

Theology Curriculum in General Education

Currently, students take 7-8 credits of theology in the General Education curriculum. 3-4 credits are in the Bible category and 4 credits are in the Christianity category.

Biblical (3 or 4 credits required)		
RLG100	The Word in Its World (Take 1st)	4
RLG206	New Testament	3
Christian Faith (4 credits required)		
RLG242	On Being a Christian (Take 2nd)	4
RLG220	Issues in Vocation and Ethics*	4
THY330	Our Living Faith	4

Beginning 1 June 2009, the curricular requirements switch to 3-4 credits at an introductory level and 4 credits at an intermediate level. The 300-level intermediate courses have an introductory course as a pre-requisite.

Introductory (3 or 4 credits required)		
THL100	The Biblical Heritage of Christianity	4
THL206	New Testament*	3
Intermediate (4 credits required)		
THL242	On Being a Christian	4
THL305	Portraits of Jesus: Gospels ... Gnostics ... Islam	4
THL320	Global Christianity	4
THL325	Christian Ethics for the Professional	4
THL330	Our Living Faith*	4
THL334	Love and Hate	4
THL335	God, Death, and Destiny	4
THL336	Evil Meets Good	4
THL351	Messiah and Muhammad	4
THL352	Is God Green?	4
THL356	One Nation Under God?	4
THL357	Christianity and the Media	4

Transition year

2009-2010 will be a transition year for students. The “introductory” courses will supplant the “Biblical” courses. One section of “On Begin a Christian” from the old curriculum will be offered in each semester. In the fall, two new intermediate courses will be offered:

THL336--Evil Meets Good

THL356--One Nation Under God?

In the spring, two different intermediate courses will be scheduled:

THL334--Love and Hate

THL352--Is God Green?

The pre-requisite requirement for intermediate courses will not be enforced in 2009-2010.

Full implementation

In 2010-2011, the new curriculum will be fully implemented. Intermediate courses tentatively scheduled in the fall are:

- THL320--Global Christianity
- THL356--One Nation Under God?
- THL357--Christianity and the Media

In the spring:

- THL335--God, Death, and Destiny
- THL334--Love and Hate
- THL305--Portraits of Jesus: Gospels ... Gnostics ... Islam

Pre-requisite requirements will be enforced.

Course schedule

Introductory courses will be offered at 10:00, 1:00 and 3:00-4:50 MW.

Intermediate courses will be offered at 9:00, noon, and 2:00.

On Tuesday evenings of the Spring semester, we will alternate between introductory (2010) and intermediate courses (2011).

Additional sections may be offered, if the budget allows.

Points of note

- Students should take the introductory course during their first year at Concordia.
- Church work students take THL203 and THL330 to meet their General Education requirements.
- The RLG100 Word in its World course offered by the Department of Continuing Studies does not meet the Theology requirement in General Education for traditional students.

Course Descriptions

THL100 The Biblical Heritage of Christianity 4 credits

An investigation of the sacred literature and basic theological expressions of the Christian tradition. The course emphasizes the covenant dealings of God with His people and the completion of the old covenant in God's new covenant in Jesus Christ. Students will read selected portions from each major division of the Old and New Testaments and will explore themes taken up by the ecumenical creeds. (THL100 is not open to students enrolled in or having taken THL203, THL206 or THL303)

THL206 New Testament 3 credits

An introduction to the historical context and literature of the New Testament. Students master the stories and teachings of early Christianity, practice the use of the tools of biblical interpretation, and grow in their ability to read texts of the Bible in their historical and literary contexts.

THL242 On Being a Christian 4 credits (2009-2010 only)

The question, "What is Christianity?" will be explored in light of American culture, which impacts both the questions people ask and the answers being offered. After surveying the teachings and history of Christianity, students will wrestle with basic questions of life, such as "Who am I?", "What is the meaning of life?", "How are we to make moral choices?", "Why is there suffering in the world?" with Christianity as the centerpiece for ultimate answers.

THL305 Portraits of Jesus: from the Gospels to the Gnostics and Islam 4 credits

Beginning with the four distinct presentations of Jesus in the Gospels of the New Testament, students also explore the portrayal of Jesus in classical writings, Jewish writings, the Nag Hammadi literature, the Christian apocrypha and Islamic literature. Students will gain skill and confidence in reading ancient texts

and understanding the historical, social, and religious trends that shaped the ancient world. (Prerequisite: THL100 or THL206)

THL320 Global Christianity 4 credits

The question “What is Christianity?” will be explored from a global perspective. After surveying the state of Christianity, its teachings, and practices, students will wrestle with basic questions of life and Christian vocation in the third millennium. A major component of the course will be study of worship practices of areas churches representing diverse cultural and immigrant groups. (Prerequisite: THL100 or THL206)

THL325 Christian Ethics for the Professional 4 credits

This course uncovers a foundation for the discussion of ethics and vocation in the chief elements of Christian doctrine and in the writings of major Lutheran theologians. Both ethical theory and personal values are explored. Students examine issues of accountability in business, sport, and politics through classroom discussions, and debates. In conversation with Christian themes, students develop a system for making ethical decisions in their personal lives as well as in public and employment situations. (Prerequisite: THL100 or THL206)

THL330 Our Living Faith 4 credits

A study of the content and effective application of the Christian understanding of creation, redemption, and sanctification; with an exploration of the biblical basis, the conceptual framework and the contemporary significance of the historic doctrines of the church. (Prerequisites: THL203 and THL206)

THL334 Love and Hate 4 credits

These two words bring forth a wide variety of actions, emotions, mind - sets, and frameworks for life. Students will spend a significant amount of time examining texts that speak of love and hate in the Bible. But the course will range widely to evaluate concepts of love and hate during various eras, in such diverse areas such as psychology, philosophy, history, literature, politics, and as conveyed in various media. The goal will be to understand various ways of addressing the subject of love and hate in secular and theological settings. (Prerequisite: THL100 or THL206)

THL335 God, Death, and Destiny 4 credits

An exploration of the diverse interpretations of death and ultimate human destiny in the major world religions, with particular attention to how these topics are addressed in the Christian Bible (the Old and New Testaments) and in the Christian tradition. (Prerequisite: THL100 or THL206)

THL336 Evil Meets Good 4 credits

From earliest days of human history, people have struggled with the significance of evil and wickedness, especially in a world created by a God who is all and only good. Events such as the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon have deepened the questions, especially for Americans. This course will probe this conversation through interaction with some of the classic expressions of humanity’s understanding of good and evil, in the process considering texts from both Christian and non - Christian viewpoints. It will encourage students to wrestle with some of the key biblical texts that deal with this question, spending significant time in particular with the book of Job. Students will endeavor to provide their own thoughtful and informed understanding of this classic struggle to understand why evil exists in this world – and how we are to live with that reality. (Prerequisite: THL100 or THL206)

THL351 Messiah and Muhammad 4 credits

This course takes a serious look at two billion - some adherent religions, Christianity and Islam. The “founders,” history, teachings and texts of the religions, as well as their contemporary practice will be

studied, compared and contrasted. Questions of peaceful and political coexistence in the 21st century will be considered. (Prerequisite: THL100 or THL206)

THL352 Is God Green? 4 credits

Drawing on the resources of Christianity and other religions, this course examines issues of ecology, sustainability and human health (broadly conceived). Students will explore the significance of Biblical themes of creation and new creation as they consider 21st century ethical choices for the care of the cosmos and the human community. (Prerequisite: THL100 or THL206)

THL356 One Nation under God? Christianity and Politics in America 4 credits

The claim that the United States is a Christian nation will be examined from the Puritan settlers through the rise of the religious right in the late twentieth century, with particular emphasis on the notion of covenant and the influence of Christian leaders in various reform movements (abolitionist, temperance, women's suffrage, civil rights). The question of "one nation under God" will be tested against the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms. (Prerequisite: THL100 or THL206)

THL357 Christianity and the Media in Contemporary Culture 4 credits

Christianity has an unmistakable interplay with various forms of the media. This course explores subtle and overt Christian themes in movies, music, magazines/newspapers, theater, the World Wide Web, and television. Students locate, watch, and critically analyze numerous media resources and discuss them in correlation to Christian themes in the Bible. (Prerequisite: THL100 or THL206)

Transfer Students

For a transfer course to meet general education requirements, the course must demonstrably meet the adopted learning outcomes. The General Education committee requests that advisors check transfer courses against these outcomes before submitting a petition. Students with introductory work elsewhere may meet the General Education requirements in Theology by taking two courses at the intermediate level (petition required).

Introductory

- Identify and analyze narratives, theological themes, and literary types of the biblical texts;
- Describe the geographical, historical, cultural, and religious milieu of the biblical eras;
- Relate the Bible to Christian teachings and practice, particularly as these have been conveyed in the Lutheran tradition; and
- Utilize the basic tools of the theological discipline.

Intermediate

- State the central place of the Gospel in the teaching, life, and witness of the Christian church;
- Practice a Lutheran hermeneutic centered in an understanding of the main interpretive principles of the Reformation;
- Articulate the significance of biblical and theological teachings for central issues of contemporary import;
- Describe the continuing interaction of religions and /or cultures; and
- Respect those with differing religious traditions and experiences while being faithful to personal beliefs and practices.