Course Description

“Eschatology,” the study of the “last things” and includes theological reflection upon the realities of death, judgment, heaven, hell, purgatory, and the consummation of all God’s creation in the life of God. This course will explore the nature and scope of Christian hope historically and systematically. In the first half of the course we will focus most intensely on the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, analyzing the beginnings, historical developments, and practical implications of belief in the resurrection and how this belief shapes various dimensions of Christian hope. We will then turn to classical accounts of heaven, hell, and purgatory and contemporary engagements with important eschatological questions. Central questions for the course include the following: how do we imagine the final state for which we hope? Why hope for the resurrection of the body and not just the immortality of the soul? How do the Church’s teachings on eschatology impact another aspects of Christian thought and the living of the Christian life?

Course goals

Students will be able to:

1) Describe the place of hope within the Christian faith and connect eschatological doctrine with other dogmatic topics
2) Discuss the doctrine of the resurrection in light of the dialectic of personal continuity and eschatological transformation
3) Explain how belief in the resurrection extends Christian hope beyond spiritualistic and individualistic imaginings of the afterlife
4) Describe classical and contemporary views on heaven, hell, and purgatory
5) Formulate an account of Christian hope in response to biblical and theological texts

A Pedagogical Principle

The construction of this course (the syllabus, assignments, classroom time, etc.) is grounded upon one basic pedagogical principle: “Learning results from what the student does and thinks and only from what the student does and thinks. The teacher can advance learning only by influencing what the student does to learn” (Herbert Simon). My goal in this course is to create the circumstances that are most likely to lead to significant learning for students. First and foremost here is the requirement of frequent, active engagement with the course material.

Course Requirements

Participation: This course is centered on an intensive 11-day period and thus discussion and various forms a group work will feature prominently. It is the expectation that students will come to each session having carefully prepared the readings and ready to contribute to the class discussion. In-class participation in 15% of the final grade.

Quizzes: Research into student learning has consistently shown that a higher frequency of quizzes, papers, or exams is strongly correlated with higher student achievement. Most days of the course
there will be a short quiz at the start of the afternoon session. Quizzes are worth 20% of the final grade.

**Midcourse Exam:** the midterm exam will be distributed on Saturday, December 31st. It is due by the end of the day Monday, January 2 and is worth 15% of the final grade.

**Take-Home Final Exam:** at the conclusion of the course, students will be given a take-home final exam. This exam must be returned via Sakai within two-weeks of the conclusion of the course (by January 20th) and is worth 30% of the final grade.

**Book Review/Research Paper:** each student will write a paper after the conclusion of the course that engages some theme related to eschatology or a theologian’s eschatology in greater depth. The details of this paper will be discussed in class and topics will be determined in consultation with the instructor prior to leaving Tucson. The final paper is worth 20% of the final grade.

**Course Policies**

Laptops and tablets are permitted, but should only be used for activities related to the class.

The Notre Dame Academic Code of Honor Pledge is observed in this course. “As a member of the Notre Dame community, I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty.” Any plagiarism on written assignments will result in an F for the assignment and possibly an F for the course. A description of plagiarism can be found in the Academic Code of Honor section IV.B.

If you have a documented disability that will require accommodation in this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services (http://disabilityservices.nd.edu/, 574–631–7157) for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs. I am eager to accommodate your needs but I will be unable to do so without communication from Disability Services.

**Required Texts**

3) A Bible

There is one recommended text for the course: Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* [ISBN: 9780231081276].

All other texts will be posted on Sakai [marked with an S on the syllabus]. These should be printed out and accessible in class.
Course Schedule

The normal course schedule will be as follows:

Morning
9:00-10:15: Morning Session #1
10:15-10:30: Break
10:30-11:45: Morning Session #2

Afternoon
2:00-2:15: Quiz
2:15-3:30: Afternoon Session
3:45-5:00: Office Hours

Evening
7:30-8:30: Evening Discussion

Day 1: Tuesday Evening, December 27: Introduction to Eschatology
Our first meeting will be from 7:00-8:30 on Tuesday evening. We will do introductions and discuss the overall goals and structure of the course. We will then begin with an “introduction to Christian eschatology.” In preparation, students should read the three short texts below.

Read: “Introduction to Christian Eschatology” [S]
Read: Augustine, Homily on 1 John [S]
Read: Karl Barth, Dogmatics in Outline, 153-155 [S]

Day 2: Wednesday, Dec 28: Eschatology in the Bible
[1] Hope in the Old Testament
   Read: Ps 71; 2 Samuel 7; Jeremiah 23:1-8; Ezekiel 37:1-14; Isaiah 56:1-8; 65:17-25; 2 Maccabees, 6:1-7:42; Daniel 7, 12
   Read: Robert Krieg, Treasures in the Field, 81-100 [S]
   Read: Lawrence Boadt, “A Brief History of the Old Testament” [S]


   Read: 1 Corinthians 15; Luke 24; John 20
   Read: Caroline Walker Bynum, 1-6 [S]
   Read: Pope Benedict XVI, Jesus of Nazareth, Vol 2: Holy Week, 272-277 [S]

[4] Evening Discussion
Day 3: Thursday, Dec 29: Platonism and Christian Hope

[1] Christian Gnosticism

Read: Plato, selections from the *Phaedo* [S]

[2] Irenaeus against Gnosticism

Read: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, bk. 5, chs. 1-3, 6, 14 [S]
Recommended: Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*, 21-58


Read: Gregory of Nyssa, selections from *On the Soul and the Resurrection* [S]

[4] Evening Discussion

Day 4: Friday, Dec 30: Augustine and Medieval Developments

[1] Augustine’s Synthesis

Read: *The City of God*, bk. 22, chapters 1-5, 11-21, 29-30 [S]
Recommended: Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*, 94-114


Read: *Summa Contra Gentiles* IV.79 [S]
Read: “Aristotle and Thomas on the Body/Soul Relation” [S]

[3] The Beatific Vision Controversy of the 1330s

Read: John Weakland, “Pope John XXII and the Beatific Vision Controversy,” 76-84 [S]
Read: Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus* [S]

[4] Evening Discussion
Day 5: Saturday, Dec 31: Contemporary Reflections on the Resurrection

[1] The Core Significance of the Resurrection of the Body
   Read: Karl Rahner, “The Resurrection of the Body” [S]
   Read: Joseph Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 301-310 [S]

[2] Resurrection as Reversal, Double Reversal, and Fulfillment
   Read: Brian Robinette, Grammars of Resurrection, 184-186, 199-204, 292-295, 364-369 [S]
   Read: 2 Maccabees 7; Acts 2, Revelation 21

[3] Afternoon discussion and distribution of midcourse exam

[4] No evening discussion

Day 6: Sunday, Jan 1
No class

Day 7: Monday, Jan 2: Classic Teaching on Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven [I]

[1] Divine Mercy and Justice
   Read: Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, I.21 and further selections [S]
   Read: John Paul II, Dives in Misericordia, §§1-8

   Read: The Catechism of the Catholic Church (988-1065) [S]

[3] Hell
   Read: Dante Alighieri, Inferno, Cantos 1-7, 11, 32-34

[4] Evening Discussion

Day 8: Tuesday, Jan 3: Classic Teaching on Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven [II]

[1] Purgatory
   Read: Dante Alighieri, Purgatory, Cantos 1-2, 4 (lines 130-139), 9-12, 25, 27, 30

[2] Purgatory II
   Read: Catherine of Genoa, Purgation and Purgatory [S]

[3] Heaven
   Read: Dante Alighieri, Paradise, Cantos, 1, 10-13, 23-26, 32-34
   Recommended: Caroline Walker Bynum, The Resurrection of the Body, 291-305

[4] Evening Discussion
Day 9: Wednesday, Jan 4: Interpreting the Classic Teaching Today
[1] A Bus-Trip to Heaven [I]
  Read: C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*, 1-87

  Read: C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*, 89-146

[3] Friendship with God

[4] Evening Discussion

Day 10: Thursday, Jan 5: Further Questions in Contemporary Eschatology
[1] Time and Eternity
  Read: Karl Rahner, “The Life of the Dead” and “The Intermediate State” [S]

[2] Hope for Universal Salvation?
  Read: Readings TBD

[3] Hope and History
  Read: Oscar Romero, “The Easter Church,” 52-62 [S]

[4] Evening Discussion

Day 11: Friday, Jan 6: A Synthesis of Christian Hope
[1] Hope in History [cont.]
  Read: Oscar Romero, “The Church, the Body of Christ in History,” 63-84 [S]
  Read: “Last Homily of Oscar Romero,” 191-193 [S]
  Read: Scott Wright, *Oscar Romero and the Communion of Saints*, 127-137 [S]

  Read: Pope Benedict XVI, *Spes Salvi*, 1-31 (selections)

  Read: Pope Benedict XVI, *Spes Salvi*, 32-50 (selections)

[4] Final Evening Discussion and Distribution of Final Exam