



## Grace Communion Seminary

### TH508 Christology of T. F. Torrance

#### Short Syllabus

#### **Instructor: Gary W. Deddo**

(Instructor may be contacted through GCS course website)

#### **GCS Mission Statement**

*“Equipping the Saints for Pastoral Ministry.”* We are committed to equip the saints for pastoral ministry through quality graduate-level distance education programs in biblical, theological, ministerial and pastoral studies informed by Incarnational Trinitarian faith.

#### **Course description**

This course surveys the Christological thought of theologian Thomas F. Torrance with a focus on the person, life and work of Jesus Christ. Consideration will also be given to the topics of the church and eschatology (the last things), as explicated in his two-volume series of edited lectures on Christology originally delivered to students at New College, University of Edinburgh. Since for Torrance Christology intersects with every other doctrine, this course will serve as a mini-systematic theology.

**To do well in this course, the student will be expected to devote 12-14 hours a week.** As are all GCS courses, this is a standard and accredited master’s degree class.

#### **Required textbooks**

Torrance, Thomas F. *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008. 978-0-8308-2891-3, 424 pp., \$28.00 (new from IVP)

Torrance, Thomas F. *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014 reprint, 978-0830824588, 489 pp. \$28.00 (new from IVP). Any printing is acceptable.

Please obtain these books before the class begins. To find the lowest prices on these books, you may find it helpful to use [www.bookfinder.com](http://www.bookfinder.com). But check InterVarsity Press, the publisher, too. Online prices may be cheapest there.

### **Recommended textbooks**

Colyer, Elmer M. *How To Read T. F. Torrance: Understanding His Trinitarian and Scientific Theology*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity; Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2007.

McGrath, Alister E. *T. F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography*. Edinburgh: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2006.

Molnar, Paul D. *Thomas F. Torrance: Theologian of the Trinity*. Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Routledge, 2009.

Torrance, Thomas F. *Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Faith*. New edition. Edinburgh: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2000.

Torrance, Thomas F. *Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons*. Reprint edition. Edinburgh and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2001.

Torrance, Thomas F. *The Mediation of Christ*. Revised edition. Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard Publishers, 1992.

### **GCS Outcomes**

This course will contribute primarily to these two GCS objectives:

a) Reason from a sound theological basis as new covenant Christians centered in Incarnational Trinitarian faith. And e) Integrate biblical exegesis with sound theological exposition that informs personal spiritual growth and that directs effective ministry in Jesus Christ.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

This course will enable the student to:

- 1) Describe the major theological themes of Incarnation, Atonement, the Church and Eschatology and their inter-relationships as developed by Torrance, including his understanding of the Christian life that is fostered in response to these realities. (Gained through readings and class lectures and accounted for in the Quotation and Comment Notebook, the Online Forums and Final Exam.)
- 2) Identify key biblical teaching that informs T.F. Torrance's doctrinal understanding of the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Church and Eschatology and explain how those biblical teachings contribute to his understanding. (Gained through readings and class lectures and accounted for in the Quotation and Comment Notebook and Written Sermon/Meditation)
- 3) Analyze and critique aspects of Torrance's thought and theological arguments in the light of Scripture, relevant ecumenical creeds of the church and contemporary expressions of evangelical theology with some reference to a few of his contemporary critics. (Gained through readings and class lectures and accounted for in the Quotation and Comment Notebook, the Online Forums, written Sermon assignment and Final Exam.)
- 4) Illustrate and explain how Torrance's theological understanding can contribute to Christian ministry by enabling more faithful articulation of key theological themes and thereby enriching ministry, preaching, teaching and personal lives as members of the Body of Christ in its local and global expressions. (Through the Forums, Quotation and Comment Notebook, written sermon, and final exam.)
- 5) Interpret, paraphrase and use Torrance's theological understanding of these key theological themes for Christian teaching and worship (Demonstrated through the Online Forums and the submission of a 5-page sermon or meditation on one of the major themes Torrance explicated in the assigned reading.)

## Requirements and assignments

- 1) Submitting a one-page **Autobiographical Sketch** for the instructor and the rest of the class participants the first week of class.
- 2) Completion of all **assigned reading** of required texts and essays due prior to participating in class forums. This amounts to about 768 pages of reading, accounted for in the Reading Notebook and the Quotation and Comment Notebook. (30% of grade).
- 3) Reading all **instructor lectures** and instructions posted during the assigned week, about 2.25 hrs hour per week. (Required to pass)
- 4) Participation in two weekly **Online Forums**: Two entries per week on the Instructor's Forum and two entries per week on the class discussion forum. (25% of grade)
- 5) Completion of one 5-page **written Sermon or Meditation** making use of one of Torrance's explications of a key theological truth showing the related key biblical teaching and making reference to one other Torrance book and to a common objection to Torrance's understanding of the doctrine. (15% of Grade)
- 6) Completion of the **Final take-home exam** (30% of grade)

## Assignments, estimated hours, and grade weighting

Assignment	Hours *	Percentage of grade
Reading the syllabus and lectures (11 x 2.25 hrs @ 10 pages per hour)	25	Required to pass
Reading forum discussions and making responses 1.5 hrs per wk)	16	25%
Reading the textbooks (786pp. @10 pp/hr logged in Reading Report List and accounted for in Quotation and Comment Notebook	78	30%
Quotation and Comment Notebook (0.5 hr. per week)	6	Included in reading grade
Studying for the final exam	10	
Taking the final exam	3	30%
Writing 5-page Sermon (with footnotes!)	10	15%
Total – about 12 hours each week (13 wks)	148	100

\* This is an estimate for the “average” student. A student who reads quickly may be slow in writing papers, and vice versa. Some students will complete the course requirements in less total time, and some will take more time.

## Weekly topics and assignments (tentative)

Week	Lecture Topic	Assignments to be done during the week (besides reading lecture for the week)
Week 1	Editor’s Introduction Introduction to Christology	<i>Incarnation</i> Editor’s Intro and ch. 1 (61 pp.) Two Forums Autobiographical sketch
Week 2	The Incarnation Once for All Union	<i>Incarnation</i> , chs. 2 & 3 (78 pp.) Two Forums

Week 3	Continuous Union in Life of Jesus The Mystery of Christ	<i>Incarnation</i> , chs. 4 & 5 (76 pp.) Two Forums
Week 4	The Hypostatic Union Kingdom of Christ and Evil	<i>Incarnation</i> , chs. 6 & 7 (76 pp.) Two Forums
Week 5	Introduction to Atonement Atonement in the New Testament	<i>Atonement</i> , Editor's Intro. <i>Atonement</i> , chs. 1 (74 pp.) Two Forums
Week 6	Redemption in the Old Testament Priesthood of Christ	<i>Atonement</i> , chs. 2 & 3 (75 pp.) Two Forums
Week 7	Atonement: Paul and Justification Atonement as Reconciliation	<i>Atonement</i> , chs. 4 & 5 (62 pp.) Two Forums
Week 8	Atonement as Redemption Resurrection of Jesus Christ	<i>Atonement</i> , chs 6 & 7 (62 pp.) Two Forums
Week 9	The Nature of the Resurrection Event The Ascension and Parousia of Jesus Christ	<i>Atonement</i> , chs. 8 & 9 (62 pp.) Two Forums
Week 10	The Biblical Witness: The Spirit and the Apostolic Testimony and Gospel The One Church of God in Jesus Christ, (partial)	<i>Atonement</i> , ch. 10 & ch. 11, pp. 341-389 (pp. 73) Two Forums
Week 11	The One Church of God in Jesus Christ, (continued) Jesus Christ: the First and Last Epilogue: The Reconciliation of Mind	<i>Atonement</i> , ch. 11, pp 389-400; ch.12 & Epilogue (57 pp.) Two Forums Reading Report List and Quotation and Comment Notebook is due, by 10pm Friday of Week 11
Week 12	Final paper must be turned in by the end of Thursday of Week 12	
Week 13	Final exam must be taken on or before Tuesday of Week 13	