

15800 Calvary Road
Kansas City, MO 64147-1341

Course: TH440 D(N) Contemporary Theology
Credit: 2 Semester Hours
Semester: Spring 2026; Session 1
Dates: January 12 – March 6, 2026
Time: Monday/Wednesday 8:00-9:20 a.m.
Place: CABRE 100; Online Teams/Canvas;
Professor: Dr. Joshua Paxton / Office: CABRE 108
Phone: Office: (816)768-6970 / Cell: (816)679-9387
Email: Joshua.paxton@calvary.edu,

I. DESCRIPTION

A survey and biblical analysis of a broad range of theological issues relevant to local church ministry in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Classical liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, and neo-evangelicalism are studied as a backdrop to a more detailed evaluation of more recent theological systems, movements, and issues that impact the church in both American and international contexts. (Prerequisite: BI115)

This course is offered in two formats: in-person and online. Students registered for in-person attend the classes in person, online students attend the classes via the online classroom. For both in-person and online students, assignments, and interaction outside of the class period are done in the learning management system.

II. OBJECTIVES

A. General competencies to be achieved:

1. Identify and define the nature of theology (PLO 1, 5) (A 1-3)
2. Compare biblical theology with other religious theologies (PLO 1, 2, 5) (A 1-6)
3. Identify non-evangelical theologies and systems of thought (PLO 1, 2, 5) (A 1-6)

B. Specific competencies to be achieved:

1. Be able to briefly explain the theological emphasis of key twentieth Century theologians (PLO 1, 2, 5) (A 1-6)
2. Restate the specific weaknesses and strengths of the major non-evangelical theologies of 20th and 21st century Christendom (PLO 1, 2, 5) (A1-6)
3. Grow in appreciation for the role of the Bible in developing theology (PLO 1, 2, 5) (A1-3)
4. Gain experience analyzing contemporary theological expressions of early 21st century American (PLO 1, 2, 5) (A 1-6)

Our Mission: "...to prepare Christians to live and serve in the church and in the world according to the Biblical worldview."

III. REQUIREMENTS

1. Reading

Read the assigned portion of the textbook, *Theologies of the 21st Century*. There is a schedule of readings due each week in "Modules" in Canvas. This assignment will be submitted along with the reading reflections below.

Read the assigned portion of the textbook, *Contemporary Theology: An Introduction*. There is a schedule of readings due each week in "Modules" in Canvas. This assignment will be submitted along with the reading reflections below.

2. Reading Reflection

Each week the student will write a 2-page paper on the reading for that week. Additional instructions may be found in Canvas.

3. Discussion Questions

Each week the student will respond to a discussion question in Canvas. More instructions are available in Canvas. Students should first respond to the question themselves and then respond to another student for full credit.

4. Final Paper / Project

Each student will submit a final project/research paper equivalent to 15 pages, double spaced Turabian research format. The project may be a formal research paper on a contemporary theology topic, a set of lesson plans teaching a series for Sunday School or home Bible study; a series of sermons dealing with a contemporary issue facing the church; a video dealing with such an issue; or....be creative.

IV. METHODS

A. In-class methods: listening to lectures, participating in class discussions, writing, presentations.

B. Out-of-class methods: reading, writing, research.

1. Grading:

	Points
1. Smith Reading.....	100
2. Macgregor Reading.....	100
3. Reading Reflections.....	200
4. Discussion Questions.....	200
5. Participation.....	200
6. Final Project/Paper.....	200
Total	1000

2. "See Grading Scale in the University Catalog"

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- C.** The Bible is a required textbook in every course at Calvary University. To facilitate academic level study, students are required to use for assignments and research an English translation or version of the Bible based on formal equivalence (*meaning that the translation is generally word-for-word from the original languages*), including any of the following: New American Standard (NASB, English Standard Version (ESV), New King James (NKJV), or King James (KJV). Other translations and versions based on dynamic equivalence (*paraphrases, and thought-for-thought translations like NLT and NIV*) may be used as supplemental sources. Please ask the professor if you have questions about a particular translation or version.
- D.** All class papers must follow the Turabian style according to *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition. Unless otherwise indicated book reports and study questions may be in non-research format, interviews and other research papers should be in research paper format. A copy of the Turabian Style Guide is available on the Clark Academic Center page of Calvary's website.
- E. Late Assignments:** Assignments will be penalized according to the professor's late policy as explained in Canvas.
- F. Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is defined as copying any content without identifying the source. This also includes taking another person's or AI entity's ideas or constructs and presenting them as your own. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Most assignments at Calvary require the student to produce original work. Therefore, unless specifically permitted by the instructor, the use of AI-generated content is prohibited (even if cited) as it does not represent original work created by the student and is an unreliable aggregate of ideas from other sources. AI, however, may be utilized in cases where the instructor has explicitly permitted its use to accomplish specific tasks. It is only in these cases that AI-generated (or modified) content may be submitted by the student. If there are any questions as to the permissibility of AI use for an assignment, please ask your instructor for clarification.
- Any assignment that includes plagiarism will receive a zero (0) grade. Students should note that papers will be submitted in Canvas via "Turn-It-In". This program automatically gives the student's work a plagiarism score, students should strive for a score less than 20.*
- G. Disabilities:** Students with disabilities have the responsibility of informing the Accommodations Support Coordinator (aso@calvary.edu) of any disabling condition that may require support
- H. The Clark Academic Center** (learning@calvary.edu), located in the library building, is dedicated to providing free academic assistance for all CU students. Student tutors aid with all facets of the writing process, tutor in various subject areas, prepare students for exams and facilitate tests. Please take advantage of this service.
- I. Attendance Policy** – Calvary has no official attendance policy, the attendance policy of the professor will be explained in class and in Canvas.

V. REQUIRED MATERIALS

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The Bible (Instructor will use ESV)

MacGregor, Kirk R. *Contemporary Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020. (ISBN: 978-0-310-11372-0) [Retail: \$34.99; Amazon \$21.62; Kindle \$7.99]

Smith, David L. *Theologies of the 21st Century: Trends in Contemporary Theology*. Wipf and Stock, 2014. (ISBN: 9781625648648) [Retail \$48.00; Amazon \$34.16; Kindle \$9.99]

VI. TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

A schedule will be posted in Canvas prior to the start of class