

Systematic Theology 5201: Contextual Theology

Contextual Theology, Term B, 2022

Course Information

ST 5201B Contextual Theology

Wednesday 8:30-11:00 am, Rm. W104

Prerequisites ST 5103A

Instructor(s) Dawn Davis (Rev.) DMin, Domenic Ruso (Rev.) PhD

Contact Information ddavis48@uwo.ca, domruso@gmail.com

Office Location A221 and online

Office Hours (or offer to set appointments) Respond to emails received between Monday-Friday within 24 hours.

Visit the Program “Owl” site for the Course Content, Zoom links, course material, supportive and guiding documents and news. To access ST 5201B on Owl, please go to

<https://owl.uwo.ca/portal/site/008982d3-3d66-4810-ab63-a57f64352dc7>

Course Description

An exploration of the importance of context in how theology and ministry shape each other. The influence of culture, ethnicity, politics, gender, economics, globalization, colonialism, various media and the environment will be explored. The course will examine how this particular time—post-COVID, post-colonial, post-Christian context—affects how we think, pray and act.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Analyze—using several different contextual theological models—diverse social, political, cultural and theological contexts of ministry.
- Create a cohesive and relevant contextual theology by integrating theological sources (doctrine, scripture, tradition, history, religious experience) with the current contextual environment.
- Demonstrate an ability to have a thoughtful dialogue about the influence of experience and context on theological development and thought.
- Develop behavioural aptitude for navigating diverse ministry contexts.

Textbooks and Course Materials

Required:

Bevans, Stephen B. *Essays in Contextual Theology. Theology and Mission in World Christianity*, volume 12. Leiden Boston: Brill, 2018.

Sanneh, Lamin O. *Whose Religion Is Christianity? The Gospel beyond the West*. Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 2003.

Course Requirements and Assignments: Please submit assignments to the appropriate folder on the course Owl site. Name electronic files for submission in the form **Last Name, First Name - Title** (e.g., Smith, John – Book Review.docx).

For Written Assignments: Please note that spelling and grammar will be considered in the evaluation of all assignments. Students may lose points for spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. Students who require additional support and/or tutoring with respect to their writing skills are encouraged.

1. **Participation** is more than just attending class; it means entering fully into class discussions and exercises. Students are expected to share concepts, information, and experiences—and to listen and respond to the contributions of others. Differing points of view are encouraged, and students are welcome to put forward positions they may not agree with. The goal throughout is a thorough, lively, and loving exploration of ideas. During class, students should:

- be able to demonstrate knowledge of all the materials covered
- be ready to make thoughtful comments
- relate them to their work and personal experiences
- respond to the materials, the professor(s), and the ideas of fellow students.

While voluntary participation is strongly encouraged, students should be prepared to respond when called upon to give their views. On the other hand, they should avoid continuously dominating class and group discussion. The most valuable element of participation is listening carefully and responding to what others have to say.

The following scale will be used to rate class participation:

0. Absent
1. Attended class but did not speak or participate. When invited to give an opinion, gave an answer such as "I'm not sure".
2. Made minor comments or contributed only when called on.
3. Made a reasonable contribution to the discussion and activities. Opinions related to theory and concepts covered in the course.

4. Made insightful and significant contributions to the discussion. Built on the contributions of others personal experience and examples provided were supported with theory and concepts.
5. Made exceptional contributions.

The course may include simulations, short exercises, and group work. The involvement of every student in these activities is essential to the success of the activities and to their value as learning tools. Student involvement in these activities will be given significant weight in assessing the participation mark. (20%)

2. **Book Review** of Sanneh, Lamin O. *Whose Religion Is Christianity? The Gospel beyond the West*. Students will write a book review by focusing and engaging with the author's argument and conclusions. The Book Review will be 3-5 pages, double-spaced, 12-pt font, typewritten, Word document. Due Week 7, February 16, 2022. (20%)

The book review should include:

- i. A coherent explanation of the structure of the text including comments about genre and flow, and overall style of the book.
- ii. A re-articulation of the argument(s) made by the author clearly and fairly. (Please include page numbers.)
- iii. An analysis of the author's arguments by agreeing or disagree with the key points raised in the book.
- iv. An expansion or clarification of the author's argument. Please include page numbers/location.)

3. **Intercultural Development Inventory Plan** Option A: Students will complete the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assessment. They will then meet for a one-on-one session with an IDI administrator for a 50-minute debrief of their IDI assessment. Students will then complete an IDI Plan targeting their Intercultural Developmental perceived and actual mindsets and the orientation gap that exists between them. Students will develop goals that foster development along the intercultural development continuum (a list of suggested resources is provided by the IDI personal plan material). The Plan document provides an outline and space for the student's written input. All written input must be single-spaced, 12 pt. font, typewritten. Due March 9. (30%)

Intercultural Development Inventory Goal Application and Reflection Option B: If students have recently completed their IDI Plan for other class assignments, then they will provide a reflection paper which includes: a summation of their IDI findings; a detailed outline of their IDI Plan goals; and a reflection on the application of at least two goals. The Goal Application and Reflection paper (Option B) must be 5-7 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, typewritten, Word document.) Due March 9. (30%)

4. **Current Context Interview and Reflection Report** on "Nones" and "Dones." Students will interview at least two people whose current religious affiliation fits within the category of "None" and "Done." ("Nones refers to those folks who tell pollsters they have no religious affiliation, none; nor any particular set of religious beliefs. Dones are the folks who've given up on institutional religion, those folks who were once part of a congregation, but have found it didn't fulfill their needs and so they quit." Danner, John Dr., *Faces on Faith: Nones, Dones and SBNR*, Sanibel Captiva, USA. June 2, 2020) Students will be given a core number of interview questions and asked to develop at least three more questions which will constitute the slate of questions used for the interviews. They will gather data from the interviews, analyze the data gathered and reflect on the analysis in order to develop a description of the theological and spiritual perspective of the religious context of the individuals being interviewed. They will also reflect on how

effective the spiritual formation context of the student, would or would not be, in addressing the spiritual needs of those interviewed. Students will want to incorporate information gathered from class lectures from this assignment, particularly from Week 4 and 5, Canadian Social Religious Context. The Interview and Reflection Report of Nones and Dones will be 5-7 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, typewritten, Word document. Due Week 9, March 30. (30%)

Summary of Assignments and Grading

Assignment	Value	Date
1. Class participation	20%	n/a
2. Book Review	20%	February 16, 2020
3. IDI Plan (or Application Reflection)	30%	March 9, 2020
4. Current Context Interview and Reflection	30%	March 30, 2020

Course Outline

Week 1, Jan. 12: Introduction and Overview

Models of Contextual Theology

Week 2, Jan 19: Models of Contextual Theology continued

Week 3, Jan. 26: The Criticism of Relativism

Week 4, Feb. 2: Canadian Social Religious Context

Visiting speaker, Rev. Dr. Neil Elliot, sociologist, parish priest and statistician for the Anglican Church of Canada.

Week 5, Feb 9: Canadian Multi- and Poly-culturalism

Week 6, Feb. 16: Colonialization, Post-Colonialization and Global Christianity missional context (Due, Book Review)

Winter Break February 21-27

Week 7, Mar 2: Liberation Theology

Week 8, Mar. 9: African Post-Colonial context with Dr. Mabilia Kenzo from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
(Due, IDI Plan or Application Reflection paper)

Week 9, Mar 16: Feminist and Womanist Theology with Dr. Michelle Voss Roberts, Emmanuel College

Week 10, Mar 23: Environmentalism and Eschatology

Week 11, Mar. 30: A Realistic Vision of Flourishing

Week 12, Apr 6: Wrap-up (Due, Current Context Interview Reflection paper)

Course Bibliography

The following list includes recommended books for further study.

Bergmann, Sigurd, and Mika Vähäkangas, eds. *Contextual Theology: Skills and Practices of Liberating Faith*. Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2021.

Bevans, Stephen B. *Models of Contextual Theology*. Rev. and Expanded ed. Faith and Cultures Series. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 2002.

Brett, Mark G., ed. *Colonial Contexts and Postcolonial Theologies: Storyweaving in the Asia-Pacific*. Postcolonialism and Religions. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Crossan, John Dominic. *God and Empire: Jesus against Rome, Then and Now*. s.l.: HarperOne, 2007.

Dawson, Lorne L., and Joel Thiessen. *The Sociology of Religion: A Canadian Perspective*. First edition. Themes in Canadian Sociology. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Dyrness, William A., ed. *Emerging Voices in Global Christian Theology*. Eugene, Or: Wipf & Stock, 2003.

———. *Learning about Theology from the Third World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, Zondervan Pub. House, 1990.

González, Justo L. *Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.

Grey, Mary. "Feminist Theology: A Critical Theology of Liberation." In *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, edited by Christopher Rowland, 2nd ed., 105–22. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521868831.007>.

Griffin, David Ray. "Postmodern Theology: Christian Faith in a Pluralist World Edited by Frederic B. Burnham San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989." *Theology Today* 47, no. 2 (July 1990): 220–22.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/004057369004700225>.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1988.

Kenzo, Mabilia. "Thinking Otherwise about Africa. Postcolonialism, Post-Modernity and the Future of African Theology." *Exchange*, 31, no. 4 (2002).

King, Thomas. *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*. Toronto: Anchor Canada, 2013.

- Kwok, Pui-lan. *Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World*. Eugene, Or.: Wipf and Stock Pub., 2003.
- . *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*. 1st ed. Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.
- Lee, Jung Young. *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Linda Hutcheon. “Eruptions of Postmodernity: The Postcolonial and Ecological.” *Essays in Canadian Writing*, no. 51–56 (n.d.): 146–63.
- Louis Cornelissen. “Religiosity in Canada and Its Evolution from 1985 to 2019.” Insights on Canadian Society. Statistics Canada, October 28, 2021.
- Macquarrie, John. *Principles of Christian Theology*. Revised edition, 5th impression. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1984.
- McAlpine, Bill, Joel Thiessen, Keith Walker, and Arch Chee Keen Wong. *Signs of Life: Catholic, Mainline, and Conservative Protestant Congregations in Canada*, 2021.
- McClendon, James William. *Biography as Theology*. Eugene: Wipf and Sock, 2002.
- Migliore, Daniel L. *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 2004.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. *Experiences in Theology: Ways and Forms of Christian Theology*. 1st Fortress Press ed. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Grand Rapids, Mich. : Geneva [SZ]: W.B. Eerdmans ; WCC Publications, 1989.
- Nickoloff, James B. “Church of the Poor: The Ecclesiology of Gustavo Gutiérrez.” *Theological Studies* 54, no. 3 (September 1993): 512–35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004056399305400305>.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. 1st ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.
- Parsons, Susan Frank. *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. http://cco.cambridge.org/login2?dest=/book?id=ccol052166327x_CCOL052166327X.
- Pears, Angela. *Doing Contextual Theology*. London ; New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Schreier, Robert J. *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local*. Faith and Cultures Series. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1997.
- Staines, David, ed. “71. National Consciousness in Canadian Culture.” In *Northrop Frye on Canada*, 493–507. University of Toronto Press, 2003. <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442677807-075>.
- Tennent, Timothy C. *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church Is Influencing the Way We Think about and Discuss Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2007.
- Thiessen, Joel, and Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme. *None of the above: Nonreligious Identity in the US and Canada*, 2020.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *The Survivors Speak: A Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, 2015.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. "Theology and the Condition of Postmodernity." In *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, edited by Kevin J. Vanhoozer, 1st ed., 3–25. Cambridge University Press, 2001.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL052179062X.001>.

Volf, Miroslav. *Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World*. New Haven London: Yale University Press, 2015.

Voss Roberts, Michelle. *Dualities: A Theology of Difference*. 1st ed. Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.

Yoder, John Howard. *The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gospel*. Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984.

Appendix to Course Outlines:

Faculty of Theology Academic Policies & Regulations 2021–2022

Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean and the Instructor to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Student Code of Conduct

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work, and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at:

<https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

1. A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
2. Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular

examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Review the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/attendance.pdf.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf. The appeals process is also outlined in this policy as well as more generally at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf.

Turnitin.com

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

It is not appropriate to use electronic devices (such as, but not limited to, laptops, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Statement on the Recording of Class Activities

Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.

Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems (“Clickers”)

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”) may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else’s clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

Academic Consideration for Missed Work: Medical or Non-Medical Absences & Accommodation

MDiv and MTS students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester must consult with the Dean’s Office. MDiv and MTS students are excluded from using the Self Reported Absence option as that is restricted to bachelor-level students. Students may request academic consideration on medical grounds by contacting the Dean of Theology office at srice@huron.uwo.ca. To protect student privacy, details of the medical accommodation need only be disclosed to the Dean, who will communicate to the instructor(s) the necessary accommodation. Instructors may not request medical or other documentation from students. The Dean may require medical or other documentation, and the student may be required to complete the Student Medical Certificate, available online at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf. Following a determination of accommodation, the Dean will contact the instructor(s) and the student who will then arrange a new deadline for missed work.

Students seeking academic consideration for a non-medical absence (e.g. varsity sports, religious, compassionate, or bereavement) may be required to provide appropriate documentation to the Dean’s Office. All consideration requests must be directed to the Dean’s Office with notice also given to the instructor.

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation. Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://academicssupport.uwo.ca/>.

Please review the full policy on Academic Consideration for medical and non-medical absence at: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf. Consult the Dean’s Office for any further questions or information.

Support Services

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation (see above), students should contact Sandra Rice in the Dean’s Office at srice@huron.uwo.ca.

Your Faculty Advisor is also able to answer questions about your program and to assist with any concerns about academic matters. Contact them for a conversation whenever you need.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your workload is not manageable, you should consult with the Dean. If you are considering reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please review the list of official Sessional Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here:

<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with your course instructor and the Dean, who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect your full-time status and therefore have implications for OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

An outline of the range of services offered to Huron students is found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>.

Huron Student Support Services: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>

Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>

Student Quick Reference Guide: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/#1>

Learning Development and Success: <https://www.uwo.ca/sdc/learning/>

Accessible Education: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>

Western USC: <http://westernusc.ca/your-services/#studentservices>

Mental Health & Wellness Support at Huron and Western

University students may encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. Huron offers a variety of services that are here to support your success and wellbeing. Please visit <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/wellness-safety> for more information or contact staff directly:

Wellness Services: huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca

Community Safety Office: safety@huron.uwo.ca

Chaplaincy: gthorne@huron.uwo.ca

Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

 [Systematic Theology 5201 Final 2.docx](#)