Course Description

The relation between politics and religion has been one of the most contentious issues in the modern period. This course will examine the tradition of theological reflection on the nature of justice and the state. This survey course will expose students to the key texts from this tradition, including those of Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, and Barth. The key developments of Christendom, modernity, and the secularisation of politics will all be covered. Issues covered in the course will include the nature of politics, sovereignty, justice, law, and democracy. Students will be encouraged to reflect on the relationship of church and state in their own countries, and reflect theologically on global and regional politics.

Method of Teaching

A combination of lectures, readings, writing and discussion.

Course Assessment

To complete this course you need to write six minor assignments and one major assignment.

1) Minor Assignments

There are six pieces of minor assessment, being the weekly tasks in weeks two to seven as found below. All are due in class on the Thursday for that week's readings (15, 22, 29 September and 6, 13, 20 October 2016). They will be graded and returned with comments. Each piece of work should be 500 words, which should be considered a minimum guide for this work. Each piece is worth 8% of the course, making a total of 48% of the overall grade for the course.

2) Major Assignment

The one major assignment (worth 52%, due end of Assessment Week) is to write a "Mirror for Princes" (speculum principis) for a fictitious political leader in your country. In 3000–4000 words you must outline how a good political leader from your country ought to rule. You can write this specifically for a male or a female ruler, or a generic one. Your essay must demonstrate an understanding of the genre of "Mirror for Princes" and draw on scripture, Christian theological traditions, and your own culture. In outlining your advice for how a political leader ought to and ought not to conduct themselves, you might write about what they must and must not do and why, what company they should keep and what to avoid, what virtues they should cultivate and how they should acquire and keep them. You might also discuss how they conduct the internal affairs of the nation, the administration of justice, international affairs, and the use of violence to achieve their aims.

In understanding what is required you might find this quote helpful:

As a genre, the mirror for princes follows certain conventions. It typically begins with a "humility topos." The author disclaims any particular linguistic or political ability to advise the prince, but accepts the responsibility either because his work was commissioned by him, or because the author believes it to be in the best interests of the kingdom. The substantive discussion of political ideas is organized around a narrative order – the transformation of the prince into an ideal king. In some works this presented in part as a physical transformation, and the advice includes principles of nutrition, hygiene, and instruction in a variety of subjects. In others the transformation is metaphorical; the princes moral and intellectual infancy is gradually exchanged.
for a mature wisdom and virtue. The text is characteristically enlivened by *exempla* from Scriptural and classical stories of good and bad rulers. All political mirrors emphasize the development of character, good judgement, and the classical virtues of courage, justice, temperance, and prudence, as well as the princely qualities of liberality, magnificence, generosity, and authority. The differences in mirrors stem from their authors' disagreements about the essential nature of kingship and the problems of ruling as well as the differences brought about by political culture and context.


Sources for the Major Assignment include (but should not be limited to) these:

**Cultural Sources**

Cultural expectations of rulers drawn from appropriate sources, such as stories, songs, fables, scholarly materials and biographies of past rulers.

**Selected Biblical Sources**

- Deuteronomy 17
- Job 29
- The narratives of Solomon and David, including Psalm 72

**Primary Source examples of this literature include (in chronological order)**

- Thomas Aquinas. c. 1265. *De Regno, Ad Regem Cypri (On Kingship, to the King of Cyprus)*. translated by Gerald B. Phelan, revised by I. Th. Eschmann, O.P. Online: [http://dhspriory.org/thomas/DeRegno.htm](http://dhspriory.org/thomas/DeRegno.htm)
- Giles of Rome. c. 1270s. *De Regimine Principum (On the Rule of Princes)*


Selections of some of these texts can be found in:

Secondary sources on this literature include


Course Texts

Required Texts

The set text for this course will be a course reader available from the bookshop.

Further Reading

In addition to the required readings for each session there are other readings listed. These are often the source material for lectures and provide further sources to assist with completion of assignments. Below are further readings relating to contextual political theologies and the Pacific region.

Selected Works in Contextual Political Theology


Selected Books on Politics in the Pacific


Selected Journals Covering Politics in the Pacific

Course Outline

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

Week 1 - Course Introduction (week beginning 5 September 2016)

Weekly Task

none

Session 1: Introduction to "Political Theology"

Required Reading

- none

Further Optional Reading


Session 2: Introduction to "Politics" in the Pacific

Required Reading


Further Optional Reading


Week 2 - Theological Politics (week beginning 12 September 2016)

Weekly Task
Outline the political importance of one Christian practice or element of Christian worship.

Session 3: The Church as a Political Society

Required Reading
- Ephesians 2:19-22
- Philippians 3:20

Further Optional Reading

Session 4: The Bible as a Political Book

Required Reading
- Matthew 22:15-21
- Luke 1:46-55

Further Optional Reading

**Week 3 - Empires: For and Against (week beginning 19 September 2016)**

**Weekly Task**

Write a reply to one Christian argument in favour of Empire.

**Session 5: Christian and Other Empires**

**Required Reading**
- 2 Thessalonians 2:4-12
- Revelation 13

**Further Optional Reading**

**Session 6: Christians against Empire**

**Required Reading**
- Mark 5:1-13
- Revelation 18

**Further Optional Reading**
Week 4 - The Rise of Pacific Nations (week beginning 26 September 2016)

Weekly Task

Outline the case for or against patriotism.

Session 7: National Independence and Sovereignty

Required Reading

- Micah 4

Further Optional Reading


Session 8: Pacific Nationalisms

Required Reading

- Genesis 10:32
- Deuteronomy 32:8
- Acts 17:26-27
- King, Martin Luther, Jr. 1953. "The False God of Nationalism." Sermon. Online: http://mlk-
Further Optional Reading


Week 5 - Christian and Secular Societies (week beginning 3 October 2016)

Weekly Task

Argue for or against the inclusion of Christianity and/or God in your nation's constitution.

Session 9: Christian States and Constitutions

Required Reading

- Psalm 33:12
- Matthew 10:32
- Romans 13:1-7

Further Optional Reading

- Fullerton, Leslie Douglas. 1969. *From Christendom to Pluralism in the South Seas Church-State Relations in the Twentieth Century*. Madison: Drew University. [in library]
Session 10: Secular and Liberal Democracies

Required Reading
- Exodus 18:26
- Deuteronomy 1:13
- Galatians 3:28
- Galatians 5:1, 13

Further Optional Reading

Week 6 - Political Participation and Influence (week beginning 10 October 2016)

Weekly Task

How you would reply to someone who says that Christians should not engage in politics?

Session 11: Christians in Politics

Required Reading
- Jeremiah 29:7
- Psalm 72

Further Optional Reading
Session 12: Christians against Politics

Required Reading
- 1 Samuel 8
- Psalm 146:3
- John 18:36
- Acts 5:29

Further Optional Reading
- Tolstoy, Leo, The Kingdom of God Is Within You. Online: https://archive.org/details/thekingdomofgodi00tols

Week 7 - Current Political Issues in the Pacific (week beginning 17 October 2016)

Weekly Task

What is the actual or potential role of the Church in countering corruption in your society?

Session 13: Power and Corruption

Required Reading
- Deuteronomy 17:14-20
- 1 Kings 21
- Isaiah 1:23
Further Optional Reading

- Transparency International https://www.transparency.org/

Session 14: Climate Change

Required Reading

- Psalm 46
- Isaiah 24
- Hosea 4:1-3

Further Optional Reading