THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Overview
The Christian gospel offers a particular and inspiring vision of the human person. This vision is grounded upon the person and work of Jesus Christ and is enlivened by the gift of the Spirit. The purpose of Christian theological anthropology is to explore the mystery of the human person in light of this divine self-communication through Christ and the Spirit. It seeks to convey what it means to be a Christian humanist, a notion that can perplex a contemporary audience that often sets in opposition the terms “Christian” and “humanist,” and increasingly turns to the natural sciences for guidance on what it means to be human. In contrast to the contemporary, culturally influential scientism, Christian philosophical reflection understands inquiry into religion and the humanum to be mutually beneficial. Christian theological anthropology, moreover, believes them to be intimately united. This course will examine the possibility and meaning of the idea of Christian humanism by reflecting on the basic dimensions of human existence and asking what light the person of Jesus Christ sheds on this reality.

Outcomes
At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- demonstrate a basic understanding of the Christian vision of the human person across a range of key topics
- register and begin to explore critical questions and challenges to that vision
- articulate the significance of contemporary findings in evolutionary biology and neuroscience for theological anthropology
- apply their understanding of theological anthropology in a pastorally effective and sensitive manner.

Schedule of Topics
1. Introduction: The nature and purpose of theological anthropology
2. Creaturehood and imago dei
3. Embodiment and incarnation
4. Freedom and transcendence
5. Sin
6. Grace
7. Gender and sexuality
8. Community
9. God’s action / human action: vocation
10. Spirituality and prayer
11. Suffering human and divine
12. Dying and death; judgment and fulfillment
13. Quaestiones disputatae: emergence and theological anthropology
Requirements

(1) **Attendance at all class meetings and active participation in discussion** that shows evidence of a close reading and thoughtful evaluation of the assigned readings. In addition, in the last class, students will present in groups on one chapter of the book assigned that week. Class participation will count for 30% of the grade.

(2) **One analysis paper** on any major theme treated up to week 7. This mid-term paper counts for 30% of the final grade.

(3) **Final take-home examination.** The final take-home exam will comprise four questions on major themes of the course, of which two must be answered (4-5 pages each). With the permission of the instructor, advanced students may write a research paper (15-20 pages) instead of the final exam. The final will count for 40% of the final grade.

N.B. All written work must be submitted via the course website and be double-spaced, 12-point font, with one inch margins on all sides.

**COURSE BOOKS**


**COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE OF READINGS ASSIGNMENTS**

**Week 1**

**Introduction: Nature and Purpose of Theological Anthropology**


Karl Rahner, “The Theological Dimension of the Question about Man,” *Theological Investigations* (hereafter *TI*) XVII, 53–70.


**Week 2**

**Creaturehood and the imago dei**


Celia Deane-Drummond, “In God’s Image and Likeness: From Reason to Revelation in Humans and Other Animals” in *Questioning the Human*, 60–76.

**Week 3 Embodiment and Incarnation**


Rahner, "On the Theology of the Incarnation,” *TI IV*, 105-120.

Oliver Davies, “Neuroscience, Self, and Jesus Christ” in *Questioning the Human*, 79–100.

**Week 4 Transcendence and Freedom**

Sachs, *CVH*, 27-34.


**Week 5 Sin**


**Week 6 Grace**


**Week 7  Gender and Sexuality**


**Week 8  Community**

*Gaudium and Spes*, preface, chapters 1-2 (§ 1-32).

**Week 9  God’s Action / Human Action: Vocation**

Sachs, *CVH*, 103-112.

**Week 10  Spirituality and prayer**


**Week 11  Human Suffering and Divine Suffering**


**Week 12  Dying and Death; Judgment and Fulfillment**

Sachs, *CVH*, 75-102.

**Week 13  Quaestiones Disputatae: emergence and theological anthropology**