P50SF05 Theological Anthropology

Master of Theology Degree  
Pacific Theological College  
Semester 2B, 2015  
Course Lecturer: Dr Richard Davis, Richard.Davis@ptc.ac.fj

Course Description

The understanding of what it means to be a human being is a central concern of ecumenical theology and ethics. This course will begin with Christian theological understandings of what a human being is from the biblical accounts of humans made in the image of God (imago Trinitatis), to the Fall, to the incarnation of God as human in Jesus Christ, and humanity's new status as the new Adam in Christ. It will trace traditions of theological reflection on the human creature through church history up to the modern period. Throughout the course, a Christian understanding of the human will enter into dialogue with other views of human nature from disciplines such as the sciences, the arts, economics, politics, world religions, and cultures, and ideologies such as feminism, socialism, and capitalism. Students who complete the course will have surveyed this important theological topic though some of the classic doctrines of theology, such as sin, soteriology, and the Trinity. They will be able to develop their own contextual theological anthropology as a critical tool in thinking theologically about contemporary social issues in the Pacific and beyond.

Objectives

At the end of the course the student will be able to:

- give an account of the importance of theological anthropology
- describe the issues surrounding the image of God
- relate sin to the human condition
- relate a theological understanding of the human to politics and economics
- understand the importance of the body to theological anthropology
- develop a contextual theological anthropology

Textbook and Readings

The textbook for this class is Nonna Verna Harrison's *God's Many-Splendored Image: Theological Anthropology for Christian Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010). This is available from the PTC bookshop and is also in the library. We are reading most of this book for the course so you need to have it.

The other essential work is the World Council of Churches' publication *Christian Perspectives on Theological Anthropology* (Faith and Order Paper no. 199, 2005). This is in the library and can be downloaded from http://bitly.com/FaithOrder199.

These two works are 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. Journal articles and book chapters will either be available online, through the library's online ATLA Religion Database, or in the library's filing cabinet.

Lists of Further Optional Readings are for students wanting to pursue topics further, perhaps in essays, and
sometimes include the sources used in the preparation of lectures.

Other works in **Theological Anthropology** that the library holds include:


There are also some other studies about the Pacific person:


**Note on Language:** It is old fashioned and now considered sexist to refer to humans as "men". In our own speech and writing it is considered good practice to use inclusive language, such as "humans", "humanity", or "men and women", instead of "man" or "mankind". Some older literature will use “man” and we need to read carefully to see whether the author means actual men or humans in general.

**Assessment**

In all assignments please use, as far as possible, primary sources when discussing someone's theology. If necessary you may quote from original sources from secondary sources, but I wish to see engagement with the unmediated ideas of theologians. Both assignments must have a completed "PTC Assignment Cover Sheet" attached to the front of the assignment. This can be obtained from http://ptc.ac.fj/?page_id=1136.

**Minor Assessment**

1) Class Presentation and Essay, 2000-2500 words (30% of final grade), due Friday of Assessment Week by 4pm to College Reception.

You will select, in agreement with the lecturer, to present the two or three **Required Readings** for a scheduled class. In the second half of that session you will present the readings in summary form, highlighting the key points, outlining the argument, and then raising some questions for group discussion. Time for presentation is 15-25 minutes, followed by discussion. Your presentation must be written up and handed in as an essay (or write the essay first and then present that). A draft may be shown to the lecturer for feedback prior to final submission at the end of the Semester.

In-class presentations (worth 50% of the 30%) will be graded holistically according to the following criteria:

- **Accuracy:** Does the presentation accurately convey the meaning of the assigned text?
- **Priority:** Does the presentation accurately distinguish between the main ideas and ancillary details of the assigned text?
Major Final Assignment

2) 4000 words (70% of final grade), due Friday of Assessment Week (30 October 2015) by 4pm to College Reception.

You have been asked by your Church to write a report in response to the World Council of Churches paper Christian Perspectives on Theological Anthropology (reference above).

In writing your response you must draw on your Christian understandings of the human person from the position of your Church and your context (however you define it). In this task you must identify points of agreement with the document, and points of disagreement, but at each stage your position must be backed up with reference to the sources of theology (such as course readings, other books, and the Bible), a close reading of the document itself, and your own cultural resources.

As this a long document you might choose to reply and discuss just a part of it. But whatever you chose to focus on, you must give brief reasons for doing so.

Course Outline

This course is taught over seven weeks with two sessions a week.

Week 1 - Course Introduction (week beginning 07 September 2015)

Session 1: Introduction to Theological Anthropology

No readings.

Session 2: The Human Condition in Theological Perspective

Required Reading

- God's Many-Splendored Image, Introduction and Chapter 1
- Memmi, Albert. 1965. The Colonizer and the Colonized, New York: Orion. Chapter entitled, 'Mythical portrait of the colonized', p. 79–89. [in library]

Further Optional Reading


Week 2 - The Image of God (week beginning 14 September 2015)

Session 1: The Human as Body, Mind, and Spirit

Required Reading

- God's Many-Splendored Image, Chapters 2 and 3

Further Optional Reading

Eerdmans. [in library]
- Murphy, Nancey C. 2006. *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [in library]
- Smail, Tom. 2006. *Like Father, Like Son: The Trinity Imaged in Our Humanity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. [in library]

Session 2: The Human as a Moral Being and a Sinner

Required Reading
- *God's Many-Splendored Image*, Chapter 4

Further Optional Reading

Week 3 - Human Children, Men, and Women (week beginning 21 September 2015)

Session 1: The Human Child

Required Reading

Further Optional Reading

Session 2: Human Gender and Sexuality

Required Reading
- *God's Many-Splendored Image*, Chapter 5

Further Optional Reading

**Week 4 - Humans as Creatures (week beginning 28 September 2015)**

**Session 1: Human Embodiment**

**Required Reading**

- *God’s Many-Splendored Image*, Chapter 6

**Further Optional Reading**


**Session 2: Humans and other Animals**

**Required Reading**

- *God’s Many-Splendored Image*, Chapter 7

**Further Optional Reading**


**Week 5 - Work and Art (week beginning 05 October 2015)**

**Session 1: The Human Worker**

**Required Reading**

- *God’s Many-Splendored Image*, Chapter 8

**Further Optional Reading**

Session 2: The Human Artist

Required Reading

Further Optional Reading
- Hanson, F. Allan and Louise Hanson. 1990. Art and Identity in Oceania. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. [in library]

Week 6 - The Social and Political Animal (week beginning 12 October 2015)

Session 1: Politics and Human Nature

Required Reading
- God's Many-Splendored Image, Chapter 9

Further Optional Reading

Session 2: Economics and Human Nature

Required Reading

Further Optional Reading
- Daly, Herman E. and John B. Cobb, Jr. 1994. For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy
Week 7 - Disability, Illness, and Death (week beginning 19 October 2015)

Session 1: Disability and Illness

Required Reading


Further Optional Reading


Session 2: Death and Immortality

Required Reading


Further Optional Reading