

Penn West Academy for Ministry

Theology Course 2023-2024

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Course Objectives:

1. To understand and express the connection between the Bible, its interpretation, and theology.
2. To identify theological methods, such as constructive, liberation, primary theology, secondary theology, feminist, historical, moral theology (ethics), and so on.
3. To engage in practical theological reflection, with a deeper relationship with God being the primary goal.

Texts:

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together and Prayerbook of the Bible, DBW Volume 5, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004).

Dorothy and Gabriel Fackre, Christian Basics: A Primer for Pilgrims, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).

Robert Wicks, Seeds of Sensitivity: Deepening Your Spiritual Life, (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1995).

Optional Text: Gabriel Fackre, The Christian Story: A Narrative Interpretation of Basic Christian Doctrine, Volume 1, Third Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996). *The Christian Story deals with the same information as Christian Basics but in more depth and in an academic way. It is not a required text but a good complement to it.*

Year TWO—*In the Academy, we are on a four-year cycle. 2023-2024 is year TWO for me.*

September 8-9, 2023: Jesus of Nazareth, Part I

Readings for Oct: Fackre & Fackre, Christian Basics, “Jesus Christ,” pages 38--63, pay special attention to the diagram 161.

Assignment for October:

1. Buy a journal and record your prayer life in it/reflections for the course. This is for you to keep. I will not request it from you.
2. Turn in a paper to me that tells me about your relationship to Jesus answering these questions: 1. How do you encounter Jesus most personally? 2. Where does Jesus comfort you? 3. Where does Jesus challenge you?

October 13-14, 2023: Jesus of Nazareth, Part II

Readings for March: Fackre & Fackre, Christian Basics, “ pages 64-82. *Although the Fackres don’t have a chapter in their chart on the Holy Spirit, much of the Holy Spirit material is covered in this section.*

Wicks, Seeds of Sensitivity, “Piercing the Darkness,” Chapter Six, pages 125-148.

Assignment for March:

Find a picture of Jesus that speaks to you (It doesn’t have to speak positively to you; you can dislike it.) Let me know two things about this picture: does it, in your view, demonstrate a ‘high’ Christology or ‘low’ Christology? And, which roles (prophet, priest, king, teacher, savior, presence among others) does this work of art express? Either attach a picture of the artwork with your paper or give me a web address where I can find the image online. Why do you think you like this picture/dislike it?

March 8-9, 2024: The Holy Spirit

Readings for May: Fackre & Fackre, Christian Basics, “The Church,”
pages 64-89.

Bonhoeffer, Life Together and Prayerbook of the Bible, “The
Day Together,” pages 48-80.

Assignment for May:

1. Use Wicks’ method of prayer on page 135 (historically called the prayer of the Examen). Record your thoughts and insights in your journal. Write a paper about Steps 5 and 6 to share with me your insights of how the Holy Spirit might be bearing fruit in your life.

May 10-11, 2024: Church & Ethics

Readings for September 2024: Fackre & Fackre, Christian Basics, 72-
74.

Wicks, Seeds of Sensitivity, “Seeds of Sensitivity,” Chapter Three, pages 65-
83.

Assignment for September 2023:

1. Does Bonhoeffer’s description of “The Day Together” demonstrate the marks/ministries of the church? Why or why not?