

Course Description

Course Number: HT 264W-L1

Instructor: Rev. Winston D. Persaud, PhD, Professor of Systematic Theology

Course Title: *Readings in Theology: A Critical, Meditative, and Contemplative Approach—JDDJ and texts of L-RC Dialogue, rounds XI and VIII*

Semester and Year: Fall 2023

Requirement fulfilled: Elective open to M.A., MDiv., Discovery and other students

Number of hours, grading option: 1 credit hour; credit/no-credit

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will involve a critical, contemplative, and meditative reading of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (Lutheran World Federation and The Roman Catholic Church (31 October 1999), *The Hope of Eternal Life* (L-RC Dialogue XI) and select pages of *The One Mediator, The Saints, and Mary* (L-RC Dialogue VIII).

COURSE OBJECTIVES. In their reading of the texts, the students will be expected to keep four primary questions in mind:

- How do the *JDDJ* and the L-RC Dialogue USA texts speak about the Christian hope of eternal life: from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit?
- How do the texts define the Gospel?
- What role do Luther's theology and Lutheran Confessions play in the texts?
- How is the decisive role of the doctrine of justification *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, and *solus Christus* described in each text?

In addition to the four questions, Wartburg Seminary's Mission Statement and the Twelve Pastoral Practices are to be kept in mind.

The students will be challenged to read the text in a way that allows it to be 'sovereign' and 'subject'. In short, the hermeneutical and pedagogical premise of this course is that there are three subjects: the students/ professor as participants, the subject (doctrine/theological theme and topic) being considered, and the written texts, which were multi-authored through years of long and sustained dialogue.

PROCEDURE: Regular weekly discussion in plenary sessions of materials read. Weekly posting on Castle Commons of theological reflection (150-200 words) on the reading for the week which will normally be 12-14 pages. In addition, where it is necessary for participation asynchronously, the student will be expected to view the recording of the plenary discussion and post a written reflection (150-200 words) on Castle Commons.

EVALUATION will be based on attendance, and oral and written contributions of participants.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Bible; *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*; *The Hope of Eternal Life* (L-RC Dialogue, XI); *The One Mediator, the Saints, and Mary* (selected pages; L-RC Dialogue, VIII); Kolb/Wengert, Eds. *The Book of Concord*.

Commitment to DEI Work

Creating Beloved Community and a learning environment full of mutual respect is hard and ongoing work. We are a diverse community seeking greater diversity, and this diversity is paramount in the beauty of God's good creation. Indeed, we see this diversity as grounded in the doctrine of the Trinity. Diversity can refer to multiple ways that we identify ourselves, including but not limited to race, national origin, languages, sex, ability, body type, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, gender identity, ancestry, veteran status, culture, or genetic information. These diversities and more contribute to the perspectives and excellence that, I, as an instructor, bring into the classroom and beyond and will be affirmed.

I am still learning how to best celebrate multiple perspectives. Please let us know ways to celebrate your identities, pronouns to use, and/or when something said/assumed in class concerns you. I acknowledge that for centuries white male authors have dominated this field and are present in our course readings and may present overt and covert biases in the material due to the lens through which it was crafted. I have attempted to have us read and discuss materials which offer notable diverse, ecumenical, Lutheran-Roman Catholic perspectives. I continue to work at finding textbooks, articles, and other resources on the focus of the course by authors who reflect the diversity of voices to which I am committed. In our common work in Jesus' Name, your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated to improve the effectiveness of this course for you personally and for groups of students.

Topics covered in seminary are often difficult on various planes. When we embrace diverse perspectives, we embrace healthful disagreement—a mark of deep and true community. Please engage in discussion with care and empathy for yourself and others. In this class we endeavor to embrace the uncomfortable as we critically examine some of our most basic assumptions, values, and beliefs. As you work to bring good courage to this course, I will work to ensure an environment that supports your full participation and risk taking.

The instructor intends that this course will foster especially the following Pastoral Practices:

- *Practice of Ecclesial Partnership:* Displays a healthy sense of connectedness with the whole church. Fosters partnership with the ELCA and ecumenical openness.
- *Practice of Collegiality:* Leads in a way that is responsive to the situation and promotes team building. Creates collegial groups within and beyond the church for promoting many forms of ministry.
- *Practice of Evangelical Listening and Speaking the Faith to Others:* Listens in a way that leads people to deeper faith questions. Engages in thoughtful witness to the Christian message, especially to youth and those outside the faith.
- *Practice of Sensitivity to Cross-Cultural and Global Dimensions:* Is sensitive to multicultural issues and religious pluralism in the context of globalization. Understands the inclusive character of the Christian Gospel.

ACCOMODATIONS POLICY: It is seminary policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disability conditions that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students are responsible for informing their instructor of any documented disability by the end of the first week of class or upon subsequent diagnosis. Documentation on disability conditions is kept in a confidential file in the ADA Compliance Officer's office.