

Syllabus for  
**GTHE 961— History and Methods of Contextual Theology**  
3 Credit Hours  
Spring 2020

Ph.D. Program

Modular format: includes Pre-course, In-course, and Post-course requirements.

On campus visit \_\_\_\_\_

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The course examines the development of various models in taking socio-cultural and religious contexts as a critical element in the construction of context-specific theologies. The course also investigates contemporary scholarship of the discipline, including Constructive Theology.

Theological reflection never occurs in a vacuum. It takes place in an ecclesial context as well as a cultural context. If the Church's fundamental identity is not self-bestowed but divinely given as a people redeemed and summoned to share in the *missio Dei*, God's mission to reach the world with the Good News of Christ, then theology is shaped by this missiological identity and is thus contextual. This course explores ways in which the Gospel can be faithfully articulated in the language and thought-forms of a given culture and in ways that address the needs and problems and longings of that culture.

Prerequisites: None

**II. COURSE GOALS**

The purposes of this course are to do the following:

- A. Understand the contextual nature of theological reflection.
- B. Consider some of the ways in which the biblical message has been inculturated historically.
- C. Investigate current models of contextual theology.
- D. Observe theological approaches and disciplinary rationales for doing contextual theology. Introduce some of the theologies prevalent in the Majority World (as well as among minority populations in Europe and North America), recognizing various contextual factors present within the regions and situations.
- E. Elucidate methods of constructing theology which address a given cultural context. Establish biblical and theological criteria for evaluating contextual theologies.

**III. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THIS COURSE**

As a result of successfully completing this course, the student will be able to do the following:

- A. Terminal Objectives
  - 1. Demonstrate a grasp of different models of contextual theology, noting strengths and weaknesses.
  - 2. Evaluate current models of contextual theology.
  - 3. Identify and assess examples of the impact of Christian history on theological reflection.
  - 4. Analyze some of the theologies prevalent in the Majority World (as well as among minority populations in Europe and North America) in light of their relationship to Scripture, the historic Christian faith and their context.
  - 5. Develop a strategy for constructing theology in ways that are faithful to Scripture and the historic Christian faith and which address a given cultural context.

- B. Unit Objectives
  - 1. Unit I - To understand the contextual nature of theology
  - 2. Unit II - To investigate various models of contextual theology
  - 3. Unit III - To develop a strategy for constructing theology in context

#### IV. TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER LEARNING RESOURCES

##### A. Required Materials

###### 1. Textbooks

Bevans, Stephen B. *Models of Contextual Theology* (rev. and expanded edition) Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002. ISBN 9781570754388

Greenman, Jeffery P. and Green, Gene L. *Global Theology in Evangelical Perspective: Exploring the Contextual Nature of Theology and Mission*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2012. ISBN 9780830839568

Schreiter, Robert. *Constructing Local Theologies* (30<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition) Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015. ISBN 9781626981461

Wrogemann, Henning. *Intercultural Theology*, vol. 1: *Intercultural Hermeneutics (Missiological Engagement)*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2016. ISBN 9780830850976

###### 2. Other materials

###### Supplemental Readings

##### B. Optional materials

###### 1. Textbooks

Seminal sources recommended for building a library and mastering the knowledge base undergirding the course:

Anderson, Allan, et al. *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

Anderson, Gerald H. ed. *Asian Voices in Christian Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1976.

Asamoah-Gyadu, J. Kwabena. *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Chan, Simon. *Rethinking Asian Theology: A Grassroots Perspective*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014.

Cone, James H. *A Black Theology of Liberation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990.

Dyrness, William A. *Invitation to Cross-Cultural Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992.

Ezigbo, Victor. *Re-imagining African Christologies: Conversing with the Interpretations and Appropriations of Jesus in Contemporary African Christianity*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010.

Frie, Hans W. *Types of Christian Theology*. Edited by George Hunsinger and William C. Placher. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

Gutierrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988.

Kairos Theologians. *Challenge to the Church: A Theological Comment on the Political Crisis in South Africa*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1985.

Koyama, Kosuke. *Water Buffalo Theology*. Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition, Rev. and Expanded. Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1999.

Ma, Wonsuk. *Mission in the Spirit: Towards a Pentecostal/Charismatic Missiology*. Eugene, Ore: Wipf and Stock, 2010.

Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. New York: Harper, 1951.

Sobrino, Jon. *Christology at the Crossroads: A Latin American Approach*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1978.

Stassen, Glen H., Yeager, D.M. and Yoder, John Howard. *Authentic Transformation: A New Vision of Christ and Culture*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.

Stackhouse, Max. *God and Globalization*. Harrisburg: Trinity, 2000.

Tanner, Kathryn. *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.

Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2007.

Tennent, Timothy. *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*. 2007.

Ward, Graham. *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Yong, Amos. *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014.

2. Other materials

None

V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. University Policies and Procedures

1. Students and faculty at Oral Roberts University must adhere to all laws addressing the ethical use of others' materials, whether it is in the form of print, electronic, video, multimedia, or computer software. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating involve both lying and stealing and are violations of ORU's Honor Code: "I will not cheat or

plagiarize; I will do my own academic work and will not inappropriately collaborate with other students on assignments.” Plagiarism is usually defined as copying someone else’s ideas, words, or sentence structure and submitting them as one’s own. Other forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to) the following:

- a. Submitting another’s work as one’s own or colluding with someone else and submitting that work as though it were his or hers;
- b. Failing to meet group assignment or project requirements while claiming to have done so;
- c. Failing to cite sources used in a paper;
- d. Creating results for experiments, observations, interviews, or projects that were not done;
- e. Receiving or giving unauthorized help on assignments.

By submitting an assignment in any form, the student gives permission for the assignment to be checked for plagiarism, either by submitting the work for electronic verification or by other means. Penalties for any of the above infractions may result in disciplinary action including failing the assignment or failing the course or expulsion from the University, as determined by department and University guidelines.

2. Disability

The Disability Service Center, in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, assures that no qualified individual with a disability will be denied reasonable accommodations based upon the individual’s needs. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Disability Service Center and properly register for these services. For more information, call 918.495.7018 or go to [www.studentresources.oru.edu](http://www.studentresources.oru.edu).

B. Graduate School of Theology and Ministry Policies and Procedures—Ph. D. Program

1. **Residential Week:** Each course will have a residential week, held in the CityPlex Towers on the 21<sup>st</sup> floor, meeting Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
  - a. This week will be comprised of five days on the ORU campus in Tulsa, Oklahoma.
  - b. Each course will include 7 weeks of online instruction *prior to* the residency.
  - c. The weeks *following* the residency will be devoted to work on the research paper.
  - d. Students are to make travel arrangements that do not interfere with their involvement in all sessions during the residency.
2. Instructions for the online portion of this course and designated assignments are to be found in the course management shell in Desire 2 Learn (D2L) and elsewhere in this syllabus.
3. Each overdue assignment will be penalized 10% for EACH WEEK it is late. After the third week, no credit will be given for the assignment.
4. Attendance
  - a. Students are to attend all sessions during the modular intensive week.
  - b. All absences, late arrivals, and early departures **must be approved by the Ph.D. Director.**

C. Course Policies and Procedures

1. Evaluation Procedures (see Assessment Chart for course-specific artifacts)
  - a. Grading:
 

(1)	<i>Academic Book Review</i>	10%
(2)	<i>Asynchronous Group Discussions (2)</i>	20%
(3)	<i>Seminar Paper &amp; Presentation</i>	30%
(4)	<i>Research Paper</i>	40%
  - b. Grading scale:

A=90-100%  
 B=80-89%  
 C=70-79%  
 D=60-69%  
 F=59% and below

2. Whole Person Assessment Requirements
  - a. WPA requirements for this course:  
Research paper
2. Other Policies and Procedures
  - a. **Refinement of Dissertation Proposal**  
Students will review and refine their dissertation proposals, based on feedback from the professor and director of the Ph.D. program, and submit them on d2l.
  - b. **Asynchronous Group Discussions**  
Students will engage in two online threaded group discussion boards. Students will be assigned to small groups. The discussion will consist of a brief essay (500 words) on the topics below, followed by an asynchronous dialogue.  
 #1 – Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*  
 #2 – Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*
  - c. **Academic Book Review**  
Students will select a book from the course bibliography and write a book review complying with academic style guidelines. The review will be organized according to these components:
  - d. **Seminar Paper & Presentation**  
Students will select a topic germane to the course, survey the scholarly literature, analyze leading interpretations, and stake out a position. The word length of the paper will be 2000 words. Students will then present their papers during the residency. Assessment will be conducted by means of peer evaluation.
  - e. **Research Paper**  
The major assessment of the course is scholarly research paper. Students will follow the methodology and style guidelines described in Turabian. Students will frame a research question, pose a working hypothesis, and then conduct research to test the hypothesis. On the basis research findings, students will formulate a thesis and an argument with source documentation in support that thesis. At least 20 sources should be consulted. The required minimum word length is 5000 words.
  - f. Course instructor: Dr Peter Althouse [palthouse@oru.edu](mailto:palthouse@oru.edu)

## VI. COURSE SCHEDULE.

### A. PRE-RESIDENTIAL PHASE (7 weeks):

Week 1 <i>Dates</i>	Topic: The Rise of Global Theologies and the Translation Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Greenman, intro &amp; Chs. 1-4</li> <li>• Read Bevans, pp. ix-xx &amp; Chs. 1-4</li> <li>• Peruse d2l shell</li> </ul>
Week 2 <i>Dates</i>	Topic: Theological Engagement with the Majority World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Greenman, Chs. 5-8</li> <li>• Read Bevans, Chs. 5-9</li> <li>• Due: Group Discussion #1</li> </ul>
Week 3	Topic: Local Theologies: The	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Greenman, Chs. 9-12</li> </ul>

<i>Dates</i>	Christian Faith in Cultural Contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Schreiter, pp. ix-xix &amp; Chs. 1-3</li> <li>• Review Dissertation Proposal</li> </ul>
Week 4 <i>Dates</i>	Topic: Scripture, Tradition and the Cultural Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Greenman, Chs. 13-15</li> <li>• Read Schreiter, Chs. 4-7</li> <li>• Due: Updated Dissertation Proposal</li> </ul>
Week 5 <i>Dates</i>	Topic: Intercultural Hermeneutics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Wrogemann, pp. xv-xxii &amp; Chs. 1-6</li> <li>• Research for Seminar Paper</li> </ul>
Week 6 <i>Dates</i>	Topic: Concepts of Culture and Intercultural Hermeneutics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Wrogemann, Chs. 7-16</li> <li>• Due: Group Discussion #2</li> </ul>
Week 7 <i>Dates</i>	Topic: Christian Missions and Foreign Cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Wrogemann, Chs. 17-26</li> <li>• Due: Seminar Paper</li> </ul>

#### **B. RESIDENCY WEEK AGENDA:**

##### **Daily Schedule**

8:30 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	Prayer
9:00 a.m.	10: 00 a.m.	Lecture
10:00 a.m.	10:15 a.m.	Break
10:15 a.m.	12:00 noon	Lecture
12:00 noon	1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m.	3:15 p.m.	Seminar Paper Presentations
3:15 p.m.	3:30 p.m.	Break
3:30 p.m.	5:30 p.m.	Seminar Paper Presentations

#### **C. POST-RESIDENTIAL PHASE (7 weeks)**

Weeks 9-15 <i>Dates</i>	Research Paper (steps)
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**Inventory for Student Learning Outcomes**  
**Graduate School of Theology and Ministry**  
**Ph.D. in Theology**  
**GTHE 961— History and Methods of Contextual Theology**  
**Dr Daniel Thimell**  
**Spring 2020**

This course contributes to student learning outcomes for the Master of Divinity degree as indicated below:

**Significant Contribution**—Addresses the outcome directly and includes targeted assessment.

**Moderate Contribution**—Addresses the outcome directly or indirectly and includes some assessment.

**Minimal Contribution**—Addresses the outcome indirectly and includes little or no assessment.

**No Contribution**—Does not address the outcome.

Degree Program Outcomes		Significant Contribution	Moderate Contribution	Minimal Contribution	No Contribution
<b>1</b>	<b>Comprehensive Knowledge</b>				
	Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of the field of contextual theology.	X			
<b>2</b>	<b>Area of Specialization</b>				
	Demonstrate mastery of a major area of specialization.	X			
<b>3</b>	<b>Research and Writing</b>				
	Produce publication-worthy research and writing that contributes to the knowledge and advancement of the field.	X			
<b>4</b>	<b>Dissertation</b>				
	Produce a dissertation that makes an original contribution to the knowledge base of a specific area of study.	X			
<b>5</b>	<b>Integration of Theory and Practice</b>				
	Articulate interrelationships between the subject matter of Christian theology and the practices Christian ministry and mission	X			
<b>6</b>	<b>Critical Reflection on Praxis</b>				
	Engage critically in theological reflection on the praxis of the Spirit-empowered movement.	X			
<b>7</b>	<b>Pedagogical Competency</b>				
	Demonstrate an ability to teach effectively in their area of concentration in higher education		X		
<b>8</b>	<b>Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit</b>				
	Demonstrate an ability to interpret and to communicate knowledge from a charismatic perspective.	X			