 2 pages for (iv), and 1 page for (v).

d. **Theological Anthropology in Relation to Your Discipline (35%; Due Nov. 30 by email):**

Choose ONE of the following two options. Use the cited book as your primary source for reflection, supplemented by other relevant academic sources (books and journal articles).

Option 1: The Human Person in the Social Sciences: In close dialogue with Christian Smith's book, *What is a Person?*, and supplemented by other relevant sources (books, journal articles), write a thoughtful and informed paper (12 pages) on *why* the question "what does it mean to be a human person?" *matters*. Reflect *theoretically* (why the question matters at a basic philosophical or worldview level), *vocationally* (why does it matter in *my* discipline or vocation?; how does it encourage genuine yet critical engagement with my discipline?), and *personally* (why is this question important for me in my life, my sense of call and/or purpose, my walk with God, my loving and serving my neighbour, etc.). The paper might also include reflection on other pertinent questions or issues the book helped address or ideas that it stimulated.

Option 2: The Human Person in Christian Theology and Ministry: In close dialogue with Christopher Fisher's *Human Significance in Theology and the Natural Sciences*, and supplemented by other relevant sources (books, journal articles), write a thoughtful and informed paper (12 pages) on the importance of theological anthropology for systematic and practical theology and for the practice of ministry. Questions to address might include one or more of the following: (1) How would you characterize the way the three theologians discussed in the book relate theology to science? Whose approach did you resonate with most and why? Least? (2) How has studying theological anthropology in light of science impacted your own operative theology? (i.e., Where has it affirmed, enriched, challenged, or disrupted your own theological assumptions, upbringing, ecclesial tradition, etc.); (3) Discuss the relationship between theological anthropology and another area of doctrine, such as creation, providence, salvation, Christology, or eschatology (choose one area of doctrine to keep your paper focused); (4) What practical and pastoral implications arise in light of your study of being human? These might include pastoral insights into the human condition, implications for pertinent ethical issues (e.g., ecology, human sexuality, physician assisted dying, etc.), or implications for your theology and practice of church and ministry and/or mission.

D. General Guidelines for The Submission of Written Work

- a. **Style:** You should submit written work in a style consistent either with APA (counselling students only) or (all others) with the model set out by Kate L. Turabian in her work *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*. For a quick citation reference, see: http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html
- b. **Font, Margins, and Spacing:** Please submit all assignments in 12 pt. Times New Roman font and set all margins to 1". All assignments should be double-spaced unless instructed otherwise.
- c. **Academic Policies:** All students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the academic policies outlined in the Academic Calendar (pp. 19–22), particularly concerning grading, class attendance, and academic dishonesty and plagiarism.
- d. **Avoiding Plagiarism:** You are required to give credit to all of your sources by citing them properly. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and can result in failing an assignment or even the course. See Providence Library's citation guidelines: http://www.providenceuc.ca/college/library/research/use_a_style_guide_or_create_a_bibliography/

- e. **Content:** See the supplemental research paper grading chart (provided in class).
- f. **Title Page and Documentation.** The title page for all written work ought to include the title of the paper, name of the course, name of the professor, date of submission, and your name (if you have a campus mailbox, this should also appear on the title page). Do not submit papers in any type of binder or cover: a staple in the top left corner will suffice.

E. Late Assignments. Late papers will receive a 1/3 grade point reduction penalty on the first and second days late or parts thereof (e.g., from B+ to B first day late, to B- second day late). Papers handed in later than two days late will receive a full grade point deduction per week (e.g., from B+ to C+).

Extensions, while rare, may be granted for exceptional extenuating circumstances (heavy workload, assignments for other classes, professional responsibilities, and personal holidays are not appropriate considerations for extensions).

F. Submission of Written Work. Students are required to retain a copy of all assignments (hard copy or electronic version).

G. Selected Bibliography (available on the course page on Blackbaud)

IV. Tentative Course Schedule, Content and Supplementary Readings

DATE	TOPIC	READING
Mon. AM	<p>Course introduction</p> <p>Why <i>theological</i> anthropology?</p> <p>Human beings as <i>creatures</i></p> <p>The importance of the sciences and social sciences</p> <p>Determined by the Word of God</p>	<p>Anderson, ch. 1-3</p> <p>Wright article</p> <p>Franklin article on why study science</p>
Mon. PM	<p>Determined by the Other</p> <p>The <i>imago Dei</i></p> <p>Human beings as <i>relational</i> and <i>rational</i> creatures</p>	Anderson, ch. 4, 6
Tues. AM	<p>Human beings as <i>eschatological</i> creatures</p> <p>Human evolution</p> <p>View segment of Venema lecture and/or Lamoureux TED Talk</p> <p>Humanity as self-determined</p> <p>Discuss Franklin article, "The Human Person in Contemporary Science and Theology," <i>Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith</i> 64, no. 2 (June 2012): 120-29.</p>	<p>Anderson, ch. 5</p> <p>Franklin article</p>
Tues. PM	Human sinfulness	Anderson, ch. 7
Wed. AM	<p>Personhood, Community, and Ethics</p> <p>Discuss Franklin book (from student assignments)</p> <p>Holistic human personhood (body <i>and</i> soul)</p>	Anderson. ch. 11
Wed. PM	<p>Human beings as male and female</p> <p>Human sexuality</p> <p>Discuss Anderson and Radner articles</p>	<p>Anderson, ch. 8</p> <p>Radner articles</p>
Thurs. AM	<p>Being human in life and in death</p> <p>Abortion</p>	
Thurs. PM	<p>Being human in life and in death</p> <p>Physician assisted death / euthanasia</p>	Anderson, ch. 9
Friday AM	<p>Human being and becoming</p> <p>Q&A Session: Dr. Joshua Swamidass on Evolution & Christian Faith</p> <p>Discuss Franklin article on evolution and eschatology (Patrick S. Franklin, "Under the Beginning in Light of the End: Eschatological Reflections on Making Theological Sense of Evolution," <i>Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith</i> 66, no. 3 (Sept. 2014): 154-70.)</p>	<p>Anderson, ch. 12-13</p> <p>Franklin article</p>