

Penn West Academy for Ministry

Theology Course 2022-2023



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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 ONE—*In the Academy, we are on a four-year cycle. 2022-2023 is year one for me.*

September 9-10, 2022: **How We Got Here: Theology as field of Study—
Evangelical, Catholic, Ecumenical & Experiential.**

Readings for Oct: Fackre & Fackre, Christian Basics, “Afterword,”
Pages 155-162, pay special attention to the diagram 161.

Wicks, Seeds of Sensitivity, “Introduction,” Pages
7-12.

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 short paper to me that explains to me in your own words each of the perspectives we discussed in class (evangelical, catholic, experiential, dialectic, correlational, or contextual). Which perspective are you drawn to? To which perspective do you feel resistance/discomfort? Do you know why?

October 7-8, 2022: **The Bible and Inspiration**

Readings for March: Fackre & Fackre, Christian Basics, “Creation and
Fall,” Chapters One and Two, pages 5-26.

Wicks, Seeds of Sensitivity, “Unexpected
Wisdom,” Chapter One, pages 15-37.

Bonhoeffer, Life Together and Prayerbook of the
Bible, “Classification & Creation,” pages 162-164.

Assignment for March:

Interview a friend/neighbor/congregation member/significant other/pastor and ask them how they believe the Bible was inspired. In other words, how did God communicate God’s Word to the author of Matthew (for example)? Using the handout from class, can you identify

which category (roughly) fits their understanding of inspiration? Which fits yours?

March 10-11, 2023: Creation and Fall

Readings for May: Fackre & Fackre, Christian Basics, “Covenant,” pages 27-37.

Bonhoeffer, Life Together and Prayerbook of the Bible, “Community,” pages 27-31 and “The Law,” pages 164-165.

Assignment for May:

1. See the handout, “Approaching Discernment Through Nature,” From Elizabeth Liebert’s The Way of Discernment. Do this practice several times in different natural settings. A quiet place. An urban park. The rain. Record your thoughts in your journal and come prepared in May to discuss what your experience was like.

May 12-13, 2023: Covenant

Readings for September 2023: Fackre & Fackre, Christian Basics, “Jesus Christ,” pages 38--63.

Wicks, Seeds of Sensitivity, “A Sensitive Healing Presence,” Chapter Four, pages 84-95.

Assignment for September 2023:

1. There are two dimensions of the Biblical covenant—vertical (that is, between God and humanity) and horizontal (between fellow people). [See Bonhoeffer pages 27-31]. How is the Biblical concept of Covenant different than/similar to the words agreement/community/fellowship? Reflect on your best memories of community and fellowship. It does

not have to be a church-focused memory. Write a short paper on how that experience of community fits with the best ideas of Covenant.