

Political Theology and the English Reformation

Hilary 2025, Introductory/Intermediate

Dr. Michael J. Lynch and Dr. Brad Littlejohn, Instructors

Course Description

This class will focus on the political theology of English Protestants in the 16th century. We will look at the writings of Peter Martyr Vermigli, Heinrich Bullinger, John Jewel, and other influential Reformed theologians on the English Reformed Church. Special attention will be given to the role and duty of the civil magistrate regarding religion as well as civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction in distinction from early modern Roman Catholic positions.

Course Format

The format of the course will be predominantly one of guided discussion. The instructor will often be doing most of the talking, but generally to illuminate and draw out themes from the text for discussion, rather than in straight-up lectures. Thus, students will be expected to come having read and engaged with the text selection for the week, and with thoughts prepared to contribute.

Classes will meet via Zoom for two each week and will be recorded for later viewing by students who cannot participate. Additional student participation and instructor interaction can take place on a private discussion board. Auditors have no requirements, but may participate in all class activities. If the scheduled time does not work for a particular student, they may drop the course according to the Drop Policy in the Academic Catalog.

Course Objectives

Objectives for this course include: (1) to get a basic biographical knowledge of each theologian (2) to sketch the theological contours and development of this doctrine in each theologian's corpus (3) to note the various scholastic distinctions employed by each (4) to better understand the historical context in which *The Death of Death* and *De Morte Christi* were written (5) to summarize where Owen and Davenant agree and disagree relative to the death of Christ and its extent (6) to remark on the various pastoral concerns related to the doctrine of the death of Christ, especially in its relation to the offer of the Gospel.

Classroom Resources

- [Populi](#) online classrooms are used for all course content, including assignments, grades, announcements, course records, and more.

- [Zoom](#) links & recordings are provided on the Populi course page Conferences tab. Class sessions are two hours weekly (2.5 in summer) for ten weeks (8 weeks in summer) and recorded for absent students (not for dissemination outside of class).
- [Discord](#) may be used for additional student and instructor interaction as well as Davenant community discussions.

Course Requirements

1. Weekly readings (due before our meeting each week).
2. Weekly interaction with fellow participants and the instructor in live class sessions.
3. Students taking the class for credit or for a degree can have (at most) two excused absences from live class participation without penalty.
4. Late work: Grade reduction of -5% per calendar day upon instructor discretion. No assignments will be accepted after the last due date without an approved extension.

Additional Course Requirements for Course Credit and Masters Students:

1. Attentive and sustained participation in class is the primary requirement. For-credit students may have two excused absences. (20% of final grade) [All Students]
2. Weekly (10) 1-page, typed, *single* spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font, reflections which engage with the assigned readings for that day. These may range from a simple digest of the material to an engagement with and reflection upon a single aspect of the reading. (25% of final grade) [All Students]
3. Oral examination **OR** Research Essay: At the conclusion of the course, the professor will schedule a 15–30-minute Zoom session to assess you on your mastery of the relevant concepts and material from the course. Essay: 10-12 typed pages, Times New Roman. (25% of final grade) [All Students]
4. Weekly (10) Reading Questions. In order to stimulate discussion, Write 5 thoughtful questions for in-class discussion. (30% of final grade) [All Students]

Grading Scale

Passing: ≥93:A • ≥90:A- • ≥87:B+ • ≥83:B • ≥80:B- • ≥77:C • ≥73:C

Retake if Core: 70–72:C- • ≥67:D+ • ≥63:D • ≥60:D- • <60:F.

Course Text

[King Henry VIII](#), “To the Clergy of the Province of York, Anno 1533. Touching his Title of Supreme Head of the Church of England” in *Cabala, sive Scrinia Sacra, Mysteries of State and Government: In Letters* ... (London: for G. Bedell and T. Collins, 1663), pgs. 244–48.

[Cuthbert Tunstall](#), “Protestatio contra Titulum Henrico VIII. In Concessione Subsidii Datum, quo Vocatur ‘Supremum Caput,’” in *Concilia Magnae Britanniae Et Hiberniae, Ab Anno MCCCL. Ad Annum MDXLV.*, ed. David Wilkins (London: R. Gosling et al., 1737), 745. [To be provided in translation].

Heinrich Bullinger, “The Office of the Magistrate” in Torrance Kirby, *The Zurich Connection and Tudor Political Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pgs. 25–57. [To be provided].

[Heinrich Bullinger](#), *The Decades of Henry Bullinger*, trans. by H. I. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1849), pgs. 307–322, 345–393.

[Henrich Bullinger](#), “An Answer Given to a Certain Scotsman, in Reply to Some Questions Concerning the Kingdom of Scotland and England,” in vol. 3 of John Knox, *The Works of John Knox*, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1895), pgs. 217–26.

Peter Martyr Vermigli, “Of the Magistrate” in Kirby, *The Zurich Connection*, pgs. 59–119. [To be provided].

John Ponet, *A Shorte Treatise of Politike Pouuer* (Strasbourg: Printed by the heirs of W. Köpfel, 1556). [To be provided]

[John Knox](#), *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* in vol. 4 of *The Works of John Knox*, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1855), pgs. 363–420.

[John Jewel](#), *An Apology, or Answer, in Defence of the Church of England* in *The Works of John Jewel*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1848), 3:97–106.

[John Jewel](#), “Epistola Rev. P. Joannis Juelli, Episcopi Sarisburiensis, ad Virum Nobilem, D. Scipionem, Patricium Venetum” in *Works*, 4:1094–1126.

[William Allen](#), *A True, Sincere, and Modest Defence of English Catholiques* (Rouen, 1584)

[Robert Persons](#), *A Conference About the Next Succession of the Crown of In gland* (R. Doleman, 1594)

Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* in *The Works of [...] Richard Hooker*, 3 vols (Oxford: At the University Press, 1845), Books 1 and 8.

Course Schedule

Subject to change. [Click here](#) for the most current syllabus.

| Week | Dates | Discussion Topics | Reading |
|-------------|--------------|--|--|
| 1 | 1/15 | King Henry VIII, Cuthbert Tunstall and the English Reformation | King Henry, "To the Clergy"; Tunstall, "Protestatio" |
| 2 | 1/22 | Vermigli on the Civil Magistrate | Vermigli, "Of the Magistrate" |
| 3 | 1/29 | Bullinger on the Civil Magistrate | Bullinger, <i>Decades</i> , pgs. 307–322, 345–393; Bullinger, "The Office of the Magistrate;" Bullinger, "An Answer" |
| 4 | 2/5 | John Ponet on Political Power | Ponet, <i>A Shorte Treatise</i> |
| 5 | 2/12 | John Knox on Female Magistrates | Knox, <i>The First Blast</i> |
| 6 | 2/19 | John Jewel on Civil and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction | Jewel, <i>Apology</i> , 3:97–106; Jewel, "Epistola" |
| 7 | 2/26 | William Allen's Defense of English Catholics | Allen, <i>A Modest Defence</i>, 116-218 |
| 8 | 3/5 | Robert Persons on the Succession of England | Persons, <i>A Conference</i>, I.1-82 |
| 9 | 3/12 | Hooker on Law | Hooker, <i>Of the Laws</i>, Book 1 |
| 10 | 3/19 | Hooker on the Civil Magistrate and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction | Hooker, <i>Of the Laws</i>, Book 8 |