



September Study Guide

The Nature of God and God's Creation: Trinity, God, Creation, Providence

The Iona School for Ministry

Seniors | September 2022

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Learning Outcomes

Learners who complete this course will be able to:

- Articulate a christian doctrine of the Trinity inflected by early church theology in order to inform their practice of ministry in tomorrow's world.
- Construct a christological conception of creation that carefully considers covenant, church, and communion in order to inform their practice of ministry in tomorrow's world.

Read these before class

Introduction to Theology, 3rd edition, by Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra. Morehouse, 2002.

Chapter 4 Trinity, pp. 67-88

Chapter 5 God, pp. 89-108

Chapter 6 Creation, pp. 109-121

Chapter 7 Providence, pp. 122-132

The Christian Theology Reader, 5th edition Alister E. McGrath. Blackwell, 2016.

3.23

3.32

3.40

3.41

3.42

Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God, by Kelly Brown Douglas. Orbis, 2015.

Part I Skim

Ch. 4 Focus

What kinds of questions should you begin asking?

- How has God revealed God's Triune nature to us?
- Carefully read these Trinitarian Theophanies...what do you learn about the identity of God?
 - The Resurrection: Romans 8:11
 - The Annunciation: Luke 1:26
 - Jesus' Baptism: Luke 3:21, Mark 1:10-11, Matthew 3:16-17
 - The Transfiguration: Luke 9:28-36
 - Sending the 70: Luke 10:21
 - Crucifixion: Luke 23:46
- In Jesus of Nazareth, gentiles learn of God's covenant with Israel...how does this inform a christian theological account of providence?
- How is the doctrine of the Trinity crucial to our understanding of salvation?
- What issues actually led to the church's deep thinking about God's Trinitarian nature?
- How do we not worship three gods?
- Where, specifically, do our liturgies explicitly name the Triune God?
- What's actually at stake in the doctrine of the Trinity?
- Rowan Williams calls heresies "near misses". Why did the church determine that Sabellius and Arius missed the target?
- What shape does a christian doctrine of creation take when informed by:
 - Colossians 1:15-23?
 - Ephesians 1:10?
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17?
 - John 1:1-14?
- What must sin be in light of who Jesus is?
- Why must gentiles remember their gentile identity as they consider the doctrines of the Trinity, creation, and providence?
- How do you account for the rise of panentheistic or process theological proposals?
- What shape does a christian doctrine of creation take when we consider the end (*telos*)?

Assessment: Paper

I learned this model of assessment from my teacher Willie Jennings.

Your paper is due to me no later than Friday, September 16, at 12:00 PM CST.

Submit a paper to my email address: jacob@holyfamilyhtx.org

1. Please make the subject of your email: “*Last Name* Trinity & Creation Paper”.
2. At the end of our in-person class, I will give you a document with three (3) pastoral scenarios as prompts. You will select one (1) prompt and write about how you would respond to it for at least two pages.
 1. Again, your paper is due to me no later than Friday, September 16, at 12:00 PM CST.
3. Your paper must be typed in font Times New Roman 12 or an equivalent, double-spaced.
4. Submit your paper as a .pdf. Do not submit as a word document (.doc or .docx).
5. Your paper will be graded on the basis of:
 1. Your grasp of the pastoral issue in the prompt.
 2. Your integration of our class discussions and readings.
 3. The richness of your theological insights—more than just reciting what you’ve heard.

I encourage you to chat about the prompts outside of class with your fellow cohort members. Peer consultation is an important practice to maintain in your ministry. However, your paper should demonstrate your work alone.

Papers are due on time. Unless you and I work out something in advance, any late paper will not be accepted. If an extreme situation arises, like a death in your immediate family, you become ill, or something urgent with someone in your home, communicate with me with as much advance notice as you are able and we will co-create an appropriate solution.

Criteria for Assessment

100-97 A+ / 96-93 A / 92-90 A-

These grades indicate that you have submitted exceptional work, signaling an extraordinary grasp of the material, superior pastoral sensitivities, and composed in a creative manner.

89-87 B+ / 86-83 B / 82-80 B-

These grades indicate that good work has been done with a few issues that could be improved in a second iteration.

79-77 C+ / 76-73 C / 72-70 C-

These grades indicate that you have met the basic requirements for the course.

69-67 D+ / 66-63 D / 62-60 D-

These grades indicate that your work did not meet the expectations of coursework for someone pursuing ordained ministry and credentialed lay ministry.

59 and below is an F

An F indicates that your work did not follow instructions.