

**ICS Calendar Title:** The Radical Theopoetics of John D. Caputo  
**ICS Course Code:** ICS 150907/250907 W15  
**Instructor:** Emeritus Professor James Olthuis  
**Term and Year:** Wednesdays, 6:0-9:00 pm, Winter 2015  
**Last Updated:** November 18, 2014

## **Contents**

- [1. Course Description](#)
- [2. Reading Schedule](#)
- [3. Course Requirements](#)
- [4. Description and Weighting of Elements to be Evaluated](#)
- [5. Required Readings](#)
- [6. Some Recommended Readings](#)

### **1. Course Description**

This seminar will trace, explore, and interact with the developing Theopoetics of postmodern philosopher/theologian John D. Caputo. Situated at the interface between deconstruction and the religion, Theopoetics is a radical alternative to both classical theism and classical atheism, insisting that whether or not God shows up depends on us. In the style of Deconstruction, Theopoetics seeks a way between absolutism and relativism, envisioning Truth, not as a claim we make, but as a claim made on us. For Caputo, philosophy (as the search for wisdom) and theology (as the search for God) work together: The one true philosophy—the love of truth—is the love of God.

### **2. Reading Schedule**

Jan. 7: Introduction. *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*  
Jan. 14: *Philosophy and Theology*  
Jan. 21: *Truth*  
Jan. 28: *The Weakness of God*, chps. 1,2,3  
Feb. 4: *The Weakness of God*, chps. 4,5,6  
Feb. 11 *The Weakness of God*, chps. 7,8,9  
Feb. 18 ----- Spring Reading Week ----  
Feb. 25 *The Weakness of God*, chps. 10,11,12  
March 4 *The Insistence of God*, chps. 1,2,3  
March 11 *The Insistence of God*, chps. 4,5,6  
March 18 *The Insistence of God*, chps. 7,8,9  
March 25 *The Insistence of God*, chps. 10,11,12

April 1 Presentations

April 8 Presentations, Loose Ends and the Future!

### 3. Course Requirements

- a) Critical understanding of the dynamics at work in the interfacing of deconstructive philosophy and radical theology.
- b) Ability to think creatively and constructively about the strengths and weaknesses of Theopoetics.
- c) Knowledge of John D. Caputo's extrapolation of the thought of Jacques Derrida.

### 4. Description and Weighting of Elements to be Evaluated

- a) Total reading (1250 pages)
- b) In-seminar leadership: Taking turns leading discussion of assigned materials.
- c) Description of course project: 4,000-6,000 words (MA); 5,000-7,000 words (PhD) on topic of student's interest within the purview of the course.
- d) Description and weighting of elements to be evaluated:
  - i. Class participation: 20%
  - ii. Seminar presentations: 30%
  - iii. Research Project/Paper: 50%

### 5. Required Readings

John D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1997. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B809.6 .D46 1997]

\_\_\_\_\_, *Philosophy and Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B29 .C2745 2006]

\_\_\_\_\_, *The Weakness of God*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BT103 .C37 2006]

\_\_\_\_\_. *Truth*. London: Penguin Books, 2013. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BL51 .C35 2013]

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Insistence of God*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BT103 .C3675 2013]

## 6. Some Recommended Readings

John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BD241 .C34 1987]

\_\_\_\_\_, *More Radical Hermeneutics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BD241 .C336 2000]

\_\_\_\_\_, *Against Ethics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BJ1012 .C324 1993]

\_\_\_\_\_, *Demythologizing Heidegger*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B3279 .H49 C273 1993]

\_\_\_\_\_, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B809.6 .P37 1997]

Ray Martinez (ed.). *The Very Idea of Radical Hermeneutics*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1997. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: ON ORDER ; Robarts Library: BD241 .V29 1997X]

James H. Olthuis (ed.). *Religion with/out Religion*. London: Routledge, 2002. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B2430 .D4]

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or Student Services as soon as possible.