Class time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00 – 2:20 p.m.
Location: CGR 1302

Instructor: Dr. Jeremy Bergen
Office: CGR 2122
Email: jbergen@uwaterloo.ca
Phone: 519-885-0220 ext. 24234
Office hours: Thursdays 2:30-3:30 p.m., and by appointment

Land acknowledgement
We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

Course Description
Introduction to the classical themes of Christian theology (revelation, God, creation, sin, Jesus Christ, salvation, church, etc.) and their interrelationship, critical reflection on these beliefs, and examination of debates about the meaning of Christian beliefs in contemporary contexts.

Course Objectives
- to introduce the history, language, sources, norms and methods of theology
- to understand the basic content of Christian belief and to enter into debate about this content
- to practice what it means to think, speak, and write theologically
- to read theological texts carefully and critically
- to make connections between Christian theology and contemporary issues
- to understand the diversity of practices and beliefs in the contemporary church
- to develop interest in other courses in Religious Studies and/or Theological Studies

Required Texts
- Occasional articles and chapters, posted on LEARN.
**Requirements**

1. **Engaged participation and responsibility for your own learning**
   This means careful and critical reading of assigned texts before class, attending class, taking notes during lectures, asking questions, contributing your ideas and opinions in a respectful way. You will not do well in this course if you do not do the required readings and attend class. If you miss a class, you are responsible for the material that was covered. All handouts, including lecture outlines will be posted on LEARN, usually several hours before class. I will not give mini-lectures on what you missed, nor will I distribute my own lecture notes.

   Please consider others: do not come and go during class, switch off all phones, use laptop/tablet for taking notes only. *If you use phones/computers inappropriately during class, you may be asked to leave.* There may be legitimate reasons for exceptions (medical conditions, devices to support specific learning needs, etc.); please speak to the instructor in advance.

2. **Brief reading reflections (7 x 2%): 14%**
   Each reading reflection should be one page in length, double-spaced (about 300 words). Do not be concerned with “covering” everything in the text. Rather, focus your reflections on one of the main ideas in the reading. It doesn’t need to be “the” main idea, but neither should it be an obscure or minor point. In a short paragraph, summarize what the author is saying. Then engage with the idea. You should not do additional research—just focus on the text at hand. What are its strengths and/or weaknesses, assumptions, or implications? If he disagree, can you appreciate why the author, or the Christian tradition more generally, makes that argument? If you agree, explain why. Draw connections between the reading an other material we are discussing in this course, or material learned from other courses. Be sure to include one critical, open-ended question. It could be a question you’d like to ask the author, a question that would prompt a good discussion in class.

   There are ten readings for which you may submit a reading reflection. Only the first seven that you submit will be marked and credited toward your final grade (i.e. there is no bonus for doing more than what is required).

   This is intended as a “low stakes” writing exercise, and it is possible to receive full marks (which doesn’t imply that your work is perfect). In general, my rubric is as follows:
   2/2 – good content, good writing
   1.5/2 – content or writing is good, the other is minimally acceptable
   1/2 – content and writing are minimally acceptable

   Due in LEARN Dropbox by noon on the day the reading will be discussed in class.

3. **One test: 18%**
   The test will include T/F, short answer (paragraph), and a short essay question, *February 14.*

4. **Two short essays, 5-6 pages each, 2 x 20%**
   See attachment for specific guidelines. Each short essay will be a critical engagement with a chapter from the book *God Does Not...* Due *March 7* and *March 26.* Submit in hard copy, not through Dropbox.

   *Option: If you have interest in researching a particular topic related to the course, you may write one research paper (10 pages, worth 40%) in lieu of the two short essays. Due Mar. 26. You must have the specific approval of the instructor by Feb. 28 in order to take this option.*
Guidelines for the research paper will be provided on LEARN. Note: it is an academic offence to submit a paper for this course that has been submitted for credit in another course.

5. Final Exam: 28%
The exam will consist of T/F and short answer questions (covering material introduced since the last test) and short essay questions (covering the entire course). An exam review sheet will be distributed in class but will not be posted on LEARN. This exam will be scheduled by the university and is subject to all university regulations for exams, including changes for conflicts. **Student travel plans are not acceptable grounds for granting an alternative final examination time.**

Late submission policies

Brief reading reflections
If you submit up to 48 hours late, you will be able to receive a maximum of 1 out of 2. After 48 hours, you will receive 0 out of 2. (Since the Dropbox will not accept late submissions, these should be emailed to the instructor.)

Short essay assignments
Each of the short essay assignments are due at the start of class. It must be submitted in hard copy, double-spaced, standard margins and 12-point font, with no report covers. **Include page numbers.** Late assignments will be penalized 3% per 24-hour period or portion thereof (including weekends), and can be accepted no later than the last day of classes except in exceptional circumstances for which documentation is required. Late papers must be submitted to the Grebel front office during regular business hours (M-Th, 8 a.m.-7:30 p.m.; F, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.). You may “stop the clock” by emailing an assignment to me over the weekend, but **only if you submit it in hard copy to the front office on the next business day.** (E.g. A paper is due Thursday in class, that is, at 1 p.m. If you email me a copy on Saturday morning, and hand in a hard copy on Monday, it will be considered 2 days late. However, if you email me a copy on Saturday but hand in a hard copy on Tuesday morning, then it will count as submitted on Tuesday morning, that is, 5 days late.) I will make every effort to return as soon as possible papers that have been submitted on time. Papers will be returned in class, or left with the Grebel reception desk for pick-up.

If you have questions or concerns about any of the tests or assignments, please contact me before the due dates. **There are no “make-up assignments” in this course.**

LEARN
I will be using LEARN for several elements of this course. All students must familiarize themselves with the LEARN platform and check it regularly.

- Email communications – These are generated from LEARN and sent to students’ uwaterloo email accounts.
- Content – All handouts in class, including the lecture outlines, will be posted in LEARN, usually prior to class. **If you miss a class, there is no need to ask me for a handout.** If you wish to record lectures, please check with me first.
- Discussion – There is no requirement to participate in any online discussion. However, I will start by making two forums available. “Ask a Question” is the place to ask the instructor about course content and/or course requirements. “Start/continue a conversation” is a place to start or continue a conversation about a particular topic. This forum is primarily for students, though the instructor will monitor it, and may contribute
from time to time. I encourage you to make use of these forums, and may occasionally “seed” a discussion with a particular question or comment.

- Submission of brief reading reflections – By Dropbox on LEARN.
- Grades – All grades will be recorded and calculated in LEARN.

**Outline of classes and required readings**

Please bring a copy of the required readings for the day (hard or electronic copy) with you to class.

* = posted in LEARN.
^ = reading for reflection paper

1. Jan. 8 – Introduction / What is a theologian?

2. Jan. 10 – Historical points of reference

3. Jan. 15 – The Theistic Claim
   
   *Understanding Christian Doctrine* 1-3, 5-21
   
   ^Understanding Christian Doctrine, 23-47

   
   *Understanding Christian Doctrine* 49-58, 73-76
   

   
   ^Understanding Christian Doctrine, 50-71

   
   *Understanding Christian Doctrine*, 77-88
   
   ^God Does Not..., 131-150

7. Jan. 29 – Problem of Evil
   
   *Understanding Christian Doctrine*, 89-101
   

8. Jan. 31 – Creation
   
   *Understanding Christian Doctrine*, 103-112
   

9. Feb. 5 – Theological Anthropology, Sin
   
   *Understanding Christian Doctrine*, 113-117
   

10. Feb. 7 – Jesus Christ

    *Understanding Christian Doctrine*, 119-133
11. Feb. 12 – Jesus Christ (continued)
   Popular conceptions and misconceptions of God
   Discussion of the short essay assignment/review for the test
   God Does Not... 9-19, 83-105

12. Feb. 14 – TEST

[Reading week]

13. Feb. 26 – Salvation
   Understanding Christian Doctrine, 135-148

14. Feb. 28 – Holy Spirit
   Understanding Christian Doctrine, 149-157

15. Mar. 5 – Church
   Understanding Christian Doctrine, 157-165

16. Mar. 7 – Faith and History: Resurrection of Jesus as Test Case
   FIRST SHORT ESSAY DUE

17. Mar. 12 – Sacraments and the Life of Virtue
   Understanding Christian Doctrine, 167-177

   Understanding Christian Doctrine, 179-193

19. Mar. 19 – Eschatology 1
   Understanding Christian Doctrine, 195-204

20. Mar. 21 – Eschatology 2
   Understanding Christian Doctrine, 205-216

22. Mar. 26 – Atheism
   SECOND SHORT ESSAY DUE
22. Mar. 28 – New options in theology

23. Apr. 2 – Postcolonialism; Indigenous theological perspectives

   Understanding Christian Doctrine, 217-221

FINAL EXAM – to be scheduled by the University during the exam period.

UWaterloo Policies:
Academic Integrity
Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the Academic Integrity link and Ethical behaviour link

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisory, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean of Arts. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 - Student Appeals.

Other information

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities
The AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term. AccessAbility Services link
Counselling Services
Counselling Services provides free confidential counselling, in both individual and group sessions, with qualified professionals to help registered students, faculty and staff with personal concerns, educational career decisions, and strategies to studies and exams: Counselling Services link, ext. 33528, NH Room 2080.

Accommodation for Illness
A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the “University of Waterloo Verification of Illness” form or it will not be accepted. More information can be obtained from Health Services and the form is available in pdf. Medical Clinic link

The Writing and Communication Centre
Writing and Communication Centre staff offer one-on-one support in planning assignments and presentations, using and documenting research, organizing and structuring papers, and revising for clarity and coherence. Make an appointment or drop in at the Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit Writing and Communication Centre link