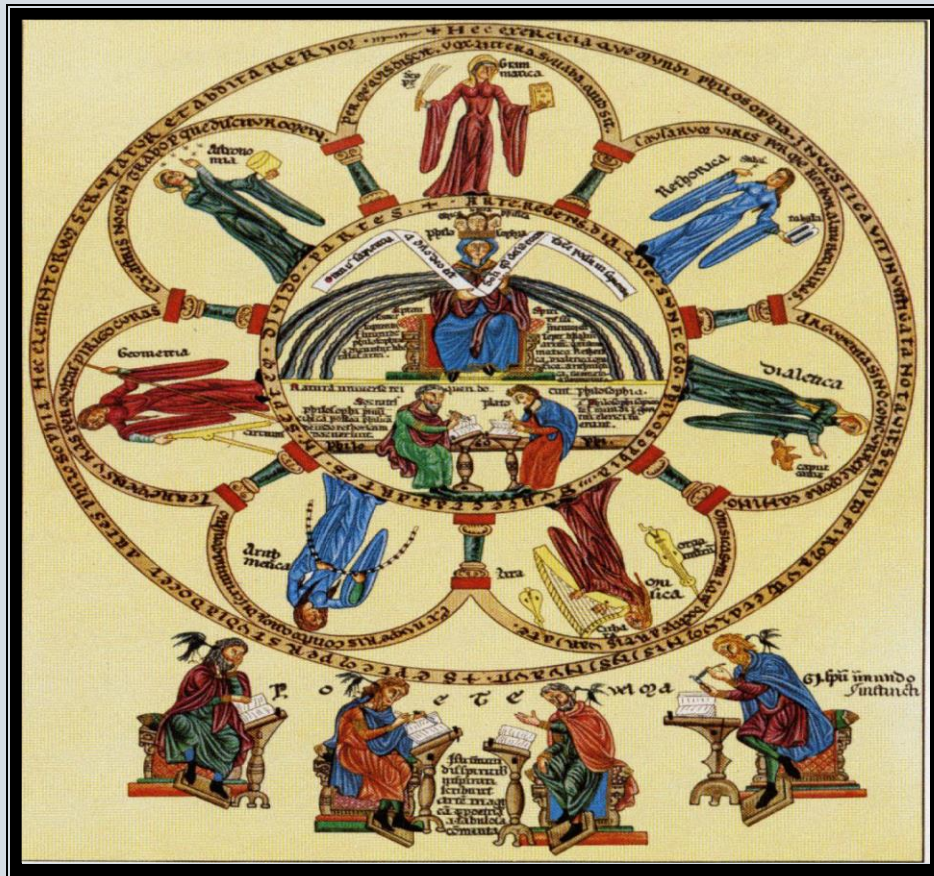


Introduction to Christian Theology

Fall 2021 / REL 20400

DR. THOMAS RYBA



For any student beginning the study of a *science*, the most fundamental questions are those which reveal that science's aims, methods, and objects of study. It is the purpose of this course to provide an *elementary* (but comprehensive) answer to the question "What is Christian Theology?" The assumption, here, is that only after we have engaged in a wide-ranging survey of the history, sources, varieties, methods, themes, and structures of Christian theology will our inquiry lead us to something like an adequate idea of its nature. Along the way, we will encounter the most intriguing personalities, arguments, heresies, and ideas--all of which have made Christian Theology what it is today.

Among the guiding questions in this class will be: How do theologians think? What do theologians argue about? How has theology developed? What are the important theological ideas? What is religious experience? How do we know anything about God? Can we say anything meaningful about God? Can we prove the existence of God? Does God have gender? Can God suffer? What is the Trinity? What is the incarnation of God? What are the Christian ideas of salvation? Do we have freedom of will? What is the Christian church? What is grace? What are sacraments?

Course Readings: Alister E. McGrath. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*; Peter C. Hodgson (Editor) & Robert H. King (Editor). *Readings in Christian Theology*; additional readings, usually each week, posted on BRIGHTSPACE.

Course Requirements: (1) a take-home essay midterm (33%), (2) a take-home essay final (33%), (3) a book report (33%), and (4) thoughtful participation in class.