

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY
[TESP 67]

Spring 2008
Tuesday, Thursday 9:55-11:40
241 Bannan Hall

Prof. Tom Beaudoin

Religious Studies Department, Santa Clara University

*...try out this ancient page for consistency
the script is tight and the twists always work
until you come to the part about learning*

—Martin Finke, "Give Me Writer's Block" (2001)

Office: Old Mission House, 553 Franklin Street, Room 3

Office Hours: Thursdays 3:45-5:15, plus one "floating hour" each week, depending on students' needs. Scheduled appointments have priority, but drop-ins are also welcome.

Phone: 408-554-4668

Email: tbeaudoin@scu.edu (please allow up to several days for response)

For students with disabilities: To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources located in The Drahmman Center in 214 Benson, (408) 554-4111; TTY (408) 554-5445. Students must provide documentation of a disability to Disability Resources prior to receiving accommodations.

COURSE READING

Beaudoin, Tom, *Consuming Faith: Integrating Who We Are With What We Buy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004)

Graham, Elaine, Heather Walton, Frances Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods* (London: SCM Press, 2005)

Opitz, Donald, and Derek Melleby, *The Outrageous Idea of Academic Faithfulness: A Guide for Students* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2007)

Schleiermacher, Friedrich, *Christian Caring: Selections from "Practical Theology"*, edited with an introduction by James O. Duke and Howard Stone, translated by James O. Duke (Academic Renewal Press, n.d. [1826])

GOALS AND THEMES

Practical theology is the conscious engagement of theological thinking with social-cultural practices, including (and often, especially) the practices that make up the life of the Christian churches. It is theology "of", "about", and "through" practice.

As such, practical theology questions both the practices that make up life and ministry, on the one hand, and theology itself on the other. That is to say, practical theology is a Christian

theology that critically inquires into cultural practices for the sake of more faithful practice, and at the same time allows that inquiry to critically interrogate how the Christian tradition understands itself. In other words, it brings theology to bear on cultural practices of significance to Christian life in the present, and in that encounter sees theology itself as a culturally and historically contingent and contested practice.

In these and other ways, practical theology is a significant and growing domain of theological inquiry today. It is a specific *subdiscipline* within contemporary Christian theology, as well as a critical *perspective* or *approach* through which one can interpret all theological work.

This course will provide an introduction [1] to the field of practical theology, [2] to basic methods of its inquiry, and [3] to some contemporary issues in the field.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Class Attendance, Preparation and Participation (25%)

This dimension of your grade honors your attendance in, active participation in, and proper preparation for, class. This includes regular and punctual *attendance*, careful and thorough *preparation* through reading of assigned texts with an eye to your own questions and insights, and appropriate *contribution* to academic conversation and community in the classroom.

A (excellent) = perfect or nearly perfect attendance, preparation and engagement that demonstrate consistently creative, engaged, well-prepared, thoughtful contribution through active learning

B (good) = nearly perfect attendance, solid and above-average preparation, contributing through regular participation that manifests a superior engagement with the course

C (adequate) = good attendance, adequate preparation, occasional level of participation that manifests more than a casual mode of learning but less than a superior one

First Examination (25%)

The first examination will survey your understanding of basic concepts from the first half of the course.

Second Examination (25%)

The second examination will survey your understanding of basic concepts from the second half of the course.

Final Statement of Learning (25%)

This paper will describe what you have learned this quarter.

SOME IMPORTANT NOTES FOR ACCOMPLISHING GOOD WORK TOGETHER

- It is strongly recommended that students form **study groups** in order to discuss the course content on at least a weekly basis, especially the readings. We have a great deal to study in ten short weeks, and in a course like this, it is almost always easier to stay disciplined when you are supported by a serious group of peers who want to help each other do well.

- Each time that class meets, it will be assumed that every student is prepared to intelligently discuss **all of the required reading** for that class.

- No laptop **computers** may be used in class.

• **Plagiarism** or other violations of academic integrity are forbidden by Santa Clara University in general and this course in particular. Please see your Handbook for details of the Santa Clara policy. The consequence of plagiarism is typically a failing grade for the course.

• **Cell phones** *must* be turned off before class.

• Please do not bring **food or drinks** (except water) to class.

• If you must miss class, contact **another student** to find out what you missed; the professor cannot teach individual make-up lessons or respond to emails about what was missed on a particular day of class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

[I] Introducing Practical Theology

Tuesday 1 April

Welcome, Introduction to Course, Discussion of Syllabus

Thursday 3 April

No class

Tuesday 8 April

A Contemporary Example of Practical Theology [I]

Reading: Beaudoin, *Consuming Faith: Integrating Who We Are With What We Buy*, pp. ix-xiv, 3-60

Thursday 10 April

A Contemporary Example of Practical Theology [II]

Reading: Beaudoin, *Consuming Faith: Integrating Who We Are With What We Buy*, pp. 63-107

Tuesday 15 April

The Foundations of Practical Theology: Friedrich Schleiermacher

Reading: Schleiermacher, *Christian Caring*, "Practical Theology as a Theological Discipline," pp. 88-103 [handout]

[III] Diverse Approaches to Practical Theology

Thursday 17 April

Introduction to Methods I: Practical Theology as the Heart's Witness?

Reading: [1] Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, "Introduction," pp. 1-16
 [2] Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflections: Methods*, Chapter One

Tuesday 22 April

Introduction to Methods II: Practical Theology as a "Constructive Narrative" Work?

Reading: Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, Frances Ward, *Theological Reflections: Methods*, Chapter Two

Thursday 24 April

Introduction to Methods III: Practical Theology as a "Canonical Narrative" Work?

Reading: Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, Frances Ward, *Theological Reflections: Methods*, Chapter Three

Tuesday 29 April

Introduction to Methods IV: Practical Theology as "Corporate Reflection"?

Reading: Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, Frances Ward, *Theological Reflections: Methods*, Chapter Four

Thursday 1 May

First Examination

Tuesday 6 May

Introduction to Methods V: Practical Theology as a "Public Correlation"?

Reading: Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, Frances Ward, *Theological Reflections: Methods*, Chapter Five

Thursday 8 May

No Class

Tuesday 13 May

Introduction to Methods VI: Practical Theology as a Work of "Praxis"?

Reading: Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, Frances Ward, *Theological Reflections: Methods*, Chapter Six

Thursday 15 May

Introduction to Methods VII: Practical Theology as a “Contextual” Work?

Reading: Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, Frances Ward, *Theological Reflections: Methods*, Chapter Seven

[III] Contemporary Work in Practical Theology**Tuesday 20 May**

A Contemporary Example of Practical Theology [III]

Reading: Opitz and Melleby, *The Outrageous Idea of Academic Faithfulness*, pp. 7-12, 14-38, 40-53

Thursday 22 May

A Contemporary Example of Practical Theology [IV]

Reading: Opitz and Melleby, *The Outrageous Idea of Academic Faithfulness*, pp. 70-79, 82-98, 100-113, 116-132

Tuesday 27 May

Second Examination

Thursday 29 May

No class

Tuesday 3 June

Final Class: What Have We Learned?

Final Statement of Learning Due