

**THEO3235/5952 Special Topics on Theological Studies I:
Modern Catholic Thought**

Teacher: Antoine Ren

Email: antoineren@cuhk.edu.hk

Language: Putonghua/English

Time: Thu. 9:30 am–12:15 pm

Venue: Lee Shau Kee Architecture Building G04

1. Course Description

The Second Vatican Council was undoubtedly the most revolutionary ecumenical council in the history of the Catholic Church. Its reforms have impacted every aspect of the Church's life. Central to Vatican II was the principle of "aggiornamento"—opening the Church to the modern world. The Council's reforms emerged from the Church's struggle to confront the challenges posed by modernity, a struggle primarily manifested in the conflict between modernists and anti-modernists. This course will trace the development of major Catholic theological thought since the modernist era, with a particular focus on the period from Vatican II to the present day. It will analyze contemporary Catholic theologians' ideas on key theological themes and explore relevant theological approaches, such as liberation theology, *communio* theology, and ecological theology. Each theme will also be considered from an ecumenical perspective.

2. Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- 1) understand how Catholic theology developed before and after the Second Vatican Council,
- 2) the position of major modern Catholic theological schools,
- 3) and the relevance of modern Catholic theology from an ecumenical perspective.

3. Course Syllabus

Week 1	Jan. 8	General Introduction: What Is Theology and How to Do Theology?
Week 2	Jan. 15	From Modernism to the Second Vatican Council
Week 3	Jan. 22	From <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> to New Theological Anthropologies
Week 4	Jan. 29	Sin and Salvation or Sinful Structure and Liberation? From Soteriology to Liberation Theology

Week 5	Feb. 5	<i>Nostra Aetate</i> and the Emergence of the Theology of Religions: From “Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus” to Inclusive Salvation
Week 6	Feb. 12	The Theology of Revelation: From God’s Self-Communication (<i>Dei Verbum</i> , Karl Rahner) to God’s Self-Effacement (Christoph Theobald)
Week 7	Feb. 26	The Renewal of Trinitarian Theology: The Unity of the Economic and Immanent Trinity
Week 8	Mar. 12	Christology from Below: Jesus — The Man Who Came from God?
Week 9	Mar. 19	Christology from Above: Christ—God Who Came to Humanity?
Week 10	Mar. 26	The Church’s Nature: From God’s People to Ecumenical Synodality
Week 11	Apr. 2	The Church’s Mission: From Sacrament of Salvation to Sacrament of Encounter
Week 12	Apr. 9	From Mariology to the Theology of Mary: An Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Perspective
Week 13	Apr. 16	From Creation to the End Times: Ecological, Political, and Ecumenical Eschatology

4. Course Components

Lecture, discussion, book chapter report, and term reflection paper.

5. Assessment

1. Class Participation: 20%

Attendance and active participation in discussions.

2. Book chapter report, book chapter presentation, or facilitating a discussion on questions arising from the book chapter (30%): The choice among these options will be determined based on the number of students.

Students will divide the chapters of Karl Rahner’s book *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, translated by William V. Dych (New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1987).

1) Book Chapter Presentation in Class (preferred option), starting from the third week: Each presentation should last 10 minutes, followed by a discussion. The presentation should include the following elements: a. the theological problem or question addressed

by the author; b. his principal thesis; c. his arguments presented; d. your own comments, including critique, appreciation, and how Rahner’s theology is relevant to your life or faith; e. questions for discussion.

2) Book Chapter Report: 1,500–2,500 Chinese characters or 1,000–1,500 English words (due: Mar. 12).

The chapter report should include the same elements as those mentioned above.

3) Facilitating discussion on questions arising from the book chapter in class: Pose 2–3 theological questions related to the chapter and facilitate a 15-minute discussion.

3. Term Paper Proposal 10 % (Due: Mar. 26)

The proposal outline should contain the following:

- 1) Title
- 2) Problematized motivation (what problem motivates you to undertake this research?)
- 3) Research question (what questions can guide your research to solve this problem?)
- 4) Steps (paper outline) for answering this question.
- 5) Hypothesis.
- 6) Bibliography (references).

4. Term Paper 40 %: 5000–6000 Chinese characters or 3000–3500 English words, footnotes and bibliography not included (**Due: Apr. 23**). Students can choose any topic within Catholic dogmatics.

6. Grading Rubric for Term Paper

Weight	Category	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
20%	Problematization and theological question	The chosen dogmatic topic is thoroughly and clearly analyzed and problematized through a critical and probing theological question.	The chosen dogmatic topic is thoroughly and clearly analyzed but is not problematized through a critical and probing theological question.	The chosen dogmatic topic is generally analyzed and is not critically problematized.	The chosen dogmatic topic is neither properly analyzed nor problematized.

30%	Thesis and Arguments	The hypothesis or thesis is clearly stated and supported with evident, logical, realistic, thorough, and comprehensive arguments.	The hypothesis or thesis is identifiable but not well articulated. The arguments are clear but need to be improved in terms of their evidence, consistency, and realistic nature.	The hypothesis or thesis is present but not easily discernible and lacks support from clear, relevant and realistic arguments.	The hypothesis or thesis is not clearly defined, making it difficult to unify the paper. The arguments presented are off-topic or irrelevant.
30%	Structure and Development	The paper's structure is exceptionally logical and clear; its flow is coherent and well-developed, with consistently and smoothly articulated transitions.	The paper's structure is sufficiently clear, and the flow and transitions are apparent but need improvement.	The flow is not smooth, and the transitions are sometimes incoherent, making the structure difficult to follow.	The structure is confusing and illogical, lacking consistent development and transitions.
20%	Style and Formatting	The paper is written with correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation, using clear, precise, and appropriate expressions. Its format adheres to academic formatting, and all reference sources are properly cited.	The paper is written mostly with correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation, using clear, precise, and appropriate expressions, with only minor errors. Its format generally adheres to academic formatting, and most reference sources are properly cited.	The paper contains frequent grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors. Some expressions are inappropriate or unclear. It does not sufficiently adhere to the academic format and citation standards.	The paper contains numerous errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Many expressions are inappropriate or unclear. It also lacks an academic format, and many source materials are used without documentation.

7. Weekly Readings

Week 1

Primary readings

Karl Rahner's *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, translated by William V. Dych (New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1987), Introduction.

國際神學委員會，《今日神學——展望、原則和準則》（2011）：

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_doc_2011129_teologia-oggi_zh-t.pdf

Other recommended readings

International Theological Commission, *The Interpretation of Dogma* (1989):

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1989_in_terpretazione-dogmi_en.html

Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology*, Translated by Mary Frances McCarthy (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), p. 15-85; 315-331.

Avery Dulles, *The Survival of Dogma: Faith, Authority, and Dogma in a Changing World* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1971), p. 137-203.

Walter Kasper, *The Methods of Dogmatic Theology*, translated by John Drury (Glen Rock, New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1969)

Walter Kasper, *Theology and church*, translated by Margaret Kohl (New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989), ch. 1-II.

Edward Schillebeeckx, *Revelation and Theology*, translated by N. D. Smith (New York, NY: Sheed & Ward, 1967), part II.

Week 2

Recommended readings

卓新平, 《當代西方天主教神學》(上海: 上海三聯書店, 1998), 頁4-148。

佛格斯·科爾 (Fergus Kerr) 著, 王濤譯 (香港: 公教真理學會, 2007), 頁1-25。

Adrian Hastings (ed.), *Modern Catholicism: Vatican II and After* (London: SPCK; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 1-214.

Mathijs Lamberigts, Gilles Routhier, Pedro Rubens Ferreira Oliveira, Christoph Theobald, Dries Bosschaert (eds.), *50 Years after the Vatican II Council: Theologians from all over the World Deliberate* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, 2015).

Week 3

Required readings

Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, ch. I

Primary readings

Vatican II: *Gaudium et Spes*

https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html

Other recommended readings

Vatican II: *Dignitatis humanae*

https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html

[ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html](#)

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *A Theological Anthropology* (New York, NY: Sheed & Ward, 1967).

Edward Schillebeeckx, *God and Man* (New York, NY: Sheed & Ward, 1969).

Week 4

Required readings

Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, ch. III

Recommended readings

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, Vol. 4, translated by Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), part II–III.

Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, translated and edited by Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis books, 2004), Sixteenth Printing, pp. 83–105.

Week 5

Primary readings

Documents of the second Vatican council (Vatican II): *Nostra Aetate*

https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html

Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, ch. II.

Other recommended readings

Jacques Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York, YN: Orbis Books, 2001)

Jacques Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, Translated by Phillip Berryman, Second printing (Maryknoll, New York, YN: Orbis Books, 2003)

David Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other: The Inter-religious Dialogue* (Louvain: Peeters, 1990)

Vladimir Latinovic, Gerard Mannion, and Peter C. Phan (eds.), *Pathways for Interreligious Dialogue in the Twenty First Century* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ* (New York, N.Y: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1988), part I.

Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, translated by J. R. Foster (New York, N.Y: Herder and Herder, 1969), Introduction & part I.

任安道, 〈宗教對話：福音本地化的必要環節〉, 《神學論集》第 191 期 (2017 / 04) 頁, 67–99。

Week 6

Required readings

Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, ch. IV

Primary readings

Vatican II: *Dei Verbum*

https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html

Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, ch. V

Other recommended readings

Karl Rahner and Joseph Ratzinger, *Revelation and Tradition* (New York, N.Y: Herder and Herder, 1969)

Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1983).

Edward Schillebeeckx, *Revelation and Theology*, part I.

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord*, v. I, ch. III–VI

Week 7

Primary readings

Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, translated by Joseph Donceel (London and New York: Burns & Oates, 2001), ch. II–III, p. 49–120.

Other recommended readings

拉辛格 (Joseph Ratzinger) 著，漢道 (任安道) 譯，《耶穌基督的天主》(香港：原道/利瑪竇研究中心，2013)

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, Vol. 3, translated by Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), part V, p. 283–360.

Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, part III.

Week 8–9

Required readings

Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, ch. VI

Recommended readings

Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ* (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2011)

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, translated by Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), part II, p. 59–259.

Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology Sacrament of encounter* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014)

Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ: The Christian Experience in the Modern World* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014)

Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, part II.

Week 10-11

Required readings

Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, ch. VII–VIII

Primary readings

Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium*

Vatican II: *Sacrosanctum Concilium*

https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html

XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Final Document: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission*:

https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf

Other recommended readings

Walter Kasper, *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission*, translated by Thomas Hoebel (New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015).

瓦爾特·卡斯培 (Walter Kasper) 著，張榮芳譯，《耶穌基督的教會》(香港：原道/利瑪竇研究中心，2022)。

Joseph Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, translated by Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996).

Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, part III, p. 255–278.

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Church and World*, translated by A.V. Littledale, Alexander Dru (New York, N.Y: Herder and Herder, 1969).

Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: A Study of Dogma in Relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958).

Henri de Lubac, *The Splendour of the Church*, translated by Michael Mason (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1956).

Yves Congar, *The Mystery of the Church*, translated by A.V. Littledale (Baltimore, Helicon Press, 1960).

Yves Congar, *Ecumenism and the future of the Church* (Chicago: Priory Press, 1967).
Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Church: The Human Story of God*, translated by John Bowden
(New York, NY : Crossroad, 1990).
Avery Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

Week 12

Primary readings

Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium*, ch. VIII

https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

Other recommended readings

Hans Urs von Balthasar and Joseph Ratzinger, *Mary: The Church at the Source*, translated by Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005).

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, Vol. 3, translated by Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), p. 283–360.

Edward Schillebeeckx, *Mary: Mother of the Redemption*, translated by N. D. Smith (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1964).

Edward Schillebeeckx, *Mary: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993).
任安道, 〈公教與新教圍繞瑪利亞的和解—評「東貝」大公合一專家組有關瑪利亞的共識〉, 《公教神學評論》第5輯 (2024/02), 頁324–360。

Week 13

Required readings

Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, ch. IX.

Recommended readings

Joseph Ratzinger, ‘*In the Beginning...*’: *A Catholic Understanding of the Story of and the Fall*, translated by Boniface Ramsey (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995).

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, translated by Bernard Wall (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1959).

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, translated by René Hague (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974).

Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, translated by Michael Waldstein (Washington, D.C : Catholic University of America Press, 1988)

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, Vol. 5, translated by

Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998).

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Dare We Hope "That All Men Be Saved"?: with A Short Discourse on Hell*, translated by David Kipp and Lothar Krauth, second edition (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014)

9. Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Please refer to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

10. Use of AI Tools

Students are permitted to use AI tools only for translating and summarizing reading texts, as well as for grammar checking in writing assignments.