

Christology

Syllabus

Introduction

This course will discuss the Church's doctrine of Christ including the following matters: the methods used for studying his personhood, his life and career, who he is (theologically speaking), the extra-scriptural evidence for his existence, the biblical information about him, what theologians from the early church to the twentieth century have said about him, what he teaches, and the anthropological and soteriological implications of the incarnation and resurrection.

The course is much more intense than a catechism course and covers material that properly fits at the level of graduate work. A wide range of academic issues are discussed and the most recent scholarship is brought to bear on them. Knowledge of the ancient languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin is not required, though some familiarity with terms often used in church documents, creeds and the like is presupposed. Translations of these terms are provided in the notes, however.

The course will be team taught by myself and by Fr. Paul Schenck. The material you will be using was developed by me, but Fr. Schenck will lead the forum discussions and will participate in the final grading. He and I will read the required essay, and he will evaluate the final exam also along with me.

Objectives of the Course

The content of this course is built around the genetic method, enunciated by the Church at the Second Vatican Council in *Optatum Totius* (16), widely used at the graduate level for courses in dogmatic theology. In the present case, it will begin with a focus on the biblical material which is the basis for Christology, considers the history of the development of the doctrine and then discusses from a speculative point of view the key doctrinal issues involved – these being in the case of Christology: Jesus' teachings, incarnation and the resurrection. Students are expected to learn this material and develop the knowledge base and the articulation skills necessary to preach it. The theology of St. Thomas Aquinas is considered when the development of Christological doctrine is examined.

The *behavioral* objective is to teach deacons an understanding of Christ so they can emulate him in their lives, thus witnessing to him as ordained ministers of the Church whose faith is centered on and in him.

Alongside the behavioral objective is the *attitudinal* one. Here the objective is to help deacons and deacon candidates to conform themselves to Christ by learning to adopt in their own lives the docility, charity, consolation, forgiveness and peacefulness that the Son of God demonstrated in his own earthly life.

The *skill* objectives include intellectual acumen, emotional honesty and forthrightness and simplicity in dealing with others inside and outside the church.

Required Readings

The textbook for this course is:

Roch Kereszty, *Jesus Christ. Fundamentals of Christology* (St. Pauls, Staten Island, 2015)
ISBN: 13: 9780-8189-0917-7 (Revised and Updated Third Edition)

In addition, the materials attached to the course are not just notes, but a comprehensive account based on a set of lectures of the field of Christology as it stands today. Students are expected to read these lectures, listen to the power point presentations for every module and follow along with readings from the required textbook. The power point presentations summarize each module and offer audio versions of the written lectures, both of which students are expected to utilize.

It should be noted that the combined lecture notes and accompanying power point and audio presentations for module 3 are the longest and most time consuming in the course. For this reason, you may need to extend your work on this material into week 4 when a new topic is also discussed.

Policy on Academic Dishonesty

Students are expected to document their written work according to the commonly accepted standards used for written assignments used by colleges, universities and seminaries everywhere in the United States. See the policy on Academic Dishonesty of the Pontifical College Josephinum for details. This policy is published in the Learning Management System. The Josephinum uses the documentation standards presented by Kate L. Turabian in her *Manual for Writers*, 8th edition.

Assignments

There will be (a) an essay discussing some aspect of the course material covered by the mid-point of the course, (b) a written five page homily which addresses any set of readings for the feast of Christ the King, (c) participation in the forums and (d) a final exam. The homily will be based on any set of the readings from the three year cycle. The written essay will be worth 30% of the final grade, the homily 20%, participation in the forum questions 10%, and the final exam 40% Of the final grade. More details will be provided about the essay once the course starts.

There will be *no time limit for the final exam*, but once you sign off you will not ordinarily be allowed to sign back on. If for some reason a mistake has been made, permission to sign back on must be obtained from Deacon Benedict LoCasto, the Director of the Distance Learning Program.

There will be two forums during the semester each of which will ask a critical question to which all students are expected to respond. You are also encouraged to respond to the comments the instructor makes and to those of fellow students. The forum contributions will be graded by Fr. Schenck and will count for 10% of the final grade. Students are encouraged to meet as frequently as travel and

time permit to discuss the material face-to-face, and of course to discuss the material covered via the distance management system.

There will also be three teleconferences, one at the beginning, one in the middle of the course and one at the end before the final exam is given. Though participation in these conferences will not be graded, students are absolutely encouraged to attend since questions about the requirements of the course that are of interest to all concerned are likely to be asked and will certainly be answered.

The final two hour exam at the end of the course will ask for several essays from a list of options that will address the various issues about Christ raised and addressed during the course. As already indicated, the final examination will be worth 40% of the final grade.

Grading

In summary, the point distribution for the final grade will be as follows: 30 percent for the essay, 20 percent for the homily, 10 percent for the forum question participation and 40 per cent for the final exam. The due date for each of these assignments is the end of the week in which it is assigned, except for the homily which will be due before the final exam is taken. Forum entries made after the week for which they are assigned will be addressed by Fr. Schenck at his convenience.

Module Expectations

Week 1 – Introduction to the Course. Lecture (Written and Oral); Kereszty, 3-33, 190-193.

Week 2 – Extra-Biblical Information. Lecture (Written and Oral).

Week 3 – Biblical Information. Lecture (Written and Oral); Kereszty, 34-97, 154-175. **(Forum 1)**

Week 4 – Continuation of Week 3 readings; Name and Titles. Lecture (Written and Oral); Kereszty, 176-190.

Week 5 – Heresies. Lecture (Written and Oral); Kereszty, 231-240.

Week 6 – Creeds and Councils. Lecture (Written and Oral); Kereszty, 248-262. **(Essay due)**

Week 7 – Ancient Christology. Lecture (Written and Oral); Kereszty, 240-247. **(Forum 2)**

Week 8 – Medieval Christology. Lecture (Written and Oral); Kereszty, 263-278.

Week 9 – The Teachings of Jesus Christ. Lecture (Written and Oral); Kereszty, 98-153.

Week 10 – Incarnation and Anthropology. Lecture (Written and Oral); Kereszty, 343-410.

Week 11 – Tomb, Resurrection and Soteriology. Lecture (Written and Oral); Kereszty, 411-442.

Week 12 – Twentieth Century Christology. Lecture (Written and Oral); Kereszty, 311-336.

Week 13 – **Final Exam. Homily due before exam can be taken.**