POLITICAL THEOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTION

Mondays, 6:30 PM – 9:30 PM, White-Gravenor 206B
September 2 – December 9

Course Description
There is no question that we are witnessing a revival of political theology as an academic discipline; a theology that has, through the ages, adapted to exigencies like secularization, modernization, globalization, et al. As an academic discipline, political theology addresses questions such as, the relationship between theology and politics; the relationship between Church and State; the role of religion in public life; and, to what extend religious belief might/should shape our political discourse.

Introduction to Political Theology is a graduate course that will explore the historical roots of political theology, while examining the philosophical, theological, and sociological relationship between religious faith and political life in civil society. Class readings will highlight some of the primary sources that influenced religious and secular practices and the ordering of society through the ages. We will look at the first generation of political theologians (Johann Baptist Metz, who started it all) and the second generation of political theologians (Cavanaugh, Hauerwas, Milbank, O’Donovan, Yoder). Our discussions will focus on the age-old tension between the transcendent and secular, the sacred and the profane, and how this on-going oscillation has shaped and continues to shape public discourse.

Through classroom discussion, reading of primary sources and class presentations, the pedagogy of this course is designed to bring students up to date in the growing field of political theology.

Instructor
Gregory C. Havrilak, Ph.D.
Office Hours: Wed 2:00 – 3:00 PM Downtown
Assistant Professor
Mon 5:00 – 6:15 PM ICC Atrium, and by appointment
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Course Goals
To provide an intellectual framework and analytical tools for students to discuss, reflect upon and understand the foundations and major players in the development of political theology, and the interaction between politics and the church.
Learning Objectives
The following objectives are built into the pedagogy of this course syllabus:

1. To provide an awareness, knowledge & understanding of the primary historical, philosophical and ecclesial sources of political theology
2. To help students recognize the interaction between politics and religion
3. To critically examine how secular and religious discourse critique each other
4. To present the major players in the development and influence of political theology
5. To help students formulate personal positions on the role of theology in public life

Evaluation
Students are expected to attend lectures, read assigned texts, submit term paper & essays, and participate in discussion, as well as display an ability to absorb, comprehend, and analyze the course material.

Course Requirements
- Reading Assignments
- Submit three short analytical essays (3 pages each, max) on assigned readings. Topics will be distributed for take home one week in advance
- Submit one 20-25 page paper
- Individual Oral Presentation: a 10 minute review of your semester paper

Grading Policy
Final grade for the course will be based on the following:

1. Class Participation/Discussion 10%
2. Analytical Essays 30% (10 X 3)
3. Term Paper 40%
4. Oral Presentation 20%

Grade Table
93-100 % = A
90 - 92 % = A-
87 - 89 % = B+
83 - 86 % = B
80 - 82 % = B-
77 - 79 % = C+
73 - 76 % = C
70 - 72 % = C-
67 - 69 % = D+
60 - 66 % = D
Below 60 % = F
Study Groups
Depending on class size, study groups (usually four) will be formed to prepare class presentations on contemporary issues in political theology. These 15-20 minute group presentations will take place near the end of the semester.

Disabilities Statement
If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

Use of Electronic Devices
All electronic devices will be turned off at the beginning of class.

Class Attendance and Late Arrival
Attendance is mandatory, and roll call will be taken at the beginning of each class. Students with two absences for any reason may receive a failing grade for the course. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to make up any assignments on time and obtain class handouts.

Readings Assignments
Required readings for each class are listed below, and should be completed before the class period. All others are highly recommended, and may be referred to in class. Shorter articles will be uploaded to Blackboard. Additional websites and recently declassified government documents will be made available in class.

Required Texts


**Recommended**


**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**Week One (Sep 2: Wednesday is a Monday)**

Introduction to the Course; What is Political Theology?

**Enlightenment Roots of Political Theology; The Four Approaches to Political Theology**


William T. Cavanaugh, Jeffrey W. Bailey, Craig Hovey, “Introduction,” in William T. Cavanaugh, Jeffrey W. Bailey, Craig Hovey, eds, *An Eerdmans Reader on Contemporary Political Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 1-XXIV, listed hereafter as ER.


**Week Two: Sep 7 NO CLASS: Labor Day Holiday**

**Week Three: Sep 14 (Back to Mondays)**

The Frankfurt School

Writing Exercise


Jürgen Habermas, Joseph Ratzinger, *The Dialectics of Secularization* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), sections posted on Blackboard.


**Week Four: Sep 21**

The First Generation of Political Theologians

**Carl Schmitt**

**Johann Baptist Metz**


**Week Five: Sep 28**

First Analytical Essay Distributed

The First Generation of Political Theologians

**Johann Baptist Metz, Con’t**


**Week Six: Oct 5**

First Analytical Essay Due

The Second Generation of Political Theologians

**Post Liberalism, Radical Orthodoxy, “Contextual” Theologies**

Readings: Phillips, 50-54.


**Week Seven: Oct 12: NO CLASS: Mid-Semester Holiday**

**Week Eight: Oct 19**  
*Second Generation of Political Theology, continued*  
*The Politics of Jesus*  
*Anabaptism, Yoder, R. Niebuhr, David Tracy*   

**Week Nine: Oct 26**  
*Second Analytical Essay Distributed*  
Liberation Theology: Gutiérrez, Sobrino  
Phillips, PT 127-140.  
Hand-outs

**Week Ten: Nov 2**  
*Second Analytical Essay Due*  
*The Church and the Political*  
St. Augustine, Martin Luther, Barth, Bonhoeffer  
Karl Barth, “Church and State,” ER, 303-315.  
“Augustine,” IG, 104-163.

**Week Eleven: Nov 9**  
**TOPICS FOR FINAL RESEARCH PAPER APPROVED BY TODAY**  
*Violence and Peace*  
Readings: Phillips, 89-106  
Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, sections posted on Blackboard.

**Week Twelve: Nov 16**

*Third Analytical Essay Distributed*

**Liberalism and Democracy**

**Protestants and U.S. Foreign Policy**

Stanley Hauerwas, John Milbank


Heinrich Meier, *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), sections posted on Blackboard.

Posting on Blackboard from *The Hauerwas Reader*.

**Week Thirteen: Nov 23**

*Third Analytical Essay Due*

**Optimism, Marginalization & Liberation**

Martin Luther King, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Althaus-Reid

Readings: Phillips, 126-140.


**Week Fourteen: Nov 30**

**Creation, History and Eschatology**

**Class Presentations**


Readings: Phillips, 141-152.


Final Student Class Presentations
Week Fifteen: Dec 7 Last Class
Final Oral Class Presentations
Final Research Paper Due: December 18, 2013 by 5:00 PM

READING LIST


William T. Cavanaugh, Jeffrey W. Baily, Craig Hovey, eds., *An Eerdmans Reader on Contemporary Political Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012).


__________, *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008),

Johann Baptist Metz, all books.


**Georgetown Honor System**

All students are expected to follow Georgetown’s honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at [www.georgetown.edu/honor](http://www.georgetown.edu/honor), and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, “What is Plagiarism?”, “Sanctioning Guidelines”, and “Expedited Sanctioning Process.” Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:

“In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.”

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