

Theologians for These Times

Sundays, 9:15 a.m., in the Assembly Room, *unless otherwise noted*

In its own time, every generation looks for the voices that speak powerfully through their responses to realities, struggles, challenges, and issues of import. Join us in examining the life, times and meaning-making of four theologians who spanned the century leading up to today. Come and allow the witness and work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Russel Botman, Ignacio Ellacuría, and Reinhold Niebuhr inform how our Christian witness might address the theological dissonance in our world.

Oct
7

Bonhoeffer and the Question of Compromise (1906-1945)

Mark Edwards

Theology has ideals of divine perfection. Politics has real world problems. What's a disciple to do when Christ isn't on the ballot? Working from both Bonhoeffer's systematized Ethics and his spontaneous reflections from prison, we'll address what he might teach us about confronting political and theological compromise.

Mark Edwards joined Nassau as Director of Youth Ministries in September of 2013. He is a lifelong Presbyterian and holds a PhD (Philosophy and Theology, 2013) from Princeton Theological Seminary. He has been an Assistant of Instruction at Princeton University, and is currently an adjunct professor at The College of New Jersey. Mark is married to Janine and they have two children.



Oct
14

Contemporary Theologian Russel Botman (1953-2014)

Dirk Smit

The South African theologian Russel Botman was internationally known for his contributions to public life - as a student leader against apartheid, an influential minister, as academic theologian, as President of the South African Council of Churches, as Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University, and as leading voice in tertiary education in Africa. His family participated in the life of this congregation when Botman was a Fellow at The Center of Theological Inquiry. One of the founding figures in what is today known as "public theology," he received the Kuyper Prize in 2014 for his contributions to public life. This class will focus on how faith informed and inspired Botman's own life of public service - in his own words, his "project of hope."



Dirk Smit is the Rimmer and Ruth De Vries Professor of Reformed Theology and Public Life at Princeton Theological Seminary. Smit came to Princeton from South Africa, where he taught systematic theology at the universities of Western Cape and Stellenbosch, was involved in ecumenical church activities and contributed to public life with both popular and academic writing.

In-depth Bible Study with George Hunsinger

Colossians

Sundays, 9:15 a.m.
Maclean House (Garden Entrance)

George Hunsinger leads a verse-by-verse examination of the Letter to the Colossians.

Oct
21

Ignacio Ellacuría: Radical Witness to the Kingdom (1930-1988)

Francisco Pelaez-Diaz

Why in some instances does witnessing to the Kingdom of God lead to the ultimate sacrifice? How does this sacrifice in some cases become a life-giving inspiration for future generations? The life and work of the Spanish-Salvadoran philosopher and theologian



Ignacio Ellacuría represents a clear example of this kind of inspiration for a deep commitment to the work of justice, freedom and the liberation from the social and political conditions that inflict suffering and death. Join Francisco Pelaez-Diaz to learn more about this Latin American theologian, who remains unfamiliar to many in the US, and explore together the answers to these questions.

Francisco Pelaez-Diaz is a PhD candidate in Religion and Society at Princeton Theological Seminary. Francisco is originally from Mexico and has worked as an ordained pastor among immigrants in a multiethnic/multiracial PC(USA) congregation in Dayton, Ohio. His dissertation –in progress– is titled “Migration as a Way of the Cross: Ignacio Ellacuría’s Notion of ‘Crucified Peoples’ for Theological Reframing of Central American Migrant Experience.”

Oct
28

Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971)

Peter Paris & Daniel Migliore

The subject of a high-profile documentary in 2017, *An American Conscience: The Reinhold Niebuhr Story*, and dubbed by Religion & Politics as “Washington’s Favorite Theologian,” Reinhold Niebuhr was respected by the political left and right. A pastor (Evangelical and Reformed Church) before he was a celebrated theologian and foreign policy expert, Niebuhr wrote prolifically about the self, morality, ethics, politics, the public square, justice and so much more. Join us for a conversation about theologian Reinhold Niebuhr’s legacy and its relevance for our times.

Peter Paris is Elmer G. Homrighausen Professor of Christian Social Ethics Emeritus at Princeton Theological Seminary. Paris is a world-renowned scholar, honored most recently by a collection in his honor, *Ethics That Matters: African, Caribbean, and African American Sources*. While in Princeton he also worked closely with the Princeton University African American Studies



Program. He has also been a Visiting Professor in Harvard University Divinity School, Union Theological Seminary (New York), and Trinity Theological College (Legon, Ghana).

Daniel Migliore is Professor Emeritus of Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. An ordained Presbyterian minister, whose broad interests include systematic theology, Karl Barth, the Trinity, and Christology. During his career he taught courses on Christology, the doctrine of God, the theology of Karl Barth, Barth’s Church Dogmatics, and an introductory course on the doctrines and practices of Christian faith. His book *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* has been a standard through three editions. Dan is a “clergy member” of Nassau.



Oct
14

Oct
21

Oct
28

Inquirer’s Class for Prospective Members

9:15 a.m., Niles Chapel

Come explore the meaning of Christian faith, church membership, and the foundations of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Contact Lauren McFeaters (lauren@nassauchurch.org, 609-924-0103 x102)

Finding Faith in Literature

Sundays, 9:15 a.m., in the Music Room, *unless otherwise noted*

Recognizing biblical allusions and picking up on theological nuances in literature can deepen and enrich novels, poetry, classics, and every kind of writing. Take a fresh look at four authors and their works – you may want to start over or pick them up for the first time.

Oct
7

Shakespeare and the Bible

Rhodri Lewis

Explore Shakespeare's relationships with, and use of, the text of sacred scripture. Writing before the publication of the King James Version, he relied for the most part on the so-called Geneva Bible, though he occasionally shows awareness of the Vulgate's Latin. Rather than turning to scripture as a source of truth or meaning as earlier dramatists did, particularly those who wrote the Mystery Plays to which the young Shakespeare was exposed, we find him treating it almost as a source like any other. He thereby explores the tensions about the authority and significance of scripture that dominated so much of English and European public life in the century after Luther posted his 95 theses.

Rhodri Lewis is Senior Research Scholar in English and Comparative Literature at Princeton University, having recently moved from a Professorship of English Literature at the University of Oxford. He remains an Honorary Fellow of St Hugh's College, Oxford. His most recent publication is *Hamlet and the Vision of Darkness* (Princeton UP, 2017), and he is currently at work on two main projects: a short book on Christopher Marlowe, and something much longer on the development of satirical writing between 1500 and 1750.



Oct
14

Renewal and Rebirth in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*

Deborah Nord

Austen's final completed novel, *Persuasion*, published posthumously in 1918, tells the story of spinster Anne Elliot's second chance at happiness with the same man, Captain Wentworth, she had rejected years before. But marriage is never just marriage in Jane Austen. This hugely satisfying love story is also a tale of spiritual renewal and even bodily rejuvenation, and it imagines, at the same time, a kind of renewal and reform of British social relations. Longing for rebirth, for escape from her autumnal and dimming life, Anne Elliot also enacts an escape from outmoded notions of privilege, class, and marriage.

Deborah Epstein Nord is Woodrow Wilson Professor of Literature at Princeton. A specialist in Victorian literature and culture, her latest books are *Gypsies and the British Imagination, 1807-1930* (2006), and, with Maria DiBattista, *At Home in the World: Women Writers and Public Life, from Austen to the Present* (2017). She is currently working on a project about the relationship between 19th-century fiction and the visual arts.



Oct
21

Milton's *Paradise Lost*

Russell Leo

In *Paradise Lost* John Milton gives an exciting poetic account of the fallen angels, the Creation of humanity (to say nothing of the rest of the universe), and life in Eden before and immediately after the Fall. But to what extent is it Christian, at least in a way that we recognize today? And to what political ends does Milton write? These are some of the abiding questions you will hear addressed in this introduction to *Paradise Lost* and its milieu.

Russell Leo, originally from Rochester, New York, received his PhD from the Program in Literature at Duke University where he studied Reformation poetics and their impact across seventeenth century Europe. Leo came to Princeton University in 2009, first, as a postdoctoral fellow at the Society of Fellows and, after 2012, as an Assistant Professor in the English Department.



Oct
28

Harry Potter Belongs at Church

Debbie Hough

J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series is easily the best-selling and most popular literature series in recent memory. These books are a "portkey" from Harry's world into the world of the Bible, because they are jam-packed with Christian symbols, values, themes, theological ideas and much more. You are invited to put on your spectacles of faith (if they are shaped like Harry's even better!) and take a look into the wealth of ideas shared in the seven volumes for fans of all ages.

Debbie Hough recently retired as the Director of Christian Education at Derry Presbyterian Church in Hershey, Pennsylvania. She is a graduate of the Presbyterian School of Christian Education and Princeton Theological Seminary. She is a Harry Potter mini-geek, her favorite character is Professor McGonagall, she's a Gryffindor and her animagus is a buzzard. And she believes all of this can work together!



SPECIAL NOON SESSION

Oct
28

Slavery, Presbyterians, and Princeton

Jim Moorhead

12:15 p.m., Assembly Room

Examine how Presbyterians addressed slavery in the pre-Civil War period. Contrary to what one might suppose, the institution was not confined solely to the South. Slavery still existed in New Jersey, though with dwindling numbers of people in bondage in the early 1800s. Explore Presbyterian responses to slavery here in Princeton--at the college, the seminary, First Church (predecessor of Nassau), and Witherspoon Street Church.

Jim Moorhead is professor emeritus of American Church history at Princeton Seminary. He became engaged in research on this topic when he wrote two short essays for the university's online Princeton and Slavery Project, and when he participated in the task force conducting an historical audit of Princeton Seminary's relationship with slavery. Jim, his wife Cynthia, and their three children are long-time participants in the life of the Nassau congregation.



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Thinking about November... FAITH AND ACTIVISM

Nassau Presbyterian Church
61 Nassau Street, Princeton, NJ
nassauchurch.org