

LAW & THEOLOGY

FALL 2021

JOHNNY REX BUCKLES

PROFESSOR OF LAW

CLASSROOM: 215, TU2

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>
8/24	Prolegomena	McGrath at 83-103; Supplemental Materials
8/26	Natural Law: Part I	Supplemental Materials
8/31	Natural Law: Part II	Supplemental Materials
9/2	Trinitarianism	McGrath at 299-326
9/7	Analogical Trinitarianism	Supplemental Materials
9/9	Interpretation: Part I	Supplemental Materials
9/14	Interpretation: Part II	Supplemental Materials

9/16	Culpability: Part I	McGrath at 329-332; Supplemental Materials
9/21	Culpability: Part II	Supplemental Materials
9/23	Causation: Part I	Supplemental Materials
9/28	Causation: Part II	Supplemental Materials; McGrath at 202-206, 344-350
9/30	Justification, Excuse, and Pardon: Part I	Supplemental Materials
10/5	Justification, Excuse, and Pardon: Part II	McGrath at 332-344, 248-264, 277-279
10/7	Church and State: Part I	Supplemental Materials
10/12	Church and State: Part II	Supplemental Materials
10/14	Church and State: Part III	Supplemental Materials
10/19	Church and State: Part IV	Supplemental Materials
10/21	Theology and Public Policy: Part I	Supplemental Materials
10/26	Theology and Public Policy: Part II	Supplemental Materials
10/28	The Creator and the Created: Part I	McGrath at 194-202, 350-353; Supplemental Materials
11/2	The Creator and the Created: Part II	Supplemental Materials
11/4	The Creator and the Created: Part III	Supplemental Materials
11/9	Human Life and Dignity: Part I	Supplemental Materials
11/11	Human Life and Dignity: Part II	Supplemental Materials
11/16	Marriage: Part I	Supplemental Materials
11/18	Marriage: Part II	Supplemental Materials
11/23	Marriage: Part III	Supplemental Materials

11/30	Make Up Day	N/A
12/2	Review	N/A
12/14	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. The professor may alter the chronology and/or content of topics (and portions thereof) appearing in the syllabus from time to time, as announced in class.

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. 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 first name.

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 Thursdays, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. (Room 218 TUII), and other times by appointment. The professor will follow a literal "open door" policy when a student is in his office – no exceptions.

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 Law Center's student handbook. With respect to the attendance policy, each student must record his or her class attendance and report to the professor concerning the same.

XII. Synchronous Distance Education Requirements.

A. Mode of Instruction.

This class is offered in HyFlex mode within the meaning of the guidance promulgated by the University of Houston (UH) and to the maximum degree permitted under that guidance and the UHLC attendance policy. Under this mode of instruction, students may participate in this course through synchronous distance education via Zoom videoconferencing as necessary for their safety and the safety of others. Students may also participate in this course in person as long as they seat themselves safely distanced from other students and follow UH guidance related to COVID-19 safety. Attendance in person at times does not foreclose virtual attendance at other times, and vice versa. Those who attend in person must comply with UH mandates, must comply with seating requirements imposed by the professor, and are expected to follow other standard health and safety measures.

B. Requirements for Virtual Participation.

For any student using the internet videoconferencing capability for synchronous distance education, each student must meet the following requirements:

- a. Be connected to the internet videoconference when class starts;
- b. 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);
- c. Do not multitask; you must not be distracted by traveling, texting, checking email, or engaging in other activities when you join the internet videoconference;
- d. Do not join the class internet videoconference from a phone except in an emergency;
- e. Listen closely and speak clearly and audibly;
- f. Identify yourself with your class roll name in the internet videoconferencing software;
- g. 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.).
- h. Keep your audio function muted when you are not speaking in class.

C. Zoom Link.

The Zoom link for attending this course virtually will be provided by email to students.

XIII. Recording of Class.

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the [Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with *anyone* without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

Normally, the professor will record class sessions to allow students to review the class presentation. Any recordings created will be deleted and destroyed shortly after the final exam for the class. Your contributions to class discussion will be included in the recording. Your continued registration in this class constitutes your acquiescence to all such recording for the purposes described above.

XIV. Syllabus Changes.

Due to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through email.

XV. Email Communications.

Email communications related to this course will be sent to your Exchange email account which each University of Houston student receives.

XVI. UH COVID-19-Related and Other Required Syllabus Language.

A. Face Covering Policy.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the University strongly encourages everyone (vaccinated or not) to wear face coverings indoors on campus including classrooms for both faculty and students.

B. Presence in Class.

Your presence in class each session means that you:

- Are NOT exhibiting any [Coronavirus Symptoms](#) that makes you think that you may have COVID-19
- Have NOT tested positive or been diagnosed for COVID-19
- Have NOT knowingly been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or suspected/presumed COVID-19

If you are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms that are not clearly related to a pre-existing medical condition, do not come to class. Please see [Student Protocols](#) for what to do if you experience symptoms and [Potential Exposure to Coronavirus](#) for what to do if you have potentially been exposed to COVID-19. Consult the (select: [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) or [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#)) for information regarding excused absences due to

medical reasons.

C. COVID-19 Information.

Students are encouraged to visit the University's [COVID-19](#) website for important information including on-campus testing, vaccines, diagnosis and symptom protocols, campus cleaning and safety practices, report forms, and positive cases on campus. Please check the website throughout the semester for updates.

D. Vaccinations.

Data suggests that vaccination remains the best intervention for reliable protection against COVID-19. Students are asked to familiarize themselves with pertinent [vaccine information](#), consult with their health care provider. The University strongly encourages all students, faculty and staff to be vaccinated.

E. Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids.

The University of Houston complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for disabled students. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, UH strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact [the Justin Dart Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#) (formerly the Justin Dart, Jr. Center for Students with DisABILITIES).