

STH TT 947 STH TT 947 Advanced Systematic Theology 2
The Human Condition
Spring 2013
Syllabus

Instructor: R. Neville
rneville@bu.edu

Tuesdays 9:30-12:30
STH 115

Office at STH 334; hours: Tuesdays, 8:30-9:30, Wednesdays, 10-11

The purpose of this course is to study the human condition as a theological problem, addressing it from the perspectives of several theological systems, including that of the instructor. The theological context is not that of Christianity alone, but of world religions and secular thinking. The general thesis of the course is that there are five ultimate conditions for human existence, each of which constitutes distinctive predicaments that religions address: obligation, wholeness, engagement with others, the achievement of a value-identity, and being itself. Beyond dealing with predicaments, religions also provide venues for ecstatic fulfillment respecting the five ultimate conditions. This thesis provides the frame upon which other theological perspectives are investigated. The instructor's manuscript, *Existence: Philosophical Theology Two*, will be distributed for analysis.

The course is a doctoral seminar with students making brief, 15 minute presentations to introduce each class reading (after the introductory class). Each student will make at least one such presentation, and all will be asked to contribute to the discussion in each class. The grade will be based on class participation and on a term paper due at the last class, May 7. Students should get the instructor's approval for term paper topics by the middle of March. Incompletes are not allowed except for the direst of circumstances, and in those cases only with the prior approval of the STH registrar. Do not plagiarize.

Students with Disabilities—Any students in this course who have a disability that might prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should meet with the instructor as soon as possible to initiate disability verification and discuss accommodations that may be necessary to ensure your full participation in the successful completion of course requirements.

The STH Academic Code of Conduct may be found on the STH website at: www.bu.edu/sth/academic/academic-conduct. All students are required to familiarize themselves with this code, its definitions of misconduct, and its sanctions. Students should especially familiarize themselves with the section on plagiarism.

The course objectives are:

1. To acquaint students with the range of approaches in world religions to the human condition.

2. To acquaint students with Christian Christological approaches to the human condition.
3. To foster articulateness and verbal leadership in dealing with the human condition.
4. To develop students' own theological positions on matters of the human condition.

Please acquire the following books for this course, available at the University Bookstore, Barnes and Noble:

Behr, John, *The Mystery of Christ: Life in Death* (St. Vladimir's Press)
 Kelsey, David, *Eccentric Existence: A Theological Anthropology*. Two volumes. Westminster/John Knox Press.
 Neville, Robert C., editor, *The Human Condition* (SUNY)
 Neville, Robert C., *Symbols of Jesus* (Cambridge UP)
 Thangaraj, Thomas, *The Crucified Guru* (Abingdon)
 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, volume 2 (University of Chicago P)
 Wildman, Wesley J., *Science and Religious Anthropology*

Please prepare the material according to the following schedule:

1/22 Introduction

1/29 Read Neville, ed., *The Human Condition*, intro and chapters 1-7

2/5 Read Neville, *Existence*, Preface, Introduction, Part I.

2/12 Read Neville, *Existence*, Part II

2/19 Read Neville, *Existence*, Part III

2/26 Read Neville, *Existence*, Part IV

3/5 Read Wildman, *Science and Religious Anthropology*, entire.

3/12 Spring break

3/19 Read Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence*, vol 1, through Part One; do *not* read the "B" chapter.

3/26 Read Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence*, vol 1, Part Two; do *not* read the "B" chapters

4/2 Read Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence*, vol 2, Part Three entire.

4/9 Read Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, volume 2, entire

4/16 Read Neville, *Symbols of Jesus*, through chapter 3

4/23 Read Neville, *Symbols of Jesus*, to the end

4/30 Read Thangaraj, *The Crucified Guru*, entire

5/7 Read Behr, *The Mystery of Christ*, entire; present paper abstracts. **Term Paper Due**

Be sure to speak to one another outside of class about the readings and discussions.

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- 2/26 Read Neville, *Existence*, Part IV
- 3/5 Read Wildman, *Science and Religious Anthropology*, entire.
- 3/12 Spring break

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