DRAFT
THEO 604: Theological Anthropology

Fall 2025
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Instructor: Anne Joh, Ph.D. (Anne.joh@garrett.edu)
Office Hours: By Appointment
Asynchronous Fridays and Saturdays in-person: 9:30-3:00 p.m.
Saturdays: September 13, October 4, November 15
Room: Main #211
Readings are subject to changes at the discretion of the instructor.

"Texts are worldly, to some degree they are events, and even when they appear to deny it, they are nevertheless a part of the social work, human life. And of course, the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted."
Edward Said, *The World, the Text, & the Critic*

Participants in this course examine theological anthropology. This dimension of Christian faith and theology is a doctrine most often left unexamined because many presume that there is something universally accepted about the category of the 'human.' Moreover, the focus on theological anthropology (i.e., what it means to be a human being from a theological perspective) participants survey past works and current debates. What are some of the 'normative' interpretations of being human? What criteria do we most often use when it comes to our understanding of being human? Do Christian theological reflections make interventions or interrogate our notions of the human to offer constructive and creative ways toward a deeper understanding of what it means to be human?

OBJECTIVES

1. To introduce students to the basic language of theological and theoretical discourses on Theological Anthropology
2. To create competence in students' ability to engage in critical analysis along with theological reflection on theological anthropology through the lens of critical race, gender, sexuality, class and colonialism
3. To equip students to engage competently in rigorous academic theological discussions of theological anthropology in the Christian tradition
4. To foster and create an ethos of engaged and sustained theological analysis in everyday practices of faith and its undergirding various understandings of what it means to be 'human'
5. To sharpen students' keen awareness that the past is always linked to the present and the conditions for our future and that our understanding of the 'human' must be deconstructed to better understand structures of oppression whose logic is often grounded on the subjective and problematic understanding of the 'human.'

REQUIREMENTS

1. Participation: 20%

   Class presence (both asynchronously and synchronously when in-person) is critical to pass this course. Critical and constructive participation is important for the fruitfulness of this course.

2. ASYNCHRONOUS Assignments: 50%

   1) Clarification - seeking greater clarity about the nature of a given writer's position, about connections between readings, or about issues that continue from seminar to seminar. 2) Critique - identifying and briefly developing weaknesses you perceive in an assigned text. 3) Implication - exploring the implications for cultural critique, theology or something else, which you see generated by the assigned reading of the week.

   KEY SUGGESTION: for the asynchronous assignments, I highly recommend watching the documentary early on and taking time to schedule consistent times to respond in the discussion thread to avoid having to do this part of the course in a rush or at once under a time crunch. I highly recommend you take time each week to post your responses and engage with colleagues' reflections as well. This is a significant portion of the final course grade.

3. Final Paper: 30%

Each student will write a 15-page paper for their final work. The research project requires sustained engagement with at least two reading materials from the syllabus. These readings should serve as tools to analyze any real issue in everyday life (such as: immigration, inter-faith, disabilities, capitalism, etc). By doing this, students are expected to integrate their imaginative skills and their ministerial life to deal with social justice issues and the implications of how our

interpretation of the 'human' influence significantly impacts these issues. The final paper should be submitted via email by **Dec. 12th**.
These presentations and the final paper will be evaluated based on both the quality of the presentation to the class and the quality of the submitted written work including asynchronous online work. (See below) The penalty for late submission (on the day of class) will be one GRADE reduction from a possible A on the presentation. Presentations and Final Paper must provide evidence of **critical engagement with the READING MATERIALS**!

*"This course follows all school academic policies and procedures, which can be accessed in their entirety on the Registrar section of MyGETS at this link: https://mygets.garrett.edu/ICS/Registrar_and_Advising/Common_Syllabus_Policies.jnz."
**For resources on theological writing and research papers, participants might reference the following: *Writing Theology Well: A Rhetoric for Theological & Biblical Writers* by Lucretia B. Yaghjian [ISBN: 9780826418852]; *The Craft of Research* by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, & Joseph M. Williams [ISBN: 9780226065847]; *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, & Dissertations* by Kate L. Turabian [ISBN: 9780226823379]; and *Style: Toward Clarity & Grace* by Joseph M. Williams [ISBN: 978-0226899152].

SCHEDULE

WEEKEND 1: September 13: IN PERSON

The first day of all classes is on September 13th. Begin reading on your own assigned readings so you can avoid getting behind. A weekend intensive requires mindfulness with making enough time when we are not in session to do assigned readings and asynchronous assignments on your own, and prepare to fully engage when we are in-person.
Asynchronous assignment: Watch Race: The Power of Illusion Part 1. Answer questions on Moodle Thread. The instructor will read these posts every Friday.

Read for In-Person Session:
McIntosh, Peggy. "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" *Independent School* 49 (Winter 1990): 31–36. (PDF on Moodle)

Applebaum, Barbara. "White Privilege/White Complicity: Connecting 'Benefiting From' to 'Contributing To'" in *Philosophy of Education* (2008): 292–300. (PDF on Moodle)

Harvey, J. "The Moral Crisis of "Being White" in *Whiteness and Morality. Black Religion/Womanist Thought/Social Justice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Saturday in-person: Feb. 24, 2024 (Sat), 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 pm.
Lecture
Small group and Plenary discussion on documentary PART 1.
Small group work to discuss readings.

WEEKEND 2: October 4: IN PERSON

Asynchronous assignment: Watch Race: The Power of Illusion Part 2. Answer questions on Moodle Thread.

Read for In-Person Session:

Victor Anderson, et al. "Race & Christianity." In *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*, 1041–1048. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010. (PDF on Moodle)

M. Shawn Copeland, Dwight N. Hopkins, Charles T. Mathews, et al. "Chapter 2: Human Being." In *Constructive Theology: A Contemporary Approach to Classical Themes*, edited by Serene Jones & Paul Lakeland, 77–116. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2005. (PDF on Moodle)

Eleazar Fernandez, *Reimagining the Human: Theological Anthropology in Response to Systemic Evil.* St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004. (Chapter 4 PDF is on Moodle)

Michelle Gonzales, "Feminist Theological Anthropology." In *Created in God's image: An Introduction to Feminist Theological Anthropology.* (PDF on Moodle)

Michelle Gonzales, *Created in God's Image: An Introduction to Feminist Theological Anthropology.* New York: Orbis Books, 2007. (Chapter 5).

David H. Kelsey, "Human Being." In *Christian Theology: An Introduction to Its Tradition & Tasks* edited by Peter C. Hodgson & Robert H. King, 167–193. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1994. (PDF on Moodle)

Saturday in-person: 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Lecture
Small group work to discuss readings.
Small group and Plenary discussion on documentary PART 2.

WEEKEND 3: November 15: IN PERSON

Asynchronous assignment: Watch Race: The Power of Illusion, Part 3. Response to questions on the Moodle thread.

Read for In-Person Session:

Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World. NY: New York University Press, 2020.* (Introduction as PDF is on Moodle)

Mayra Rivera, "Where Life Itself Lives" in *Beyond the Doctrine of Man: Decolonial Visions of the Human*, edited by Joseph Drexler-Dreis and Kristien Justaert. NY: Fordham University Press, 2020. (PDF on Moodle)

Linn Marie Tonstad, "Bodies that Speak," in *Beyond the Doctrine of Man,* (PDF on Moodle)

M. Shawn Copeland, "Enfleshing Love: A Decolonial Theological Reading," in *Beyond the Doctrine of Man*. (PDF on Moodle)

Saturday in-person: 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Lecture
Watch "Philosophical Encounters"
Small group work to discuss readings.
Small group and Plenary discussion on documentary PART 3.

FINAL PAPER due on December 12: Email the paper to the instructor.

GRADING RUBRIC

The Superior Paper (A/A-)
Thesis: Easily identifiable, plausible, novel, sophisticated, insightful, crystal clear.
Structure: Evident, understandable, appropriate for thesis. Excellent transitions from point to point. Paragraphs support solid topic sentences.
Use of evidence: Primary source information used to buttress every point with at least one example. Examples support mini-thesis and fit within paragraph. Excellent integration of quoted material into sentences.
Analysis: Author clearly relates evidence to "mini-thesis" (topic sentence); analysis is fresh and exciting, posing new ways to think of the material.
Logic and argumentation: All ideas in the paper flow logically; the argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound. Author anticipates and successfully defuses counter-arguments; makes novel connections to outside material (from other parts of the class, or other classes), which illuminate thesis.
Mechanics: Sentence structure, grammar, and diction excellent; correct use of punctuation and citation style; minimal to no spelling errors; absolutely no run-on sentences or comma splices. **The Good Paper (B+/B)**
Thesis: Promising, but may be slightly unclear, or lacking in insight or originality.
Structure: Generally clear and appropriate, though may wander occasionally. May have a few unclear transitions, or a few paragraphs without strong topic sentences.
Use of evidence: Examples used to support most points. Some evidence does not support point, or may appear where inappropriate. Quotes well integrated into sentences.
Analysis: Evidence often related to mini-thesis, though links perhaps not very clear.
Logic and argumentation: Argument of paper is clear, usually flows logically and makes sense. Some evidence that acknowledges counter-arguments, though perhaps not addressed. Occasional insightful connections to outside material made.

Mechanics: Sentence structure, grammar, and diction strong despite occasional lapses; punctuation and citation style often used correctly. Some (minor) spelling errors; may have one run-on sentence or comma splice.

The Borderline Paper (B-/C+)

Thesis: May be unclear (contain many vague terms), appear unoriginal, or offer relatively little that is new; provides little around which to structure the paper.

Structure: Generally unclear, often wanders or jumps around. Few or weak transitions, many paragraphs without topic sentences.

Use of evidence: Examples used to support some points. Points often lack supporting evidence, or evidence used where inappropriate (often because there may be no clear point). Quotes may be poorly integrated into sentences.

Analysis: Quotes appear often without analysis relating them to mini-thesis (or there is a weak mini-thesis to support), or analysis offers nothing beyond the quote.

Logic and argumentation: Logic may often fail, or argument may often be unclear. May not address counter-arguments or make any outside connections.

Mechanics: Problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction (usually not major). Errors in punctuation, citation style, and spelling. May have several run-on sentences or comma splices.

The "Needs Help" Paper (C/C-)

Thesis: Difficult to identify at all, may be bland restatement of obvious point.

Structure: Unclear, often because thesis is weak or non-existent. Transitions confusing and unclear. Few topic sentences.

Use of evidence: Very few or very weak examples. General failure to support statements, or evidence seems to support no statement. Quotes not integrated into sentences; "plopped in" in improper manner.

Analysis: Very little or very weak attempt to relate evidence to argument; may be no identifiable argument, or no evidence to relate it to.

Logic and argumentation: Ideas do not flow at all, usually because there is no argument to support. Simplistic view of topic; no effort to grasp possible alternative views.

Mechanics: Big problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction. Frequent major errors in citation style, punctuation, and spelling. May have many run-on sentences and comma splices.

The Failing Paper

Shows obviously minimal lack of effort or comprehension of the assignment. Very difficult to understand owing to major problems with mechanics, structure, and analysis. Has no identifiable thesis, or utterly incompetent thesis.

Source. Adapted from an Internet post by Patrick Rael <prael@polar.Bowdoin.EDU>.

*Course schedule is a guideline and subject to change at the discretion of the faculty.

**Deadline for the application for an INCOMPLETE posts at the beginning of the semester by the school. No INCOMPLETES accepted after the posted deadline.

***Please refer to the *G-ETS Student Handbook* in regards to the school's policy on academic dishonesty. The instructor follows this policy very strictly.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

1. Limit use of the Internet during class.
2. Limit eating and drinking during class.

3. Practice intercultural skills with one another.
4. Faculty has (at least) 48 hours to respond to any participant communication.
5. Participants wait (at least) 48 hours before submitting a request to contest grading. To contest grading, participants should request a meeting. Participants must present a case to argue for how the graded paper aligns with the assignment expectations for rigorous graduate-level academic theological work, in addition to conforming to the stipulated grading rubrics, which serve as grading guidelines. A successful argument requires the participant to bring a copy of the marked paper and provide a systematic account demonstrating how it aligns with course expectations and rubrics.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

FULL BIBLIOGRAPHY ON MOODLE

Anderson, Victor, et al. "Race & Christianity." In *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity*, 1041–1048. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Applebaum, Barbara. "White Privilege/White Complicity: Connecting 'Benefiting From' to 'Contributing To.'" *Philosophy of Education* (2008): 292–300.

Copeland, M. Shawn, et al. "Chapter 2: Human Being." In *Constructive Theology: A Contemporary Approach to Classical Themes*, edited by Serene Jones & Paul Lakeland, 77–116. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2005.

Fernandez, Eleazar S. *Reimagining the Human*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2004.

Kelsey, David H. "Human Being." In *Christian Theology: An Introduction to Its Tradition & Tasks* edited by Peter C. Hodgson & Robert H. King, 167–193. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1994.

McIntosh, Peggy. "White Privilege," *Independent School* 49 (Winter 1990): 31–36.

Movie: **R**a**c**e, The Power of an Illusion. 2003.