



**Freedom School of Ministry**  
**Spiritual Identities I**  
**Course Syllabus**  
**April 9 – May 28, 2024**

**Instructor:** Cheryl You

**Location:** online ([Class Zoom link](#))

**Office hours:** via Zoom by appointment, schedule [here](#).

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### **Course Description**

In Spiritual Identities I, we explore the central Christian doctrine of the Trinity, focusing on the Persons of the Father and the Son. The Person of the Holy Spirit will be covered in part 2 of the course, Spiritual Identities II. Through an exploration of the scriptural grounding as well as historical development of Trinitarian theology, this course will unpack key theological concepts pertaining to speaking about God as Trinity, highlight why, although this doctrine is a paradox that is difficult to understand, is a core doctrine of the Christian faith, and equip students to speak more truthfully to the nature of God as Trinity. Students will be introduced to the “grammar” of the Christian faith and why wrestling with our knowledge of God is important to the ways we worship and live out God’s image in the world.

### **Course Learning Outcomes**

1. Identify key theological concepts pertaining to Trinitarian theology
2. Begin to read Scripture through a Trinitarian lens and identify the work of a Trinitarian God throughout salvation history.
3. Articulate and explain the distinctive features of a Trinitarian vision of God and describe the Persons and relations of God the Father and God the Son.
4. Evaluate the relationship between the doctrine of the Trinity and current-day pastoral issues.

### **Course Overview**

1. Critically engage the weekly readings and lectures prepared by the professor.

2. Prior to the weekly Zoom session, prepare a 150-200 word reflection based on the weekly prompts provided. These are to be submitted to the professor in preparation for the Zoom discussion. (Due on Tuesdays at 12:00pm EST with the exception of Week 1 where it is due on Friday at 23:59 EST)
3. Attend weekly Zoom classes on Tuesdays at 6:30pm EST and engage thoughtfully and critically in the discussion.
4. Complete the course paper, a 3-5 page essay on the doctrine of the Trinity due end of Week 6.
5. Complete the course project, a 5-7 minute video presentation on the doctrine of the Trinity due end of finals week. See Course Requirements below and course modules for more details on the assignment.

### Course Schedule

PCD – *Practicing Christian Doctrine* by Beth Felker Jones

TT - *The Trinity* by Donald Fairbairn

Week of	Class Topic	Due this Week
Apr 9	Week 1: Speaking of God	<input type="checkbox"/> Read PCD pages 1-33 <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly reflection (due on Friday at 23:59 EST)
Apr 16	Week 2: The Triune God We Worship: Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity	<input type="checkbox"/> Read TT Ch 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Read TT Ch 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly reflection (due on Tuesday at noon EST)
Apr 23	Week 3: The Triune God We Worship: Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Trinity	<input type="checkbox"/> Read PCD Ch 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly reflection (due on Tuesday at noon EST)
Apr 30	Week 4: God the Father	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Swain Ch 4: <i>God the Father</i> (pdf provided) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Chapter 2: Father from Justo Gonzalez <i>Teach Us to Pray</i> (pdf provided) <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly reflection (due on Tuesday at noon EST)

<b>Week of</b>	<b>Class Topic</b>	<b>Due this Week</b>
May 7	Week 5: God the Son: Christology	<input type="checkbox"/> Read PCD Ch 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Read TT Ch 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly reflection (due on Tuesday at noon EST)
May 14	Week 6: The Trinity at Work	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Swain Ch 7: <i>The Shape of God's Triune Work</i> (pdf provided) <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly reflection (due on Tuesday at noon EST) <input type="checkbox"/> Course paper (due on Sunday at 23:59 EST)
May 21	Week 7: Reflecting God's Image: Who are We?	<input type="checkbox"/> Read PCD Ch 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Read TT Ch 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Read TT Ch 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly reflection (due on Tuesday at noon)
May 28	Week 8 Review Week	<input type="checkbox"/> Final Project: video (due on Friday at 23:59 EST)

### **Required Reading**

- 1) The Bible
  - a. NRSV, NIV or NLT is preferred. Students should choose a word-for-word (e.g., NRSV, NASB, ESV) or thought-for-thought (e.g., NIV, NCV, NLT) as the primary translation, using a paraphrase (GNT, CEV, MSG) as a reference and/or secondary translation.

- 2) Jones, Beth Felker. *Practicing Christian Doctrine: An Introduction to Thinking and Living Theologically*. 2nd Edition. Baker Academic, 2023. ISBN: 9781540965141, Pub. Price \$27.99. [256 pp.]

Note: The Kindle price is lower and you could possibly get the book at lower cost from the publisher, [Baker Book House](#). As best as you can, get the 2nd edition and not the 1st edition.

- 3) Fairbairn, Donald. *The Trinity*. Union Publishing, 2024. ISBN: 978-1739342685, Pub. Price \$8.99. [96 pp.]

### **Additional Reading**

- 1) Swain, Scott R., Graham A. Cole, and Oren R. Martin. *The Trinity: An Introduction*. Short Studies in Systematic Theology. Crossway, 2020. ISBN: 9781433561214, Pub. Price \$15.99. [160 pp.]  
Note: This is a slim volume that summarizes important concepts about the doctrine of the Trinity. Each chapter is less than 20 pages long and it has a short, helpful glossary at the back of the book.
- 2) Sanders, Fred. *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*. Crossway, 2017. ISBN: 978-1433556371, Pub. Price \$23.99. [304 pp.]
- 3) Bird, Michael. *What Christians Ought to Believe: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine Through the Apostles' Creed*. Zondervan Academic, 2016. ISBN: 978-0310520924, Pub. Price \$24.99. [240 pp.]

### **Course Requirements:**

1. **Reading Assignments (10%)** – Students are to complete the assigned reading material for the course. The reading is to be done by the module due date in which the material is presented, prior to the Zoom class meeting for the module so that the student is prepared for class discussions.
2. **Lectures (10%)** – Students are to view the associated lectures by the module due date in which the material is presented. This will be prior to the Zoom class meeting for the module so that the student has accomplished related essay questions and is prepared for class discussions. Lectures are included within all modules, and each should be viewed in one sitting prior to the associated Zoom class, if at all possible
3. **Weekly Written Reflections (15%)** – Beginning with weeks 2 through 7, each module includes writing prompts to help the student to reflect on the content presented in readings and lectures. Students are to write a 150-200 word reflection to be submitted to the instructor by noon the day of the Zoom class meeting so that the student is prepared for class discussions.
4. **Zoom Meeting Participation (15%)** – There will be a Zoom class meeting for each of the 8 modules for the course. Students are to attend, and participate in, each meeting unless previously excused by the course instructor. Students are expected to join each meeting prepared for class discussions by having viewed assigned lectures/video clips and completed readings & written assignments for the applicable module.
  - a. Participation in Zoom meetings is to be with the student's video "on" so the instructor & class members can engage visually with each other. Infrequent extenuating circumstances for turning

the video off (i.e., children present, unavoidable work requirement, etc.) will be allowable with notice in the chat to the instructor/class.).

b. Excused absences from Zoom class meetings are to be limited to no more than two per student, if at all possible.

c. To receive an excused absence the student must submit a request to the course instructor via email at least 72 hours prior to the meeting (the preceding Saturday 6:30PM Eastern). If an emergency occurs (i.e., illness, family or ministry situation/crisis) less than 72 hours before class an explanatory email or text may be submitted to the course instructor.

**5. Course Paper (25%)** –Students will write a 3-5 page (double-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman or Arial font) essay on the doctrine of the Trinity. Imagine you are formulating your own statement on what you believe about the Trinitarian God, how that belief came to be, and how it impacts your life as a Christian.. This paper is due at 23:59pm EST on Sunday of Week 6. The outline of the paper should be as follows:

Part 1: Trace the Biblical and Historical development of the Doctrine of the Trinity (1-1.5 pages)

Part 2: Briefly explain the doctrine of the Trinity and how the Father and Son relate to one another (1-1.5 pages)

Part 3: What are the implications of the doctrine of the Trinity for worship and/or Christian living? (1 page) - in this section, I would like you to zoom into your specific area of ministry and reflect on how the doctrine of the Trinity can impact or shape the work you do, whether it is in worship, preaching, leadership, teaching, outreach, etc. What are some growth areas for you personally?

Students should make use of the textbooks, lectures and supplementary material and proper citations should be used (APA/MLA/Chicago). Paper will be graded

**6. Final Project (25%)** – The final project will be due at 23:59 on Friday of week 8. Each student is to write and record a 5-7 minute video where they present the doctrine of the Trinity with supporting Scriptures and historical ideas to an audience of their choice. The paper you submitted at the end of Week 6 will help you gather the content you need for this video. The video should cover: What you believe about God, why the doctrine of the Trinity is important, what is the doctrine of the Trinity, and which Scriptures have been most helpful for your understanding of the Trinitarian God?

**7. Weighting of Course Requirements for Grading:** This is a Pass/Fail course and to receive a passing grade the student must accomplish an accumulative total of at least 80% of the course requirements which are weighted as shown below:

- Reading Assignments 10%
- Lectures 10%
- Weekly written reflections 15%
- Zoom Meeting Participation 15%
- Course paper 25%
- Final Project 25%

### **Course Policies:**

#### **The Presence of the Instructors:**

You can expect your instructors to participate substantially in this course. In addition to producing the recorded lectures for each module and reviewing all assignments, the instructors will participate in each Zoom class meeting for all eight modules of the course. Should students have questions about the course materials and/or assignments they may address them to the instructors via email. Students may also contact the professor to schedule an appointment to discuss their questions or concerns in the link provided at the top of the syllabus.

#### **Late Assignments:**

No late assignments will be accepted unless due to an extreme emergency.

### **Communications Policy**

Should students have questions about the course material and/or assignments, they may address them to the instructor via email. If you require an urgent response, you may call or text. Please allow for a 24-hour response from Tuesday-Saturday and 48 hours for response Sunday-Monday.

### **Instructor Information**

Cheryl You (M.Div., Regent University) has 25 years of pastoral and ministry experience in ministry schools and churches in Asia and the U.S. Her ministry experience includes leadership coaching and development, teaching theology, leading retreats and conferences, leading worship and production ministries, small group ministries, service design, content creation and communication, strategic leadership, and racial reconciliation work. She currently serves as Associate Campus Pastor and Pastor of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation at Freedom Life Church. For Cheryl, the most important work a leader does is developing a deep inner life in Christ. Originally from Singapore, Cheryl lives in Norfolk, VA with her husband, Jasper, their three kids and three cats.