

# **B50FF03 Contextual Theology**

Bachelor of Divinity Degree

Pacific Theological College

Semester 1A, 2015

Course Lecturer: Dr Richard Davis, Richard.Davis@ptc.ac.fj

## **Course Description**

This course aims to provide students with an introduction to the study and practice of theology. It will look at what theology is, who does theology, where it is done, and for what purpose. The traditional sources of theological reflection, such as the Bible, traditions, experience and reason will be examined. The contextuality of all theologies will be stressed, and the relativity of traditional Western theology will be exposed, and newer approaches to theology will be explored, including liberation theologies of the two-thirds world. Students will be encouraged to bring a Pacific focus to their own work, drawing on various models of contextual theology with a view to identifying, describing and critically analysing the methods that undergird such models.

## **Objectives**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Be aware of and describe the context in which they do theology
- Define what theology is and understand the role of the theologian
- Describe several sources for doing theology
- Appreciate several different models of doing contextual theology
- See how key doctrines have been interpreted through contextual methods

## **Method of Teaching**

A combination of lectures, readings, writing and discussion.

## **Assessment**

There is no exam for this course. Assessment will be through two pieces of written work. Both essays must engage with the class materials, readings, and additional scholarly materials (books, journal articles, and generally not online materials) and provide referenced evidence of this engagement. Every effort should be made to write correct English and format the essay properly. Include a cover sheet with your name and essay title.

### 1) Reflection on your Context (40%)

1000-1500 words due in class on Monday 2 March 2015.

Write a reflection on your own context as a theologian. This may include an analysis of your church, nation, city/town/village, family, culture, gender, economic status and other relevant factors. This is an open questions and you are free to work within in. You may describe those

aspects of your background that you think have been most important in forming your understanding of God, or you might write about the theologies you wish to react against and go beyond.

## 2) Essay (60%)

2000-2500 words due Friday 27 March 2015. This essay MUST be emailed to the lecturer at Richard.Davis@ptc.ac.fj by 11:59pm on Friday night. No exceptions.

From your context (which may include gender, economic, nation, cultural group etc) use one of Bevans' six methods to write about one of the doctrines mentioned in the course (eg. Trinity, Christology) for others in your context. For example, I could write about "A Pakeha approach to Creation through a Praxis Model". In this task it is important for you to demonstrate a good working knowledge of the model chosen and sound knowledge of the doctrine too. You may build on assignment one for this assignment, but you'll get no marks for simply cut and pasting part of your previous work.

## Texts and Readings

The textbook for this course is **Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology***, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002 (Revised and Expanded Edition). This is available from the PTC bookshop. We are reading most of this book for the course so you need to have it.

This book is supplemented by a number of other **Required Readings** from books and journals. The books from which these are taken will be kept on closed reserve in the PTC library. Ask at the issue desk for them. It is up to you whether you read them in the library or photocopy them for your personal study. Journals article and book chapters will either be available through the library's online ATLA Religion Database, or in the library's filing cabinet.

**Optional Additional Readings** are for students wanting to pursue topics further, perhaps in essays.

## Other Recommended Readings

In addition to the set readings for each lecture outlined below there are few books which are recommended on the general topic of contextual theology.

- William R. Barr, *Constructive Christian Theology in the Worldwide Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).
- Angie Pears, *Doing Contextual Theology* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010).
- Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (London: SCM Press, 1985).
- Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999).

For a general introductions to the subject of theology you may turn to these:

- John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology* [various editions with SCM Press].
- Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* [various editions with Blackwell].
- Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*

[various editions with Eerdmanns].

## **Contextual Theology from the Pacific / Oceania**

The library holds a fine collection of contextual theology from the region. One of the best sources is the *The Pacific Journal of Theology*. Another is the thesis collection of former PTC students.

## **Course Outline**

### **Week 1 - (week beginning 2 February 2015 )**

#### **Session 1: Course Introduction: The Seamless Garment of Theology**

There are no readings for this session.

#### **Session 2: Contextual Theology and the Theologian**

##### Required Reading

- Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*. Chapter 1: Contextual Theology as a Theological Imperative
- Jürgen Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology: Ways and Forms of Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000). Chapter 2: 'Who is a theologian?' and Chapter 3: 'How does someone become a true theologian?' [on reserve shelf in library]

##### Optional Additional Reading

- Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (London: SCM Press, 1973). Chapter 1: 'Theology: A Critical Reflection' [in library]
- Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (London: Penguin Books, 1949). Chapter 15: 'The Theologian' [in library]
- Karl Barth, 'Theology' in *God in Action: Theological Addresses* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1937). [in library]
- Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999). Chapter 1: 'Globalization and the Contexts of the Theology' [in library]

### **Week 2 - (week beginning 9 February 2015 )**

#### **Session 1: Sources of Theology 1: Revelation, Scripture, Tradition**

##### Required Reading

- *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation - Dei Verbum*, Pope Paul VI (18 November 1965). Online at [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651118\\_dei-verbum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html) . Also printed in Walter M. Abbott, ed. *The Documents of Vatican II* (1966). [in library]

#### Optional Additional Reading

- John Webster, Kathryn Tanner and Iain Torrance, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. Chapters 18, 19, 20 [in library's reference collection]
- Robert J. Schreier, *Constructing Local Theologies* (London: SCM Press, 1985). Chapter 5: "Tradition and Christian Identity" [in library]

### **Session 2: Sources of Theology 2: Reason, Worship, Experience**

#### Required Reading

- Robert L. Kinast, *Let Ministry Teach: A Guide to Theological Reflection* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996). Chapter 1 'Where's the Theology?' [chapter filed in library]

#### Optional Additional Reading

- John Webster, Kathryn Tanner and Iain Torrance, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). Chapters 22, 21, 23. [in library's reference collection]
- James Wm. McClendon, Jr., *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990). [in library]

### **Week 3 - (week beginning 16 February 2015 )**

#### **Session 1: Theology with Adjectives 1: Postmodern Theologies / God**

#### Required Reading

- Kevin J. Vanhoozer, 'Theology and the condition of postmodernity: a report on knowledge (of God)' in Kevin J. Vanhoozer, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003). [chapter filed in library]

#### Optional Additional Reading

- Frederic B. Burnham, ed. *Postmodern Theology: Christian Faith in a Pluralist World* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989). [in library]
- Graham Ward, ed. *The Blackwell Companion to Postmodern Theology* (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2005). [in library]

#### **Session 2: Theology with Adjectives 2: Postcolonial Theologies / The Trinity**

#### Required Reading

- Upolu Lumā Vaai, 'Va'atapalagi: De-heavening Trinitarian Theology in the Islands' in *Colonial Contexts and Postcolonial Theologies: Storyweaving in the Asia-Pacific*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). [chapter filed in library]

#### Optional Additional Reading

- R. S. Sugirtharajah, ed. *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006). [in library]
- Angie Pears, *Doing Contextual Theology* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010). Chapter

5: 'Postcolonial theologies'. [in library]

- Christopher D. Stanley, ed. *The Colonized Apostle: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011). [in library]

## **Week 4 - (week beginning 23 February 2015 )**

### **Session 1: Theology with Adjectives 3: Feminist Theologies / Christology**

#### Required Reading

- Keiti Ann Kanongata'a, 'A Pacific Women's Theology of Birthing and Liberation' in *Pacific Journal of Theology*, Series II No. 7, 1992, 3-11. Reprinted in William R. Barr, *Constructive Christian Theology in the Worldwide Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997). [in library]
- Mercy Amba Oduyoye. Chapter 9 'Jesus Christ' in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). [on reserve shelf in library]

#### Optional Additional Reading

- Susan Frank Parsons, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). [in library]
- Anton Wessels, *Images of Jesus: How Jesus is Perceived and Portrayed in Non-European Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990). [in library]
- Ursula King, ed. *Feminist Theology from the Third World: A Reader* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994). [in library]
- Virginia Fabella and Mercy Amba Oduyoye, eds. *With Passion and Compassion: Third World Women Doing Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988). [in library]

### **Session 2: Theology with Adjectives 4: Liberation Theologies / The Bible**

#### Required Reading

- Carlos Mesters, 'The Use of the Bible in Christian Communities of the Common People' in *The Challenge of Basic Christian Communities: Papers from the International Ecumenical Congress of Theology, February 29 - March 2, 1980, São Paulo, Brazil* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1981) [on reserve shelf in library]; reprinted in Norman K. Gottwald and Richard A. Horsley, eds. *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993) [in library]; reprinted in Alfred T. Hennelly, ed. *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1990). [in library]

#### Optional Additional Reading

- Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuría, eds. *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1996). [in library]
- Sharon E. Heaney, *Contextual Theology for Latin America: Liberation Themes in Evangelical Perspective* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008). [in library]

## **Week 5 - (week beginning 2 March 2015 )**

### **Session 1: Contextual Theology 1: The Translation Model / The Human Being**

### Required Reading

- Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*. Chapter 4: The Translation Model
- Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, Encyclical Letter, 14 September 1981, sections 1-15, 24-27. Online at [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091981\\_laborem-exercens.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html)

### Optional Additional Reading

- *Christian Perspectives on Theological Anthropology* (World Council of Churches, 2005). Online at <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/v-theological-anthropology/christian-perspectives-on-theological-anthropology> . [also in the library]

## **Session 2: Contextual Theology 2: The Anthropological Model / Sin and Redemption**

### Required Reading

- Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*. Chapter 5: The Anthropological Model
- Orlando E. Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1982). Chapter 2: 'Sin and Salvation in an Oppressed Continent' [on reserve shelf in library]

### Optional Additional Reading

- Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* [various editions with Blackwell]. Chapter on 'The Doctrine of Salvation in Christ' [in library]
- Cyril Okorochoa, 'The Meaning of Salvation: An African Perspective', in *Emerging Voices in Global Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994). [in library]

## **Week 6 - (week beginning 9 March 2015 )**

### **Session 1: Contextual Theology 3: The Praxis Model / The Church**

#### Required Reading

- Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*. Chapter 6: The Praxis Model
- Dorothy Ramodibe, 'Women and Men Building Together the Church in Africa' in *With Passion and Compassion: Third World Women Doing Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988). [on reserve shelf in library]

#### Optional Additional Reading

- Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1987). [in library]
- Paul S. Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960). [in library]

### **Session 2: Contextual Theology 4: The Synthetic Model / Eschatology**

#### Required Reading

- Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*. Chapter 7: The Synthetic Model

- Kosuke Koyama, 'The Ambiguity of History: Help from the Maker of Heaven and Earth in *Currents in Theology and Mission* Vol. 9, No. 3 (June 1982), 149-156. Online at <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0000791716&site=ehost-live>

Optional Additional Reading

- Henning Graf Reventlow, *Eschatology in the Bible and in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997). [in library]

**Week 7 - (week beginning 16 March 2015 )**

**Session 1: Contextual Theology 5: The Transcendental Model / Creation**

Required Reading

- Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*. Chapter 8: The Transcendental Model
- Justo L. González, *Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990). Chapter 8: Creator of Heaven and Earth. [chapter filed in library]

Optional Additional Reading

- Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Chapter on "The Good Creation"

**Session 2: Contextual Theology 6: The Countercultural Model / Ethics**

Required Reading

- Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*. Chapter 9: The Countercultural Model
- John Howard Yoder, 'The Constantinian Sources of Western Social Ethics' in *The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gospel* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984). [chapter filed in library]

Optional Additional Reading

- On ethics see the works of Stanley Hauerwas. [several in library]