

Jason Byassee, Vancouver School of Theology  
Th 6/780 Contemporary Trinitarian Thought  
Spring 2018, Tuesday mornings 9 AM-12.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a remarkable revival of a doctrine once considered dead and deadly: the doctrine of the Trinity. This revival was kicked off by Karl Barth and continues to this day as theologians produce work of remarkable creativity and practitioners do likewise. This course will focus on the doctrine of the Trinity in both contemporary and classical exposition, since the former cannot be understood without the latter.

Students will study one classical interpreter, such as Tertullian, Augustine, the Cappadocians, Julian, Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, Sarah Coakley, Sallie McFague (note: classical doesn't have to mean dead!). You will present your findings on this figure in class. Students will also study a contemporary expositor of the doctrine, such as Richard Rohr, Cynthia Bourgeault, Miroslav Volf, John Zizioulas (like the first list this one could expand infinitely). These folks do something unique with the doctrine—trying to emphasize how it shapes our view of humanity, society, spirituality, politics, gender, or nearly any other created thing of your choice. We will also each read the material for class which roughly divides into classical (LaCugna and Bobrinskoy) and contemporary (Reeves, Leithart, and Canliss) approaches. Students will take turns leading off discussion for the day. Students will conclude the course with an appropriate project to demonstrate what they have learned—an academic paper perhaps of some 15 or so pages, a series of sermons, a catechetical exercise, plans for a political gathering—the possibilities are nearly endless. Please clear your plans with the instructor first.

The goal here is not merely to read a lot or write a lot. It is to think and act trinitarianly for the sake of the church's faithfulness and the world's blessing.

### **Competencies**

1-Describe the biblical and theological sources for the doctrine and why it matters for the church's life today.

2-Offer trinitarian reflection in your own voice, off the script, improvised. Students will need to show they can do more than cite sources (as crucial as that is!)—you can do something new with this doctrine.

**Required books** (these are ordered through the UBC bookstore and so should be available on campus).

Boris Bobrinskoy *The Mystery of the Trinity* (St. Vladimir's 1999) ISBN: 0881418595

Julie Canliss *A Theology of the Ordinary* (Godspeed Press, 2017). ISBN: 0692840281

Catherine LaCugna *God For Us: The Trinity and the Christian Life* (Harper, 1993) ISBN: 0060649135

Peter Leithart *Traces of the Trinity: Signs of God in Creation and Human Experience* (Baker, 2015) ISBN: 1587433672

Michael Reeves *Delighting in the Trinity* (InterVarsity Academic, 2012). ISBN: 0830839836