



DT 516: TRINITY AND CREATION (SPRING 2019)

MONDAYS AND THURSDAYS 12:45 – 2:00PM

Classroom 11

"[T]he nature and mission of the ministerial priesthood cannot be defined except through [the] multiple and rich interconnection of relationships which arise from the Blessed Trinity and are prolonged in the communion of the Church, as a sign and instrument of Christ, of communion with God and of the unity of all humanity."

~ Pastores dabo vobis 12

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Jeremy W. Blackwood

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TRINITY AS TOPIC

In terms of sheer intellectual demands, the Trinity is perhaps the most difficult topic in Christian theology. We worship Father, Son, and Holy Spirit distinctly, yet claim that they are one. While we may be caricatured as believing that $1+1+1=1$, we often have a hard time explaining just why that little equation is wrong. We will offer analogies—a clover leaf; ice, water, and steam; a triangle, perhaps—and while we acknowledge that they are flawed, we often don't know exactly what the flaws are.

The topic seemed daunting even to the greatest minds in our tradition. Irenaeus of Lyons, Athanasius of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine of Hippo, Anselm of Canterbury, Julian of Norwich, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Bernard Lonergan—all have struggled with the effort to understand what we believe to be true about the Trinity. And none of us is equal to them—how, then, dare we attempt to understand so difficult a topic?

*"In the beginning
was the Word,
and the Word
was with God,
and the Word
was God."
~ John 1:1*

Augustine said that although nothing we say of God is adequate, still, speak we must if we would not remain silent. And silence is exactly what we cannot have in the graduates of a seminary program. Whether ordained or lay, whether diocesan or religious, you are here because you are called to spread the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that Gospel is of a Lord Who is the Second Person of a Trinity, Who, together with His Father and their Holy Spirit, is our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

We will struggle together through ancient terms, difficult philosophical perspectives, the vicissitudes of history, and points of subtlety so fine that you may long for an argument about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. But we do so for a reason: our God, the God into whose service we have been called, is a Trinitarian God. This was believed by our forebears, handed down to us, and is now the faith demanded of us if we are truly to listen to their voices. All else—the philosophizing, technical language, difficult analogies—is for the sake of correctly understanding and protecting that truth.

So, when it is late at night, and you're tired of reading, and you feel like you don't understand any of this, remember that this effort is how we participate in our calling and in our faith in a Trinitarian God.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This course introduces the student to the vast heritage of the Judeo-Christian experience of, and reflection on, God and creation. It treats of the principle conceptions of God as found in the Bible and in magisterial documents, as well as in patristic, medieval, and contemporary theological speculations. It gives special attention to the doctrine of the Trinity.

Put succinctly, the course will review (1) what Christianity has affirmed to be true about God as triune; (2) the grounds for that affirmation in the development of Judaism and Christianity; and (3) how that affirmation can be both understood and made pastorally relevant in a contemporary context.

By the end of this course the student will be able to:

- display familiarity with the scriptural and traditional sources of Catholic teaching on the nature of God and, in particular, the nature of God as triune
- elucidate the historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity
- explain important Patristic, medieval, & modern developments in Trinitarian theology
- evaluate significant contemporary theological conceptions of the Trinity
- distinguish magisterial teaching on God and Trinity from its theological interpretation
- develop pastorally appropriate responses to questions on the doctrine of the Trinity, creation, and the mystery of evil

MATERIALS

The following will be available as PDFs on Populi:

David B. Burrell, C.S.C., "The Act of Creation with its Theological Consequences," pages 40-52 in *Creation and the God of Abraham*, ed. David B. Burrell, Carlo Cogliati, Janet M. Soskice, and William R. Stoeger (New York: Cambridge University, 2010)

Simon Oliver, "Trinity, Motion, and Creation *ex nihilo*," pages 133-151 in *Creation and the God of Abraham*, ed. David B. Burrell, Carlo Cogliati, Janet M. Soskice, and William R. Stoeger (New York: Cambridge University, 2010)

Jeremy Wilkins, "How We Got to the *Filioque*" (unpublished notes)

A Readings Document containing:

Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* IX

Origen, *On Principles* I.1.vi and I.2.xiii

Athanasius, *Discourse against Arius* III.23.iv

Gregory of Nyssa, *To Ablabius* (selections)

Augustine, *On the Trinity* IX.1.i-viii (selections)

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I.27-43 (selections)

Karl Rahner, "Remarks on the Dogmatic Treatise *De Trinitate*" (selections)

Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 6, q.26 (selection)

An appendix of selected dogmatic statements on the Trinity

"In God all things are one and the same where no opposition of relation exists."
~ Council of Florence, Session 11, 1443 AD

The following will be linked on Populi from *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*, ed. Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering (New York: Oxford, 2004):

- Simon J. Gathercole, “The Trinity in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts”
- Stephen M. Hildebrand, “The Trinity in the Ante-Nicene Fathers”
- C. Kavin Rowe, “The Trinity in the Letters of St. Paul and Hebrews”
- Christopher Seitz, “The Trinity in the Old Testament”
- Joseph Wawrykow, “Franciscan and Dominican Trinitarian Theology (Thirteenth Century): Bonaventure and Aquinas”
- Ben Witherington III, “The Trinity in the Johannine Literature”

The following will be linked on Populi from various sources:

- Why Study the Theology of Creation with Simon Oliver (YouTube.com)
- From MIT to Specola Vaticana: Guy Consolmagno at TEDx (YouTube.com)
- The Big Bang, Cosmology part 1: Crash Course Astronomy #42 (YouTube.com)
- Why the Big Bang Definitely Happened | Space Time | PBS Digital Studios (YouTube.com)
- Why Study Evolution with Conor Cunningham (YouTube.com)
- Aristotle’s Concept of Nature (Pontifical Academy of Sciences)
- The Origin of Life on Earth (Pontifical Academy of Sciences)
- How we found out evolution is true: John van Wyhe at TEDxNTU (YouTube.com)
- Can Scientists and Religious Leaders See Eye to Eye? (YouTube.com)
- “I left the Catholic Church because of Science” (YouTube.com)

GRADING SCALE

The following chart provides the grading scale for the course, together with descriptions of the approximate meaning of each letter grade.

100 – 96	A	Exceeds expectations. Professional, polished composition. Zero or nearly zero grammatical errors. Displays exceptional insight and judgment.
95 – 91	AB	Composition and/or insight exceeds a sufficient level, but is not exceptional.
90 – 86	B	Meets expectations. All elements of assignment fully satisfied, but the assignment is merely sufficiently completed.
85 – 81	BC	One or more elements is weakly satisfied.
80 – 76	C	Satisfies some expectations. Several elements weakly satisfied, and/or composition, grammar, and/or understanding are deficient.
75 – 71	CD	Despite serious flaws, the assignment achieves minimal success.
70 – 66	D	Meets few expectations. More than one element missing, and/or composition, grammar, and/or understanding are seriously insufficient.
65 – 00	F	Fails to meet expectations. Many elements missing, and/or the assignment reveals a gross inadequacy in composition, grammar, and/or understanding.

DT 516: TRINITY AND CREATION

DR. JEREMY W. BLACKWOOD

SCHEDULE OF PROBABILITIES

This schedule is subject to modification, with notice

Mondays		Thursdays	
01/14	Who, What, Why, and How	01/17	The Genesis of Questions Genesis 1-3 and Videos (links on Populi)
01/21	Creation and Participation Burrell, "The Act of Creation..."	01/24	Creation and Trinity Oliver, "Trinity, Motion, and Creation <i>ex nihilo</i> "
01/28	They've Gone to Plaid Videos (links on Populi)	01/31	How We Know That Videos (links on Populi) Guest Speaker: Dr. Jean Creighton
02/04	Ancestry.com's Got Nothing on This Videos (links on Populi)	02/07	How We Know That Videos (links on Populi) Guest Speaker: Dr. Nakia Gordon
02/11	Science and the Life of Faith I Videos (links on Populi)	02/14	No Class – Professor at AAAS (Washington, D.C.) (Work on your group presentations)
02/18	No Class – President's Day	02/21	Science and the Life of Faith II Group Presentations
2/25 – 2/28 No Class – Spring Break			
03/04	Arizona Trip (2/27 – 3/5)	03/07	Yahwist Grammar OHT – Seitz & Rowe
03/11	Narrative and Perspective OHT – Gathercole & Witherington III	03/14	Is <i>This</i> What We Mean? OHT – Hildebrand
03/18	Advancing through Error RD – Tertullian & Origen	03/21	Oh! So <i>This</i> Is What We Have Been Trying to Say! OHT Smith and RD – Athanasius
03/25	Why Is the Dog Over There not the Dog Over Here? RD – Gregory of Nyssa	03/28	The Hippo in the Room (etc.) RD – Augustine of Hippo and Wilkins
Exam 1: Seitz to Gregory Nyssa (due 3/30 by midnight)			
04/01	The Doctors OHT – Wawrykow and RD – Thomas Aquinas	04/04	<i>Heutige Trinitätstheologie: Rahners Grundaxiom</i> RD – Rahner
04/08	No Class – Professor at HLC (Chicago) (Work on your group presentations)	04/11	The Intelligible Relation between Trinity and Grace RD – Lonergan
4/15 – 4/18 No Class – Easter Break			
04/22	No Class – Easter Monday	04/25	No Class – Professor at WCMI (Los Angeles) (Work on your group presentations)
04/29	Group Presentations	05/01	Group Presentations
Exam 2: Augustine to Lonergan (due 5/6 by midnight)			

ASSIGNMENTS

The following chart outlines the assignments for this course.

*“The economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice versa.”
~ Karl Rahner, S.J.*

Due Date	M. Div.	
	Assignment	Portion
02/21	Group Presentation I	15%
03/30	Exam 1	25%
05/06	Exam 2	25%
04/29 – 05/01	Group Presentation II	30%
N/A	Participation	5%

Full directions for all of the assignments can be found on Populi. I provide brief summaries below:

Group Presentation I Six-person group presentation on the value of one of the scientific creation and/or evolution points for pastoral ministry.

Exams Two take-home short answer and essay exams dealing with major terms, persons, and questions.

Participation Attending class, engaging in discussion, and providing evidence that you have read the assignment and are engaged with the relevant ideas and questions in the class.

Group Presentation II Three-person group presentation on a Trinitarian systematic theology.

POLICIES

Attendance Regular attendance is expected and forms part of your participation grade. You are allowed one free missed class. Every class meeting missed after that will result in a loss of 1/2 of a letter grade to your participation grade. Two instances of tardiness will equal one missed class. In addition to the effects on your grade, habitual absenteeism or tardiness may be considered a formation issue that needs to be reported to your Formation Advisor.

Missed Exams/Late Assignments Unless there are serious circumstances, I do not accept late assignments without penalty. Late assignments and exams will be penalized 10% per day late.

Electronic Devices You may use laptop computers and tablets in class. However, this is a privilege that can be revoked. If I have reason to suspect that the laptops are being used in class for purposes not related to class, I will disallow their use.

Recording You may record course lecture and discussion for your personal use, and you may share it with anyone currently registered for this **Spring 2019** edition of this course. You may not share the recording with anyone not registered for this edition of the course, nor may you publicly post it in any form accessible by anyone not registered for this edition of the course.

Plagiarism Statement Using another person’s words or unique ideas without citing the source in a submitted assignment for a course is plagiarism. As intellectual theft and academic dishonesty, it signifies a lack of the moral integrity required of theology

"The correct interpretation of a passage in Kant, Aquinas, Aristotle, or Augustine is not going to be reached by determining what is most obvious to the least intelligent person you can find."
~ Bernard Lonergan, S.J.

students and seminarians. The School Handbook (Chapter VII, Section H) details the academic and institutional consequences for plagiarism, which can include dismissal from the school. All students are required to be familiar with and abide by this policy. In all cases of plagiarism by a seminarian, the incident will be reported to the sponsoring diocese or religious institute.

Course Evaluations Requirement Towards the end of the semester the student will complete the official school on-line course evaluation form. The completion of this assessment is a course requirement.