

Indiana Wesleyan University
John Wesley Honors College
HNR 325A: Theology Honors Research Tutorial
Rhythm and Christian Doctrine: Creation and the Trinity
Fall 2015
TTH 3:15-4:40

Lexi Eikelboom
Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow

Course description:

Christian theological doctrines include imaginative construction. We represent doctrines to ourselves through categories of human experience. Much of the debate in theology surrounds how doctrines ought to be represented if they are to be faithful to scripture, Christian tradition, and human experience. One important ingredient in these constructions is movement (e.g. what are the movements between God and creation, between members of the Trinity, between Jesus Christ and ourselves?). This research tutorial investigates the debates and conversations that make up the theological doctrines of Creation and the Trinity from the perspective of the movements that they involve, using the aesthetic category of rhythm as a guide.

The course therefore serves as both an introduction to historical and contemporary approaches to the Christian doctrines of Creation and the Trinity, and an opportunity to advance the conversation by bringing a new category into the dialogue. The research in this tutorial is therefore primarily conceptual, argumentative, and based on discussion, but there is also some opportunity for investigative research. The research tutorial is divided into three parts. It begins by introducing students to the category of rhythm as it is variously conceived of and applied in the arts, sociology, and philosophy through readings, discussion, and writing. The bulk of the research tutorial then focuses on analyzing the doctrine of Creation and the doctrine of the Trinity using the category of rhythm from the first section. The investigation will take place primarily through an analysis of texts on these doctrines in discussion and written assignments. The climax of the course is an interdisciplinary theological research paper on a topic of the student's choice that uses the skills of interdisciplinary analysis developed in the course.

The purposes of this research tutorial are for the student to acquire an in-depth understanding of the Christian doctrines of Creation and the Trinity and the debates and discussions surrounding them, to use rhythm as a lens to interrogate the movements implied in various articulations of the doctrines of Creation and Trinity, and to determine what the idea of rhythm contributes to our imaginative constructions of the doctrines of Creation and Trinity to help move these conversations forward. Moreover, the research tutorial also aims to help students to understand and participate in the practices surrounding interdisciplinary theological research.

Course Outcomes and Goals:

By participating in and completing the course requirements, students should achieve the following course outcomes and demonstrate growth in the following course goals –

Outcomes

We will be focusing on the following JWHC Learning Outcomes in class discussions, lectures, reading, and writing. Students should be able to:

1. Delineate the historical developments and cultural dynamics that have shaped the present age.
 - Students should be able to describe the main patristic, modern, and contemporary debates surrounding doctrines of Creation and the Trinity, including the positions and objectives of the theologians covered in the course and their understanding of rhythm or motion if given.
2. Evaluate texts, complex information, and contemporary issues charitably, contextually, analytically, and theologically.
 - Students will continue growing in their ability to read thoroughly and critically whether that is primary or second sources, including an ability to identify and articulate various conceptualizations of rhythm in poetry, sociology, and philosophy with their attendant functions and characteristics.
3. Express ideas effectively through written and verbal communication.
 - In particular, students will be able to produce cogent written and verbal arguments for how theologians who do not explicitly use the category of rhythm might approach its role and function in a way coherent with their theological systems and concerns.
4. Identify interdisciplinary research skills and apply them to a particular problem or question.

Goals

Students should develop:

1. Proficiency in an academic discipline oriented by the habits of interdisciplinary inquiry.
2. Understanding of the interpretive power and methodological limitations of academic disciplines for elucidating truth and engaging the fundamental questions of human existence.
3. Healthy lifestyle patterns, mindful of how cycles of eating, exercise, work, and rest contribute to physical and spiritual wholeness.
4. An awareness of how questions of art and aesthetics are inherently a part of the Christian pursuit of truth through doctrine.
5. An appreciation for the traditions of conversation that have shaped contemporary church doctrine.
6. An appreciation for how other disciplines inform the construction and articulation of doctrine.
7. Skills of patient and careful reading, conceptual analysis, and theological imagination.

Required Texts:

In order to remain within legal copyright limits, students must purchase the following texts:

Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time, and Everyday Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013)
ISBN: 9781472507167

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall; Temptation: Two Biblical Studies* (NY: Touchstone, 1997)
ISBN-10: 0684825872

Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (Crossroad Pub Co., 1997)
ISBN-10: 0824516273

All other texts are provided by the instructor on Learning Studio in the “doc sharing” section.

Course Requirements:

1. **Participation (150 pts):** The success of the research tutorial depends on students reading and research outside of class and the translation of that work into discussions of good quality. Participation means more than simply speaking in class. It involves quality contribution to discussion through listening, responding, questioning, expounding, illustrating, challenging etc. with and of the text, the instructor, and one another. This includes a no-screen policy in the classroom (except in cases of disability).
2. **Research Journal (150 pts total):** Research notes should be taken for all classes to assist in discussion. However, notes for ten of the texts of the student’s choice listed in the course outline should be uploaded to the student’s Learning Studio journal prior to the class for which the discussion is due to take place as well as **submitted in hard copy after class**. Please note that the research journal is not a personal reflection, but an academic response. The journal should be no more than 2 pages in length and should include
 - a) Summary of the author’s argument
 - b) For texts putting forward an approach to rhythm, notes should include characteristics of rhythm implied by the approach and a comparison to at least one other approach. For theological texts, notes should include suggestions for where rhythm might fit in with his/her account and what characteristics this rhythm would have.
 - c) Any questions or puzzles that emerge from your reading of the text as well as a suggestion for how these might be answered.
3. **Rhythm-identification paper (100 pts):** Students will write an essay identifying and analyzing a rhythm that occurs in either the subject of their major or in daily life. Students should give a definition of rhythm that explains why the identified pattern or motion is rhythmic, should analyze its characteristics, possibly comparing it to other similar or dissimilar patterns, and should identify and evaluate any physical, emotional, social, aesthetic, spiritual and/or theological effects of the rhythm. Papers are due on **October 6th**. On this day there will be no reading assignment and the paper will form the basis of your contribution to discussion. Please upload the paper to the Learning Studio Dropbox before class.

The essay should be between 1,500-2,000 words – no more and no less. This count includes references but not the bibliography. Citation style is Chicago Manual of Style. Please see the Jackson Library if you don't have your own copy. Preferred font size and style is Times New Roman, 12 point. See also:

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

4. **Summary papers (150 pts each, 300 pts total):** Similarly, students will write two summary papers of 1,500 - 2,000 words – one on the doctrine of Creation and one on the Trinity. These papers should choose a debate pertaining to each of the doctrines, summarize the positions of the theologians involved, evaluate their arguments, and make an argument for whether or not the category of rhythm adds anything to the debate. Style and formatting is the same as for assignment 3. These papers are due on the day of the summary classes: **November 10th** and **December 10th**. On these days there will be no reading assignments and the paper will form the basis of your contribution to discussion. Please upload the paper to the Learning Studio Dropbox before class.
5. **Final Interdisciplinary Research Paper (300 pts):** Finally, students will write a research paper of 2,500 - 3,000 words on a topic of their choice pertaining to theology and including sources from a second discipline, which requires research using texts not assigned as readings in class. Students may choose to write about rhythm and its relationship to and significance for a particular theological doctrine (either discussed or not discussed in the seminar), or may choose to write about the relationship between a different category from e.g. philosophy, the arts, or sciences and theology. Half of one class will be devoted to a tutorial on conducting interdisciplinary research using the Jackson Library given by a member of the library staff. A proposal for the paper is due on **October 27th**, followed by a discussion with the instructor (details to follow). The paper should
 - a) Summarize the way in which the category has been used in relation to theology thus far, citing sources as appropriate.
 - b) Make an argument for why the category is of theological significance using one or multiple doctrinal examples and/or examples of spiritual implications.

More information on writing a research paper will be given in class. Please note that a research paper requires that you allow enough time, not only for reading but also for familiarizing yourself with your sources and constructing your argument.

Course Outline

Sept 8 Syllabus and Introductions

Sept 10 **What is Rhythm?**
Rhythm and Poetry
Reading: Derek Attridge, *Moving Words*, ch. 5; Reuven Tsur, *Poetic Rhythm*,
Introduction & ch. 1

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| Sept 15 | Rhythm and Art Reading: Giorgio Agamben, <i>The Man Without Content</i> , ch. 9 |
| Sept 17 | Rhythm and Communication Reading: Peter Auer, <i>Language in Time</i> , ch. 1 & 3 |
| Sept 22 | Rhythm and Nature Reading: James Bunn, <i>Wave Forms</i> , Introduction |
| Sept 24 | Rhythm and Society Reading: Lefebvre, <i>Rhythmanalysis</i> ; pp. 15-65; Munro, <i>Different Drummers</i> , Introduction |
| Sept 29 | Rhythm and Philosophy Reading: Amittai Aviram, "The Meaning of Rhythm" |
| Oct 1 | Rhythm and Liturgy Reading: Catherine Pickstock, <i>After Writing</i> , ch. 5 |
| Oct 6 | Summary Class Rhythm-Identification Paper DUE |
| Oct 8 | Introductory Class on Rhythm and the Doctrine of Creation |
| Oct 13 | Ordering Metaphysical Layers Reading: Augustine, <i>De Musica</i> book VI |
| Oct 15 | Chaos and Process Reading: Catherine Keller, <i>The Face of the Deep</i> , chs. 1, 9 & 13 |
| Oct 20 | Instructor at conference: Class will meet in instructor's absence. Details to follow. Creation and Music Reading: J. R. R. Tolkien, <i>The Silmarillion</i> , pp. 3-12; Jeremy Begbie, <i>Theology, Music & Time</i> , pp. 29-44, ch. 3 |
| Oct 22 | Fall Break: No Class |
| Oct 27 | Creation and Dialectic Reading: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, <i>Creation and Fall</i> (pp. 9-107) Interdisciplinary Research Paper Proposal DUE |
| Oct 29 | Nature and Grace Reading: Karl Rahner, <i>Nature and Grace</i> , ch. 5; <i>Foundations of Christian Faith</i> , ch. 2 |
| Nov 3 | Creation and God's Sovereignty Reading: Kathryn Tanner, <i>God and Creation in Christian Theology</i> , ch. 3 |

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| Nov 5 | Summary Class First Summary Paper DUE |
| Nov 10 | Introductory Class: Rhythm and the Doctrine of the Trinity |
| Nov 12 | The Mind Analogy Reading: Augustine, <i>On The Trinity</i> , Books 8 & 9 |
| Nov 17 | Goodness, Love, and Motion Reading: Bonaventure, <i>The Mind's Road to God</i> , chs. 5 & 6 |
| Nov 19 | Thanksgiving weekend: No Class |
| Nov 24 | Immanent and Economic Trinity Reading: Karl Rahner, <i>The Trinity</i> , pp. TBA |
| Nov 26 | Repetition and Dialectic Reading: Karl Barth, <i>Church Dogmatics I/I</i> , pp. 295-383 |
| Dec 1 | <i>Kenosis, Plerosis</i> , and Inversion Reading: Hans Urs von Balthasar, <i>Mysterium Paschale</i> , chs. 1 & 2; Selections from <i>Theo-Drama</i> |
| Dec 3 | The Holy Spirit and the Human Encounter with the Trinity Reading: Sarah Coakley, <i>God, Sexuality, and the Self</i> , chs. 3 & 7 |
| Dec 8 | The Trinity and the Incarnation Reading: Kathryn Tanner, <i>Christ the Key</i> , ch. 4 |
| Dec 10 | Summary Class Second Summary Paper DUE |
| Dec 16 4:50pm | Interdisciplinary Research Paper DUE |

Appendix

Grading Rubric: Interdisciplinary Research Paper

Dr. Lexi Eikelboom

Student:

| CATEGORY | Above Standards | Meets Standards | Approaching Standards | Below Standards |
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| Focus or Thesis Statement (50 pts) | The thesis statement is specific, names the topic of the essay, outlines the main points to be discussed, and explains why the topic is important. | The thesis statement names the topic of the essay and the points to be discussed. | The thesis statement outlines some or all of the main points to be discussed but does not name the topic. | The thesis statement does not name the topic AND does not preview what will be discussed. |
| Support for Position (50 pts) | Includes 3 or more pieces of evidence (facts, arguments, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement. The writer anticipates the reader's concerns, biases or arguments and has provided at least 1 counter-argument. | Includes 3 or more pieces of evidence (facts, arguments, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement. | Includes 2 pieces of evidence (facts, arguments, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement. | Includes 1 or fewer pieces of evidence (facts, arguments, examples, real-life experiences). |
| Sequencing (50 pts) | Arguments and support are provided in a logical order that makes it easy and interesting to follow the author's train of thought. | Arguments and support are provided in a fairly logical order that makes it reasonably easy to follow the author's train of thought. | A few of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem a little confusing. | Many of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem very confusing. |
| Transitions (30 pts) | A variety of thoughtful transitions are used. They clearly show how ideas are connected | Transitions show how ideas are connected, but there is little variety | Some transitions work well, but some connections between ideas are fuzzy. | The transitions between ideas are unclear OR nonexistent. |
| Closing paragraph (30 pts) | The conclusion is strong and an effective restatement of the position leaves the reader solidly understanding the writer's position. Author mentions implications, contributions and directions for further research. | The conclusion is recognizable. The author's position is restated but there is no discussion of implications, contributions, or directions for further research. | The author briefly repeats position but also introduces new arguments, ideas, or evidence. | There is no conclusion - the paper just ends. |

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| Sources (50 pts) | All sources used for quotes and evidence are credible and cited correctly according to the Chicago Manual of Style. | All sources used for quotes and evidence are credible and most are cited correctly according to the Chicago Manual of Style. | Most sources used for quotes and evidence are credible and cited correctly. | Many sources are suspect (not credible) AND/OR are not cited correctly. |
| Sentence Structure (20 pts) | All sentences are well-constructed with varied structure. | Most sentences are well-constructed and there is some varied sentence structure in the essay. | Most sentences are well constructed, but there is no variation in structure. | Most sentences are not well-constructed or varied. |
| Grammar & Spelling (10 pts) | Author makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. | Author makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. | Author makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. | Author makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. |
| Capitalization & Punctuation (10 pts) | Author makes no errors in capitalization or punctuation, so the essay is exceptionally easy to read. | Author makes 1-2 errors in capitalization or punctuation, but the essay is still easy to read. | Author makes a few errors in capitalization and/or punctuation that catch the reader's attention and interrupt the flow. | Author makes several errors in capitalization and/or punctuation that catch the reader's attention and interrupt the flow. |