

**XE790:**

***Theology and Political Theory***

Duke Divinity School

Fall 2012

Wednesdays

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**Course Objectives:**

1. Explore various ways of framing current debates in contemporary political thought as they relate to Christian theology.
2. Read the central texts in the tradition of political philosophy.
3. Explore the various ongoing debates about political theology within and outside of religious ethics and systematic theology.

**Part I: Framing the Conversation**

Week 1:           **Reformation and Secularization**  
Brad Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation* (Introduction, chs. 2-5, Conclusion)

Week 2:           **Practical Rationality, Justice, and the Rise of Liberalism**  
Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*

Week 3:           **Civic Republicanism and its Detractors**  
Ronald Beiner, *Civil Religion: A Dialogue in the History of Political Philosophy*

**Part II: Liberalisms**

Week 4:           **Liberalism of Will and the Social Contract**  
John Locke *A Letter Concerning Toleration, Reasonableness of Christianity* (sections)  
Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), chs. xiii- xxi  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, esp. book 4.

*For each of the above thinkers, what is the common good, and how do we attain it?*

Week 5:           **Liberalism of Will and Sovereignty I**  
Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*  
Hannah Arendt, "The Decline of the Nation State and the End of the Rights of Man," in *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), pp. 266-302.  
Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, chapter 2.  
Dan Philpott, "[Sovereignty: An Introduction and Brief History](#)," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 48, No. 2, Winter 1995, pp. 353-68.

**Further reading:**

Carl Schmitt, *Concept of the Political*, pp. 19-79.  
Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," *Political Theory*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 152-183  
Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* pp. 139-215; 259-285.  
Michel Foucault, "[Lecture Two; 14 January 1976](#)" in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, NY, Pantheon, 1980, 92-108.  
Jens Bartelson, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).  
Bernard Yack, "[Popular Sovereignty and Nationalism](#)," *Political Theory*, Vol. 29, no.4, 2001.

Week 6:           **Liberalism of Will and Sovereignty II**  
Giorgio Agamben: *Homo Sacer* (sections)  
Michel Foucault: "On Governmentality"

*How does Agamben extend and complicate Schmitt's and Barth's arguments?*

Week 7:           **Liberalism of Interest**  
Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*  
Rowan Williams, "From Faust to Frankenstein,"  
<http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/economics/rowan-williams-archbishop-canterbury-markets-sandel-skidelsky-marx-morality-aristotle-good-life/>

Week 8:           **Liberalism of Reason**  
John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (sections)  
John Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisted"

### **Part III: Theoretical Appropriations**

Week 9:           **Sorting the Liberalisms**  
Paul Kahn, *Putting Liberalism in its Place*

Week 10:          **Making Sense of Religion**  
Simon Critchley: *The Faith of the Faithless*

### **Part IV: Augustinian Theological Appropriations**

Week 11:          **Radical Orthodoxy**  
Augustine, Book XIX, *City of God*  
Augustine, Books XII-XIII, *On the Trinity*  
Rowan Williams, "Politics and the Soul: A Reading of the City of God," *Milltown Studies* 19/20 (1987), pp. 55-72  
John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, ch. 12

Week 12:          **Christendom Revived**  
Oliver O'Donovan: *Desire of the Nations*

Week 13: **Augustinian Liberalism**

Jeff Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, ch. 3

Charles Mathewes, *A Theology of Public Life*, 1-28, 145-213 (96)

Charles Mathewes, "Toward a Worldly Augustinianism" *Augustinian Studies*

Eric Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love*, Introduction, ch. 6 (72)

Eric Gregory, "Augustinians and the New Liberalism" *Augustinian Studies*

**Further Reading:**

Nicholas Wolterstorff: *The Mighty and the Almighty*

Mark Lilla: *The Stillborn God*

Luke Bretherton: *Christianity and Contemporary Politics*

Michael Kirwain: *Political Theology: An Introduction*

Gustavo Gutierrez: *A Theology of Liberation*

Kathryn Tanner: *The Politics of God*

Creston Davis, John Milbank, Slavoj Zizek: *Theology and the Political: The New Debate*

Evaluation

1. Weekly reflection paper (1 single-spaced page). The purpose is to highlight the central points of the readings.
2. Final paper (20-25 pages) turned in at the end of the semester
3. Participation in course discussions

**Disability statement:** Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Management System Student Access Office at 668-1267 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion. Please also contact Rev. Todd Maberry, Divinity Registrar (tmaberry@div.duke.edu or 660-3428), to assist with the process.

**Integrity:** In accordance with the Honor Code, students are expected to do their own work for each of the assignments. Any violation of the Honor Code will result in a failing grade and, depending on the severity of the case, could result in additional consequences.

**Inclusive Language:** In each assignment students are expected to follow the guidelines for inclusive language outlined in the Duke Divinity School Bulletin.