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Reformed Theological Seminary
Office Hours: By Appointment

Orlando, Summer 2023
June 26-29 (9AM-4:30PM)
ST6405
2 Credit Hours

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEOLOGY

I. Course Summary & Objectives

- a. The reason for this course is summed up by Oliver O'Donovan: 'Theology must be political if it is to be evangelical. Rule out the political questions and you cut short the proclamation of God's saving power'.¹ This course seeks to help our theology in the public square by attempting to discern a more biblically faithful understanding of the 'political'
- b. The aim of this course is to serve as an introduction to the discipline of political theology, an area of study that reflects broadly upon the nature of how humans relate to God. 'The political is understood as the use of structural power to organize a society or community of people... Political theology is, then, the analysis and criticism of political arrangements from the perspective of differing interpretations of God's ways with the world'.²
- c. To orient and familiarize the student to the theological categories such as church, state, politics – ancient and modern – and how such categories inform and shape different ideas of how the church engages the world
- d. The goal of the class is twofold:
 - i. To prepare those entering ministry a biblical and theological model for constructive, informed and wise participation in their local communities
 - ii. To offer a theological account of both the church's role as well as the individual believer's role in society and the beliefs and ideas that contribute to this vision

II. Course Requirements

- a. *Class Participation*: includes attendance of all classes and active participation and contribution in class discussion

¹ O'Donovan, *Desire of the Nations*, p. 3

² Cavanaugh and Scott, *Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, p. 2

- b. *Readings*: This course involves a good deal of reading, which is reflected in the grading scale. It is *recommended* that readings be completed before class for the purpose of considering and discussing them in class. All readings not listed in the required reading section will be found on reserve.
- c. *Theological Research Paper*: Students will write a 12–15-page paper (typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. font). The paper must treat a topic discussed in class and bring it into dialogue with a broadly construed account of political theology from a Reformed point of view. To make the essay more specific in nature, please consult your instructor to discuss this. Standard *SBL* format ought to be followed. Footnotes to be used (not endnotes). An objective for students is to marshal resources strategically and to unfold an argument in a disciplined manner. Lengthy papers demonstrate an undisciplined argument. Keep the length within the boundaries suggested.

III. Required Texts

- a. Luke Bretherton, *Christ and the Common Life: Political Theology and the Case for Democracy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019)
- b. David Koyzis, *Political Visions and Illusions: A Survey and Christian Critique of Contemporary Ideologies* (2nd ed. Downers Grove: IVP, 2019)
- c. * A packet of readings will be provided on canvas

IV. Recommended Texts

- a. Joan Lockwood O'Donovan and Oliver O'Donovan, *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999)

V. Grading Overview

- a. Reading Report: 50%
- b. Theological Research Paper: 50%

VI. Grading System

A	(97-100)	4.00
A-	(94-96)	3.66
B+	(91-93)	3.33
B	(88-90)	3.00
B-	(86-87)	2.66

C+	(83-85)	2.33
C	(80-82)	2.00
C-	(78-79)	1.66
D+	(75-77)	1.33
D	(72-74)	1.00
D-	(70-71)	0.66
F	(below 70)	0.00
I	(incomplete)	–
W	(withdraw)	–

VII. Lecture Outline

** The readings and topics are subject to revision by the professor. Any changes will be highlighted by the professor.*

a. **Lecture 1: Introduction: Identity of Political Theology & Virtues of the Political Theologian**

b. **Lecture 2: The Bible and Politics**

Reading:

- Matthew 22:15-22; Romans 13 and Revelation 13
- Richard Bauckham, 'Reading the Bible Politically' in *The Bible in Politics: How to Read the Bible Politically* (SPCK, 2011), pp. 1-19

c. **Lecture 3: The Dilemma for Political Theology Today**

Reading:

- William Cavanaugh, "'A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House': The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State". *Modern Theology* 11, no. 4 (October 1995), 397-420
- Jeffrey Stout, 'The Folly of Secularism', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 3 (2008), 533-44

- Rowan Williams, 'Has Secularism Failed?' in Rowan Williams, *Faith in the Public Square* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), pp. 11-22
- Stanley Hauerwas, 'The Politics of Freedom: Why Freedom of Religion is a Subtle Temptation', in *After Christendom* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), pp. 69-92.

d. Lecture 4 – The Emergence of Political Theology: A Starting Point

Reading:

- *The Donation of Constantine*
(<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/donatconst.asp>)
(See O'Donovan, *Sourcebook*, 228-30)
- *Epistle to Diognetus*
(<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/richardson/fathers.x.i.ii.html>)

e. Lecture 5 – Historical Understandings & Theological Paradigms ~ Part 1: *A Tale of the Two: Two Cities*

Reading:

- Augustine, *City of God*: 11.2; 14.28; 15.1-2; 19.1, 5-28
- Augustine, Letter 189, 220

f. Lecture 6 – Historical Understandings & Theological Paradigms ~ Part 2: *A Tale of the Two: The King's Two Bodies*

Reading:

- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae Prima Secundae* (I-II), QS. 93-94 in, in Aquinas, *On Law, Morality, and Politics*, trans. Richard J. Regan, ed. William P. Baumgarth and Richard J. Regan (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2003), 30-50
- Gelasius I, 'Letter to Emperor Anastasius' in O'Donovan, *From Irenaeus to Grotius*, pp. 177-79
- Gregory VII, *Dictatus Papae* and Letter 8.21 in O'Donovan, *From Irenaeus to Grotius*, pp. 240-49

g. Lecture 7 – Historical Understandings & Theological Paradigms ~ Part 4: *Luther's Two Kingdoms*

Reading:

- Martin Luther, 'Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed' in *Luther's Works*, vol. 45 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962)
- O'Donovan, *From Irenaeus to Grotius*, 581-608

h. Lecture 8 – Historical Understandings & Theological Paradigms ~ Part 5: Calvin's Two Kingdoms...?

Reading:

- Calvin, 'Prefatory Address to King Francis I of France' in *Institutes*, 9-32
- Calvin, *Institutes* IV.XX
- O'Donovan, *From Irenaeus to Grotius*, 662-84

i. Lecture 9 – More Reformers – *Rights, Conscience, Rebellion & Resistance & the Magistrate*

Reading:

- Beza, 'Rights of Magistrates' in *Constitutionalism and Resistance in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. and trans. Julian H. Franklin (New York: Pegasus, 1969), pp. 97-140
- *The Magdeburg Confession*, translated by Matthew Colvin and Introduced by George Grant, pp. 1-9
- *The Schleithem Articles* in *The Radical Reformation*, ed. Michael G. Baylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 172-180
- *Vindiciae, contra Tyrannos* in O'Donovan, *From Irenaeus to Grotius*, 711-22
- Althusius, *Politica* in O'Donovan, *From Irenaeus to Grotius*, pp. 757-70
- Johannes Polyander, 'On the Civil Magistrate', Disputation 50 in *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae*, vol. 3, ed. Harm Goris (Leiden: Brill, 2020)

Recommended:

- Knox, 'The First Blast of the Trumpet' in *On Rebellion*, ed. Roger A. Mason (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 3-47

- Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 'The Aryan Clauses and Other Correspondence' in *No Rusty Swords: Letters, Lectures and Notes from the Collected Works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, trans. E. H. Robertson and John Bowden, ed. E. H. Robertson (William Collins Sons & Co., 1965), 221-49

j. Lecture 10 – Reformed Paradigms for Political Theology

Reading:

- David Van Drunen, *Living in God's Two Kingdoms* (Crossway, 2010), [selections]
- Ernst Trice Thompson: *The Spirituality of the Church: A Distinctive Doctrine of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1961), pp. 1-46
- Oliver O'Donovan, *Desire of the Nations* (Selected Reading)

k. Lecture 11 – America, The Church & Political Life (Realism & Idealism)

Reading:

- Reinhold Niebuhr, 'Augustine's Political Realism' in *The Essential Reinhold Niebuhr: Selected Essays and Addressees*, edited and introduced by Robert AcAfee Brown (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 123-41

l. Lecture 12 – Political Theology in the Public Square

Reading:

- Cavanaugh, "Killing for the Telephone Company": Why the Nation-State is Not the Keeper of the Common Good' in *Migrations of the Holy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), pp. 7-45
- Hauerwas, 'The Church and Liberal Democracy: The Moral Limits of a Secular Polity' in *A Community of Character* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2005), pp. 72-88
- Rowan Williams, 'Do human rights exist?' in Rowan Williams, *Faith in the Public Square* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), pp. 149-59

m. Lecture 13 – Political Theology Looking Forward

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

DALLAS

Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes With Mini-Justification

Course: Introduction to Political Theology (ST6405)
Professor: Dr. Mark I. McDowell
Campus: Orlando
Date: Summer 2023

<u>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	Reading, class participation and research paper
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Moderate	Lectures and reading focus on scripture as the basis and primary resource for political reflection and judgements
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Features centrally
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	Emphasizes the holistic horizon of Scripture for all of life

Winsomely Reformed/ Evangelistic	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	Careful interaction and engagement with other views that also entails an appreciation of ethical insights.
Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Minimal	Course requirements provide framework for preaching and assess issues that ought to be understood and addressed
Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Moderate	Sound understanding of biblical and theological loci encourages and promotes faithful worship
Shepherd	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Moderate	Class material and readings shape the pastoral imagination
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	Engages key ideas of the public square