THEO 5224 God, Creation and Eschatology

Instructor: Prof. Keith, CHAN ka-fu (陳家富)

Date & Time: Mon 19:00-21:30

Venue: ARC G03

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1. Course Description:

Postmodernism is typically constructed as an enemy of Christian faith. Critics within ecclesial institutions often have not read its thinkers, and instead relay a second-hand report that postmodernism is against "absolute truth" and religious meta-narratives. Critics further question its ethical contributions, suspecting its lack of prescriptions for an endorsement of moral relativism. This course prefers to read postmodern thinkers (theologians and philosophers of religion) more generously and positively. As a result of this course, students will be able to:

1) understand key concepts (the death of God, the infinite, alterity, gift economy, différance, etc) in the major figures of postmodern thought,

2) articulate how these concepts acquire a theological resonance,

3) voice their own critical questions for postmodernity, rooted in close readings of the course texts, and

4) suggest how postmodernism is not entirely at odds with Christian theology and its ethical discourse.

The content and readings of this course are dense. Students are strongly recommended actively to participate in the learning and teaching activities in this course. This course is NOT a general introduction course in Christian theology, but an in depth discussion of the possibility and actuality of the postmodern theological discourses.

This course instructor will use Blackboard to disseminate class announcements/ lecture notes, give out assignments, promote discussion, conduct online tests, give feedback on students' assignments and so on.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs):

	On completion of this course, students should be able to:
CILO 1	Understand the complicated Christian concepts of God, creation and eschatology, and their historical interconnection with the intellectual backgrounds.

CILO 2	Apply the concepts and ideas to evaluate the relevance of their numerous implications.
CILO 3	Reflect on their own beliefs and value towards Christian ideas.

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs):

CILO 1	Students will: • Approach and describe various key ideas and historical events in approaching these three concepts in the development of the Christian thought through discussion, written exercise and group project. • Evaluate the comments given by different theories and concepts towards the relationship between Christianity and her contexts.
CILO 2	Students will • Identify and examine different aspects of the relationship between these three doctrines and other related concepts by participating class discussions and reading. • Evaluate the religious import of the different aspects of these three doctrines.
CILO 3	Students will: • Construct their own judgements to evaluate their views towards some controversial issues through debate and class discussion. • Apply the knowledge and techniques they learn from the course to complete the project.

4. Assessment:

4.1. Tutorial Presentation (35%)

Each student required to present the reading materials in the tutorials at the end of the term. Basic summary and critical discussions are required. High mark would be given to those students who can address the advanced theological scholarships.

4.2. Lecture writing (25%. Deadline: Nov 24)

Each student is assigned to submit 2 written reports of the lecturer's lecture content.

4.3. Research paper (40%. Deadline: Dec 23)

Each student is required to submit a research paper (Chinese or English) on a given topic. For your reference, usually the number of words required for a term paper in undergraduate courses (coded THEO1xxx-4xxx) is 4000-5000, for postgraduate courses (coded THEO5xxx) is 5000-6000.

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Student Name
Sept 7	1. Classical Theism	
Sept 14	2. Theology in Postmodernity	
Sept 21	3. God as Gift	
Sept 28	4. God as Becoming	
Oct 5	5. Radical Trinity	
Oct 12	6. Creation	
Oct 19	7. Nothingness	
Oct 26	8. Evil or Divine Providence	
Nov 2	9. Kairos and History	
Nov 9	10. Future or Present	
Nov 16	11. Messianism without Messiah	
Nov 23	Tutorial Presentation (1-4)	
Dec 7	Tutorial Presentation (5-8)	
Dec 14	Tutorial Presentation (9-12)	

References:

1. Christina M. Gschwandtner, *Postmodern Apologetics?: Arguments for God in Contemporary Philosophy*. Fordham University Press, 2012.

2. Clayton Crockett, Keith Putt & J. Robbins. Eds. *The Future of Continental Philosophy of Religion*. Indiana University Press, 2014.

3. David Peterson. Ed. *Resurrecting the Death of God: The Origins, Influence, and Return of Radical Theology*. State University of New York Press, 2015.

4. J. Derrida & G. Vattimo. Eds. *Religion*. Stanford University Press, 1998. (Chinese Translation)

5. Dominique Janicaud. Ed. *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn": The French Debate*. Fordham University Press, 2000.

6. Gavin Hyman. *The Predicament of Postmodern Theology*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

7. Gianni Vattimo. *After Christianity*. Columbia University Press, 2002.

8. Graham Ward. Ed. *The Blackwell Companion to Postmodern Theology*. Blackwell. 2001.

9. James K.A. Smith. *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy: Mapping a Post-Secular Theology.* Baker, 2004.

10. Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being: Hors-Texte.* University of Chicago Press, 1995.

11. --------------------, *The Idol and Distance: Five Studies.* Fordham University Press, 2001.

12. Jeffrey Robbins, *Radical Theology.* Indiana University Press, 2016.

13. John Caputo & Michael Scanlon. Eds. *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism.* Indiana University Press, 1999.

14. --. Eds. *Questioning God.* Indiana University Press, 2001.

15. --.Eds *Augustine and Postmodernism: Confessions and Circumfession.* Indiana University Press, 2005.

16. John Caputo & Gianni Vattimo. *After the Death of God.* Columbia University Press, 2007.

17. John Caputo. *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event.* Indiana University Press, 2006.

18. ----------------. *The Insistence of God: A Theology of Perhaps.* Indiana University Press, 2013.

19. ----------------. *On Religion.* Routledge, 2001.

20. Kevin J. Vanhoozer. Ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology.* CUP, 2003.

21. Lissa McCullough & Brian Schroeder. Eds. *Thinking Through the Death of God.* State University of New York Press, 2004.

22. Phillip Blond. Ed. *Post-Secular Philosophy.* Routledge, 1998.

23. Richard Kearney, *Anatheism: Returning to God After God.* Columbia University Press, 2011.

24. --------------------, *The God Who May Be: A Hermeneutics of Religion.* Indiana University Press, 2001.

25. Thomas J.J. Altizer. *The Gospel of Christian Atheism.* Westminster Press, 1966.

Tentative Tutorial Readings:

Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (天國近了：神學與神的國). Ch. 1 & 4

P. Tillich, "Kairos" *The Protestant Era*, pp.32-54.

J. Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (盼望神學). Ch.1 (pp.37-94)

J. Moltmann, *The Crucified God*. Ch.6 (Sec. 1-8)

Merold Westphal, "Divine Excess: The God Who Comes After," *Overcoming Onto-theology: Towards a Postmodern Christian Faith*, pp. 256-284 (Chinese Translation)

John Caputo, "Apostles of the Impossible: On God and the Gift in Derrida and Marion," *God, the Gift and Postmodernism*, pp. 185- 222.

Karl Barth, "God and Nothingness," *Church Dogmatics* III.3, pp. 289-368.

Richard Kearney, "The God Who May Be," *Questioning God*, pp.153-185.

John Thatamanil, "Tillich and Postmodern," *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich*. Ed. Russell Re Manning, pp. 288-302.

E. Academic Honesty

The CUHK places very high importance of honesty in academic work. Please visit : http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/ (Honesty in Academic Work: A Guide for Teachers and Students) for more details. According to University policy, every written assignment has to be submitted to a system called VeriGuide to check for academic honesty.