

STANDARD SYLLABUS

Jesus Christ THEO 267

A central and essential part of the understanding of Christian theology is the subject of Jesus Christ. Who is he? What did he accomplish? Why is this critical for the church? This course will consider a critical methodology for addressing these and other questions, utilizing the Gospels, the writings of Paul and other biblical authors, the early ecumenical councils, and the history of church doctrine, including contemporary scholarship.

Knowledge Area(s) satisfied: Theological and Religious Studies Knowledge
Skill(s) Developed: Critical Thinking Skills and Dispositions
Values Requirement(s) satisfied: Understanding Spirituality or Faith in Action in the World

Learning Objectives:

Knowledge Area (Theological and Religious Studies Knowledge):

The student will come to an understanding of the nature of Jesus Christ as both human and divine, what this might mean, how this formulation was derived, and the varieties of understanding of Christ within the Scriptures, the church, and modern scholarship. These are among the knowledge competencies the student will acquire:

- (1) adequate Biblical exegesis to differentiate the various theories of Christ (Christologies) found in the New Testament;
- (2) the nature of early controversies in the church which led to the Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon and the achievements of these councils;
- (3) a fundamental historical sense of the development in doctrine through the centuries, culminating in contemporary theories of Christology;
- (4) an understanding of and ability to explicate the relationship of the Passion and Death of Christ to salvation theory (Soteriology);
- (5) an appreciation for and ability to describe the contribution to Christology made by feminist theologians.

Skills (Critical Thinking Skills and Dispositions):

The student will come to an understanding of the nature of Jesus Christ as both human and divine, what this might mean, how this formulation was derived, and the varieties of understanding of Christ within the Scriptures, the church, and modern scholarship. These are among the critical thinking competencies the student will acquire:

- (1) the ability to analyze and interpret religious and secondary texts, beliefs, and practices relevant to Christology, using standard scholarly methods and tools;

(2) the ability to sort through a variety of interpretations of the meaning of Christ and, using critical reasoning, discern why and how these interpretations might contribute to the understanding of Christ;

(3) the ability to develop strategies for seeking and synthesizing data to support and to critique arguments found in the assigned readings or classroom lectures and discussions;

(4) the ability to recognize the processes of critical reasoning, with guidance from the instructor, resulting in the student's enhanced sense of self-confidence in reaching judgment about the subject of this course and in their own considered opinions.

Value (Understanding Spirituality or Faith in Action in the World):

Competencies: By way of example, Loyola graduates should be able to:

Demonstrate knowledge of and capacity to articulate the foundations of one's own and others' beliefs or faith traditions.

Demonstrate how faith traditions or belief systems in contemporary and classical Christology have been or can be related to intellectual and cultural life.

Develop an ability to reflect upon the applications of one's Christological beliefs or faith traditions to decisions in one's personal, professional, and civic life.

Learning Activities:

Value (Understanding Spirituality or Faith in Action in the World):

Lectures, class discussion, and student reading of primary and secondary texts will be the principal learning activities. Assessment strategies will include, as an example, the following:

The first competency (see above) may be assessed with questions, such as: (1) identify and differentiate the respective Christological approaches found in the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John; (2) identify the historical and theological sources for the Christological doctrine defined by the ecumenical Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon; (3) identify at least one contemporary Christological theory.

The second competency may be assessed with questions, such as: (1) identify and summarize the philosophical substrate for the enunciation of Christology in the ecumenical Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon; (2) consider and describe at least one application of Christological doctrine as found in contemporary literature, e.g., Kazantzakis, Dostoevsky, Gerard Manley Hopkins, etc.

The third competency may be assessed with questions, such as: (1) demonstrate by example how a human life might be transformed by adopting or rejecting religious faith in Jesus Christ; (2) identify at least one relevant ethical implication of accepting Jesus Christ as both divine and human; (3) consider the U.S. political doctrine of separation of church and state and comment critically upon one of the following topics: prayer in public schools, references to the U.S. as a "Judeo-Christian country," public displays of religious symbols, etc.

These assessment strategies and sample questions will directly address the competencies listed for the Value component of "Understanding Spirituality or Faith in Action in the World."

Possible array of texts:

- New American Bible. www.nccbuscc.org/nab/bible
- Roger Haight. Jesus: Symbol of God. Orbis Books, 1999.
- Richard A. Norris, Jr., trans. And ed. The Christological Controversy. Sources of Early Christian Thought Series. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.
- Edward Rochie Hardy. Christology of the Later Fathers. Library of Christian Classics Series. Philadelphia: Westminster Press
- Brennan Hill. Jesus the Christ: Contemporary Perspectives. Twenty-Third Publications, 2004

Note: (Instructors may vary the textbooks.)

Possible evaluation methods:

- Lecture
- Discussion
- Examinations
- Written Assignments

Note: (Instructors may vary the evaluation categories.)

Sample Semester Schedule:

Week 1:	Introduction; Gospel of Mark – Secret Messiah
Week 2:	Gospel of Matthew – Fulfillment of the Prophets
Week 3:	Gospel of Luke – Messiah of the Gentiles
Week 4:	Gospel of John – Pre-existent Logos
Week 5:	Comparison of the variety of Christologies in the Gospels; Paul – Christ of the Parousia
Week 6:	Early theologians + ecumenical councils: Chalcedon and Nicaea
Week 7:	Christ in Art (video) + discussion
Week 8:	Teacher + prophet: prophetic mission, Parables, kingdom
Week 9:	Worker of miracles: Roman + Greek miracle stories, apocryphal miracles, miracles + faith
Week 10:	Passion narratives: Why was Jesus killed?
Week 11:	Death + resurrection of Jesus

Understanding Diversity in the United States or the World

Week 12: Savior: Soteriology in contemporary thought

Week 13: Jesus: Feminist perspectives

Week 14: Jesus in Islam + in Judaism

Week 15: Contemporary significance of Jesus

Note: (Instructors may vary the presentation of topics to some degree, but the material covered will remain the same.)