

LAW & THEOLOGY

FALL 2020

JOHNNY REX BUCKLES

PROFESSOR OF LAW

CLASSROOM: VIRTUAL VIA ZOOM

TUESDAY, THURSDAY: 10:30-11:50 A.M.

I. Purpose of Course.

The goals of this course are (i) to introduce students to selected topics in the study of theology that conceptually parallel or contribute to specific subjects in law and legal philosophy; (ii) to expand students' understanding of how theological thought can inform legal inquiry, and how legal thought can inform theological inquiry; and (iii) to increase students' awareness and enhance students' comprehension of the variety of historical and contemporary approaches to resolving problems that have arisen in theological and legal thought.

II. Required Materials.

A. **Textbook:**

Alister E. McGrath, CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTION (6th ed. 2017) (hereinafter "McGrath").

B. **Supplemental Materials:**

A weekly packet of supplemental materials (generally designated by the number of the week of this seminar) will be distributed electronically.

III. Topics to Be Discussed in this Course, Reading Assignments Corresponding thereto, and Dates thereof (Subject to Revision by the Professor).

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPICS</u>	<u>READING ASSIGNMENT</u>
8/25	Prolegomena	McGrath at 83-103; Supplemental Materials
8/27	Natural Law: Part I	Supplemental Materials
9/1	Natural Law: Part II	Supplemental Materials
9/3	Trinitarianism	McGrath at 299-326
9/8	Analogical Trinitarianism	Supplemental Materials
9/10	Interpretation: Part I	Supplemental Materials
9/15	Interpretation: Part II	Supplemental Materials

9/17	Culpability: Part I	McGrath at 329-332; Supplemental Materials
9/22	Culpability: Part II	Supplemental Materials
9/24	Causation: Part I	Supplemental Materials
9/29	Causation: Part II	Supplemental Materials; McGrath at 202-206, 344-350
10/1	Justification, Excuse, and Pardon: Part I	Supplemental Materials
10/6	Justification, Excuse, and Pardon: Part II	McGrath at 332-344, 248-264, 277-279
10/8	Church and State: Part I	Supplemental Materials
10/13	Church and State: Part II	Supplemental Materials
10/15	Church and State: Part III	Supplemental Materials
10/20	Church and State: Part IV	Supplemental Materials
10/22	Theology and Public Policy: Part I	Supplemental Materials
10/27	Theology and Public Policy: Part II	Supplemental Materials
10/29	The Creator and the Created: Part I	McGrath at 194-202, 350-353; Supplemental Materials
11/3	The Creator and the Created: Part II	Supplemental Materials
11/5	The Creator and the Created: Part III	Supplemental Materials
11/10	Human Life and Dignity: Part I	Supplemental Materials
11/12	Human Life and Dignity: Part II	Supplemental Materials
11/17	Marriage: Part I	Supplemental Materials
11/19	Marriage: Part II	Supplemental Materials
11/24	Marriage: Part III	Supplemental Materials

12/1	Conclusion and Review
12/10	Exam (9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.)

IV. Reading Assignments.

Students must read the assigned portions of the required textbook and supplemental materials in accordance with this syllabus (unless modified by the professor). Each reading assignment must be completed by the beginning of class on the date corresponding to the assignment in this syllabus. In addition to these required materials, students occasionally may receive photocopied or electronic materials to supplement material otherwise assigned. Students are responsible for reading such materials as assigned. Each student should read (*not skim*) the material intelligently, but at a brisk pace.

V. Class Participation and Professionalism.

Students must participate sufficiently and professionally in class (as determined by the professor) in order to pass this course. Students should expect to participate significantly every day of class.

In this course, all students are welcome and must be respected regardless of socio-economic status, age, race, ethnicity, disability, religion, national or regional origin, veteran’s status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, political affiliation or preference, marital status, family background, educational background, occupational history, and any other physical, mental, or social attribute not previously identified.

One aspect of respect is referring to people in a dignified, considerate manner. The use of surnames is traditional in law school, and I have generally followed this tradition. However, some students may prefer to be identified by another name, such as a first name. Please tell me how you prefer to be identified (e.g., by your first, middle or last name or by an appropriate nickname), and also tell me your preferred title (e.g., Mr., Ms., Rev., Dr., etc.) when invoking your surname. I prefer “Professor Buckles.” If you do not express a preference, I will refer to you by your surname and employ a default title.

The professionalism expected of students includes (1) **respect** for every class member at all times; (2) **advance, diligent preparation** for every class unless you notify me in advance of a legitimate reason for not being prepared adequately; (3) **seriously striving** to learn the material as it is presented in class, even if that requires you to schedule office visits and/or participate in a study group; and (4) **adhering to the requirements for synchronous distance education** in section XII of this syllabus.

GROUND FOR FAILING THE PROFESSIONALISM REQUIREMENT OF THIS COURSE INCLUDE USE DURING CLASS OF ANY TECHNOLOGY FOR PURPOSES OTHER THAN THOSE DIRECTLY RELATED TO LEARNING THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THIS COURSE. EXAMPLES OF UNAUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO, SURFING THE WEB FOR PERSONAL REASONS, ROUTINELY CHECKING OR SENDING TEXT MESSAGES, AND VIEWING ONLINE CONTENT UNRELATED TO THIS COURSE.

VI. Assessment.

Assuming adequate class participation (see above), a student's grade will be based upon the student's performance on the final exam, to be administered as scheduled by the University of Houston Law Center (UHLC). The final exam is open-textbook, open-assigned materials, open-notes, and open-outline (provided that the outline is produced primarily by the student using it, acting alone or in collaboration with other students enrolled in this section of the course).

VII. Office Hours.

Unless otherwise announced, office hours will be by Zoom on Tuesdays, 4:00 - 4:30 p.m., and other times by appointment. **Students attending office hours must follow the same protocols required for synchronous distance education in class (see section XII).** Office hours will not be recorded.

VIII. Counseling and Psychological Services.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to the demands of a professional program, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/caps) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the "Let's Talk" program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html

The Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program ("TLAP") also supports law students who are dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and other mental health problems. You can reach TLAP at any time at 1-800-343-8527. TLAP's website includes a page with links to sources about mental health that are of interest to law students: <https://www.tlaphelps.org/lawstudents>.

IX. Anti-Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policies.

UHLC and the University of Houston are committed to maintaining and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from discrimination and sexual misconduct. If you have experienced an incident of discrimination or sexual misconduct, a confidential reporting process is available to you. For more information, please refer to the University System's Anti-Discrimination Policy SAM 01.D.07 and Sexual Misconduct Policy SAM 01.D.08. Please be aware that under the sexual misconduct policy, SAM 01.D.08, faculty and other University employees are required to report to the University any information received regarding sexual misconduct as defined in the policy. Due to this reporting requirement, faculty members and other employees are not a confidential resource. The reporting obligations under the sexual misconduct policy extends to alleged conduct by University employees and students.

X. Learning Outcomes.

Through this course, students should (i) learn the most important elements of the selected topics in the study of theology identified in this syllabus that conceptually parallel or contribute to specific subjects in law and legal philosophy; (ii) learn how to apply theological thought to inform legal inquiry, and how to apply legal thought to inform theological inquiry; and (iii) enhance their awareness and comprehension of the variety of historical and contemporary approaches to resolving

problems that have arisen in theological and legal thought.

XI. Student Handbook and Compliance with Honor Code.

Each student is responsible for complying with the requirements governing students in the University of Houston Law Center's student handbook, including the Honor Code.

XII. Synchronous Distance Education Requirements.

Students will participate in this course through synchronous distance education via Zoom videoconferencing. Each student must meet the following requirements:

- (i) Be connected to the internet videoconference when class starts;
- (ii) Use a computer with a working video camera **with the video function always turned on during class** and with quality audio capability; joining by audio only will be treated as an absence (you may need an external mic or headset for sufficient audio quality);
- (iii) Do not multitask; you must not be distracted by traveling, texting, checking email, or engaging in other activities when you join the internet videoconference;
- (iv) Do not join the class internet videoconference from a phone except in an emergency;
- (v) Listen closely and speak clearly and audibly;
- (vi) Identify yourself with your class roll name in the internet videoconferencing software;
- (vii) Present yourself professionally in the video stream (e.g., dress appropriately, do not eat, remain stationary except when you must excuse yourself for a brief personal break, etc.).
- (viii) Keep your audio function muted when you are not speaking in class.

XIII. Class Recordings.

Class sessions will be recorded to allow students to stream the recorded sessions for review or to enable students who missed a class to hear the class presentation. Any recordings created will be deleted and destroyed shortly after the final exam for the class. Your contributions to class discussion, whether voluntary or while on call, will be included in the recording. Your continued registration in this class constitutes your acquiescence to all such recording for the purposes described above.