



On-Campus Course Syllabus
THS 665 L1
Modern and Postmodern Theology
Spring 2025

Class Information

Day and Time: Thursdays, 1:45-4:30 p.m.

Room Number: E204

Contact Information

Instructor Name: Dr. Steve Lemke

Instructor Email: slemke@criswell.edu

Instructor Phone: 504-458-6724

Course Description and Prerequisites

An examination of the development of major theological perspectives from the rise of the Enlightenment to the present time. Attention is given to modernist and postmodernist theology in their major forms as well as major developments within evangelical theology, including varied reactions to the changing theological landscape

Course Objectives

At the end of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Identify key figures, events, ideas, and movements pertaining to the Christian church from the Enlightenment to today.
2. Narrate the significance of modern and postmodern thought on contemporary theology in American evangelicalism and global Christianity.
3. Charitably analyze theological readings from the Christian tradition and contemporary scholarship.
4. Posit historical and theological claims with nuance, clarity, charity, and coherence.

Required Textbooks

Olson, Roger, and Stan Grenz. *20th Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1993. (978-0830815258)

Vanhoozer, Kevin H., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, Cambridge Companions to Religion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. (978-0521793957)

Additional Readings (in Canvas)

- Barth, Karl. "The Election of Jesus Christ," in *Church Dogmatics: Vol. 2, The Doctrine of God, Part 2: The Election of God*, section 33, "Jesus Christ: Elected and Electing," pp. 94-143.
- _____. "No!" in *Natural Theology: Comprising "Nature and Grace" by Dr. Emil Brunner and the Reply "No!" by Dr. Karl Barth*, trans. Peter Fraenkel. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2002, pp. 67-94.
- Collins, Francis. *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*. New York: Free Press, pp. 213-234.
- Cone, James. *God of the Oppressed*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997, chap. 6, "Who Is Jesus Christ for Us Today?," pp. 99-126.
- Derrida, Jacques. "Signature, Event, Context," in *Twentieth Century Philosophy*, in *Philosophic Classics*, vol. 5, ed. Forrest Baird and Walter Kaufmann, pp. 360-379.
- Fish, Stanley. *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretative Communities*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980, pp. 1-17, 303-321.
- Frei, Hans. *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974, chapter 16, "'Understanding' and Narrative Continuity," pp. 307-347.
- Gutierrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1990 rev. ed., trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson, chapters 2 and 13, pp. 13-25, 162-173.
- Hegel, Georg W. F., trans. F. Louis Soldan. "The Absolute Religion," from Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, part 3, in *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. 15, no. 1 (January, 1981), pp. 9-34.
- Hunsinger, George. "The Harnack/Barth Correspondence: A Paraphrase with Comments," in *Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review*, vol. 50, no. 4 (Oct 1, 1986), pp. 599-622.
- Jennings, Willie James. *After Whiteness: An Education in Belonging*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020, pp. 40-61.
- Kant, Immanuel. "Preface to the Second Edition 1787," *Critique of Pure Reason*, 3 vols., pp. 1-15, available online at <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/4280/4280-h/4280-h.htm>
- _____. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 3 vols., pp. 563-589, available online at <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/4280/4280-h/4280-h.htm>.
- Kierkegaard, Soren. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. David F. Swanson and Walter Lowrie. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944, chapter 2, "The Subjective Truth, Inwardness; Truth Is Subjectivity," pp. 169-224.
- _____. *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. David F. Swanson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1936, chapters 1-3 ("A Project of Thought, "God as Teacher and Savior," and "The Absolute Paradox), pp. 5-43.
- Moore, Stephen. *Mark and Luke in Post-Structuralist Perspectives: Jesus Begins to Write*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992, chapter 2, "The Lion S(pr)ings," pp. 28-30.
- Murphy, Nancy, and James Wm. McClendon, Jr. "Distinguishing Modern and Postmodern Theologies," in *Modern Theology*, vol. 5, no. 3 (April 1989), pp. 18.
- Pinnock, Clark, "God Limits His Knowledge," chapter 4 in *Predestination and Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1982, pp. 141-177.
- Plantinga, Alvin. *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Materialism*. London: Oxford University Press, 2011, chapter 9, "Deep Concord: Christian Theism and the Deep Roots of Science," pp. 265-303.
- Rahner, Karl. *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6, sect. 4.c.23, "Anonymous Christians," trans. Karl H. and Boniface Druger. London: Dayton, Longman, and Todd, 1974, pp. 390-399.
- Rauschenbusch, A *Theology for the Social Gospel*. New York: Macmillan, 1917, chapters 1-6, 10, 15.
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *Christian Faith*, vol. 1, trans. Terrence N. Tice, Catherine L. Kelsey, and Edwina Lawler. Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 2016, "Toward the Concept "Church": Propositions Borrowed from Ethics," pp. 8-27.

Taylor, Mark. *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984, in *Between Truth and Fiction: A Narrative Reader in Literature and Theology*, ed. David Jasper and Allen Smith. Waco: Baylor University Press 2010, pp. 153-155.

Tillich, Paul. *Systematic Theology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967. (vol. 2, pp. 118-138.

_____. "The Problem of Theological Method II," in *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 27, no. 1 (Jan.1947), pp. 16-26.

Vanhoozer, Kevin. *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Theology*. Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 2005, Introduction "The Way of Truth, The Stuff of Life," pp. 1-33.

Course Requirements and Assignments

- **Reading Notes and Questions** –(due weekly, 10 points each, 150 points total)
Students should take 1-2 pp. single spaced notes on the readings for each week. The notes should include at least one of the following each week: (a) clarification questions ("Does this mean . . .?"), (b) disagreements ("That doesn't seem true to me because . . ."), or (c) application ("So what if this were applied to . . .") The notes must be posted before the class that week because the class discussion will revolve in part around the comments and questions that each student has.
- **Two Unit Tests** (midterm and final exams, 100 points each)
The exams will cover the lectures and discussions in class, as well as the assigned readings. The tests will be about 20% matching of key terms or persons, and about 80% essay questions. Of the essay questions, the majority will be addressing something specific discussed in class, and about 20% will ask the student to defend or critique a position. Some guidance will be given in advance about the content of the tests.
- **Research Paper** (due 5/1, 150 points) Either option should be 8-10 pp. double spaced
 - **Option A: Theological Dialogue Paper:** This paper compares and contrasts two theologians within modern/postmodern theology and places them in dialogue — written like a script, but one with footnotes. The paper will contain two sections: (1) a dialogue between your two theologians (≈2,500+ words) and (2) your own evaluation of the issue at hand (≈1,500 words).
 - **Option B: Classic Research Paper:** Enter into a contemporary conversation regarding one of the theologians/topics introduced in the class. Your paper should make a nuanced and well-supported and documented claim that engages both primary and secondary sources carefully. The paper must argue your thesis for at least a third of the paper.

Course/Classroom Policies and Information

Class Attendance

Students are responsible for enrolling in courses for which they (1) anticipate being able to attend every on-campus class session on the day and time appearing on course schedules, or (2) participating in academically related activities as identified in online-course schedules including synchronous class sessions conducted remotely by video, and then making every effort to do so. When unavoidable situations result in absence or tardiness, students are responsible for acquiring any missed information. Professors are not obliged to allow students to make up missed work. Per their independent discretion, individual professors may determine how attendance affects students' ability to meet course learning objectives and whether attendance affects course grades. Professors apprise students of such information in course syllabi.

Students receiving grants, loans, or scholarships must meet specified requirements of various departments at the college and should consult relevant sections of the *Academic Catalog*. To ensure such funds will not be

forfeited, students are responsible for contacting the proper departments to ascertain any specific course participation requirements and consequences of not meeting such requirements. Students receiving grants, loans, or scholarships should consult the Financial Aid office.

While Criswell College is a non-attendance taking institution, it nevertheless must demonstrate that students begin their courses in order to comply with Federal Aid regulations. Accordingly, students must participate in academically related activities during census periods. Failure to meet this requirement will result in students being administratively dropped from courses.

Academically related activity is defined as any course-related activity that may be used as evidence of attendance. Examples include:

- physical presence in a classroom during a class session with the instructor present,
- participation in a synchronous remote video class session with the instructor present,
- submission of an academic assignment, quiz, or exam,
- participation in an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction,
- participation in a study group or discussion board that is assigned by the instructor,
- documentation showing that the student and a faculty member corresponded about the academic subject of the course.

NOTE: Logging into a Canvas course alone and logging into a Synchronous Online class session without active participation or with the camera off are not considered attendance.

NOTE: A census period begins on the first day of a semester/term and runs through the end of the last day to drop courses. During the census period, attendance data is collected in order to demonstrate compliance with Federal Aid regulations. There is no census period for winter terms since there is no last day to drop courses.

Campus Closure

To ensure the health and safety of students and employees, college administrators may decide it is necessary on rare occasions to close the campus. Once this decision is announced, instructors will contact students to provide further details regarding the campus closure's impact on those courses. Students are responsible to watch for communication from their instructors and respond appropriately. (Unless otherwise specified by the instructor in this syllabus, this communication will be sent to the student's Criswell College e-mail account.)

In order to make progress toward the courses' objectives, instructors have the freedom during most campus closures to require students to participate in activities as alternatives to meeting on campus. An instructor may, for example, hold class remotely (through Zoom) at the scheduled time, provide a recording of a class or presentation for students to watch independently, or assign other activities that students are to accomplish before returning to campus. Students are responsible for accomplishing these alternative activities as well as

any course requirements listed in this syllabus during the period of the campus closure. If, during the period of the campus closure, personal circumstances prohibit a student from accomplishing these alternative activities or course requirements and assignment listed in the syllabus during the campus closure, the student is responsible for communicating with the instructor as soon as possible. Instructors will not penalize students who do not have the means to accomplish the alternative activities during the period of the campus's closure and will work with students whose circumstances during the campus closure prohibited their timely completion of course requirements and assignments in the syllabus.

Grading Scale

Assigning grade definitions (i.e., above average, average, below average) is optional. Please delete the last column below if not assigning definitions. Additionally, delete these instructions when completing syllabus.

			Grade Definitions (optional)
A	93-100	4.0 grade points per semester hour	
A-	90-92	3.7 grade points per semester hour	
B+	87-89	3.3 grade points per semester hour	
B	83-86	3.0 grade points per semester hour	
B-	80-82	2.7 grade points per semester hour	
C+	77-79	2.3 grade points per semester hour	
C	73-76	2.0 grade points per semester hour	
C-	70-72	1.7 grade points per semester hour	
D+	67-69	1.3 grade points per semester hour	
D	63-66	1.0 grade point per semester hour	
D-	60-62	0.7 grade points per semester hour	
F	0-59	0.0 grade points per semester hour	

Incomplete Grades

Students requesting a grade of Incomplete (I) must understand that incomplete grades may be given only upon approval of the faculty member involved. An "I" may be assigned only when a student is currently passing a course and in situations involving extended illness, serious injury, death in the family, or employment or government reassignment, not student neglect.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructors prior to the end of the semester, plus filing the appropriate completed and approved academic request form with the Registrar's Office. The "I" must be removed (by completing the remaining course requirements) no later than 60 calendar days after the close of the term or semester in which the grade was awarded, or the "I" will become an "F."

Academic Honesty

Absolute truth is an essential belief and basis of behavior for those who believe in a God who cannot lie and forbids falsehood. Academic honesty is the application of the principle of truth in the classroom setting. Academic honesty includes the basic premise that all work submitted by students must be their own and any ideas derived or copied from elsewhere must be carefully documented.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating of any kind,
- submitting, without proper approval, work originally prepared by the student for another course,
- plagiarism, which is the submitting of work prepared by someone else as if it were his own, and
- failing to credit sources properly in written work.

Institutional Assessment

Material submitted by students in this course may be used for assessment of the college's academic programs. Since programmatic and institutional assessment is done without reference to specific students, the results of these assessments have no effect on a student's course grade or academic standing at the college. Before submitting a student's work for this type of assessment, the course instructor redacts the work to remove anything that identifies the student.

Institutional Email Policy

All official college email communications to students enrolled in this course will be sent exclusively to students' institutional email accounts. Students are expected to check their student email accounts regularly and to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to all communications from faculty and administrative departments.

Students are permitted to setup automatic forwarding of emails from their student email accounts to one or more personal email accounts. The student is responsible to setup and maintain email forwarding without assistance from college staff. If a student chooses to use this forwarding option, he/she will continue to be responsible for responding appropriately to all communications from faculty and administrative departments of the college. Criswell College bears no responsibility for the use of emails that have been forwarded from student email accounts to other email accounts.

Disabilities

Criswell College recognizes and supports the standards set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and similar state laws, which are designed to eliminate discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. Criswell College is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualifying students, faculty, and employees with disabilities as required by applicable laws. For more information, please contact the Student Services Office.

Intellectual Property Rights

Unless otherwise specifically instructed in writing by the instructor, students must neither materially nor digitally reproduce materials from any course offered by Criswell College for or with the significant possibility of distribution.

Research and Writing Standards

The default writing style for written assignments in Criswell College Courses is the latest edition of *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* by Kate Turabian. However, instructors are free to require alternative writing styles in their courses. These styles include but are not limited to the American Psychological Association (APA), Chicago Manual of Style, Modern Language Association (MLA), and Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) writing guides.

Resources and Supports

Canvas and SONIS: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based learning tool and SONIS for student data. Students needing assistance with Canvas should contact the Canvas Help Support line at (844) 358-6140. Tech support is available at this number, twenty-four hours a day. Students needing help with SONIS should contact the Campus Software Manager at studenttechsupport@criswell.edu.

Student Services: The Student Services Office exists to foster and encourage success in all areas of life—physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional. Students are encouraged to reach out for assistance by contacting the office at 214.818.1332 or studentservices@criswell.edu. The Student Services Office also works with local counseling centers to ensure that every student has access to helpful mental health resources. More information is located on the college website at [Criswell College Mental Health Resources](#), and students may contact the Director of Student Services if they have any questions.

Wallace Library: Students can access academic resources and obtain research assistance by contacting or visiting the Wallace Library, which is located on campus. For more information, email the Wallace Library at library@criswell.edu. Login credentials are emailed to students near the beginning of the semester.

Tutoring Center: Students are encouraged to consult with tutors to improve and enhance their skills and confidence. Tutors have been recommended by the faculty to ensure that the tutor(s) are qualified to serve the student body. Every tutor brings experience and expertise in an effort to provide the proper resources for the subject matter at hand. To consult with a tutor, students can schedule an appointment through Calendly (<https://calendly.com/criswell-tutoringcenter>) or by visiting the Tutoring Center located on the second floor in room E203. For questions, call 214.818.1373 or email at tutoringcenter@criswell.edu.

Course Schedule

Date	Class Discussion Topic	Assignment
1/23 Week1	Introduction to the Class What Is the Enlightenment/ Modernism?	Murphy and McClendon, pp. 191-198 Grenz, pp. 9-23

1/30 Week 2	Modern Enlightenment Theology: The Quest for Certainty – Descartes, Immanuel Kant & Georg W. F. Hegel	Grenz, pp. 24-38 Hegel & Soldan, pp. 9-34 Kant, <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , pp. 563-589, (or about A59I/B619-A642/B670) Kant, "Preface," pp. 1-15
2/6 Week 3	Liberalism: Ritschl, Rauschenbusch, and Harnack	Grenz, pp. 51-62, 113 Rauschenbusch, chapters 1-6, 10, 15
2/13 Week 4	Existentialism: Kierkegaard, Schleiermacher, Bultmann, & Ebeling	Grenz, pp. 39-50 Schleiermacher, pp 8-27 Kierkegaard, <i>Philosophical Fragments</i> , pp. 5-43. Kierkegaard, <i>Concluding Unscientific Postscript</i> , pp. 169-224.
2/20 Week 5	Neo-Orthodoxy/Crisis Theology: Barth, Brunner	Grenz, pp. 63-85 Hunsinger (Barth vs. Harnack), pp. 599-602 Barth (Barth vs. Brunner), Nein!, pp. 67-94 Barth, Election in Christ, pp. 94-143
2/27 Week 6	Bonhoeffer, the Niebuhrs, and Tillich	Grenz, pp. 99-129, 146-155 Tillich, <i>Systematic Theology</i> . v. 2, pp. 118-138. Tillich, "Theological Method," pp. 16-26.
3/6 Week 7	Other Views: Personalism, Teilhard de Chardin, Pannenberg, Moltmann, & Rahner	Grenz, pp. 170-199, 238-253 Rahner, "Anonymous Christians," pp. 390-399 Frei, pp. 307-347
3/13aa Week 8	Test Over Unit 1	
3/13 b Week 8	Introduction to Postmodernism	Murphy & McClendon, pp. 199-214
3/17-21 Week 9 Off	Spring Break	
3/27 Week 10	Post-Foundational & Post-liberal Theologies	Vanhoozer, chapters 1-3 Moore, <i>Mark and Luke in Poststructuralist Perspectives</i> , pp. 28-60 Taylor, <i>Erring</i> , pp. 153-155.
4/3 Week 11	Post-Metaphysical, Deconstructive, and Reconstructive Theologies	Grenz, pp. 156-169 Vanhoozer, chapters 4-6 Fish, pp. 1-17, 303-321 Derrida, pp. 360-379
4/10 Week 12	Process Theology: Whitehead, Griffin, & Cobb: Openness of God: Pinnock, Sanders, Boyd (Scripture & Tradition, Theological Method)	Grenz, pp. 130-144 Vanhoozer, chapters 9-10 Vanhooser, <i>Drama of Doctrine</i> , pp. 1-33 Pinnock, "God Limits His Knowledge," pp. 141-177.

4/17 Week 13	Liberation Theologies (Black, Latin American) (Trinity, God and World)	Grenz, pp. 200-223 Vanhoozer, chapters 11-12 Gutierrez, chapters 2 & 13, pp. 13-25, 162-173 Jennings, pp. 40-61 Cone, pp. 99-126
4/24 Week 14	Feminist Liberation Theologies	Grenz, pp. 224-235 Vanhoozer, chapter 7
5/1 Week 15	Christianity and Science (Person, Christ and Salvation)	Vanhoozer, chapters 13-14 Plantinga, pp. 265-303 Collins, pp. 213-234 Research Paper Due
5/8 Week 16	An Evangelical Critique of Postmodernism (Ecclesiology, Holy Spirit)	Lemke, "Truth for a Postmodern Era" Vanhoozer, chapters 15-16 Grenz, pp. 310-316
5/15	Final Exam (over Unit II)	

Selected Bibliography

- Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*, 14 vols., trans. Torrance, Bromiley, et.al. London: T.&T. Clark, 1975.
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- _____. *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, trans. Paul Patton. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- _____. *Simulacra and Simulation (The Body, in Theory: Histories of Cultural Materialism)*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995.
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- Derrida, Jacques. *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson. London: Athlone, 1981.
- _____. *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.
- _____. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, The Seminars of Jacques Derrida, trans. Geoffery Bennington. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019 rep. ed.
- _____. *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
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- Fiddes, Paul. *The Creative Suffering of God*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Ford, David, Rachel Myers, and Ashley Cocksworth, eds. *Ford's The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology since 1918*. The Great Theologians series. New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2024.
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