COURSE DESCRIPTION: Martin Luther held that the main work of theology was not arguing “theses” or attacking false teachers but expounding Holy Scripture for the people of God. Instead of reviewing Luther’s theological ideas, therefore, this course will consider two extended examples of his biblical interpretation, the 1535 Commentary on Galatians and the Sermons on John 14-16 of 1537. Questions asked will include the following: What is “biblical interpretation” for Luther? What is the aim of his interpretive labor? What difference does the particular text he is expounding make to his presentation of famous themes like “justification by faith alone” and “the distinction of law and gospel”? Does the doctrine illuminate the text or overwhelm it? And what do doctrine and exegesis have to do with preaching?

GENERAL OUTCOMES
The general set of desired course outcomes stated by Trinity includes the following:

1. The student will recognize and identify the biblical theology evident in the course work.
2. The student will be able to articulate an understanding of biblical, historical, systematic, and pastoral theology appropriate to his or her tradition.
3. The student will be able to effectively communicate the Christian message to a diversity of people in order to advance the mission of God.
4. The student will be prepared to lead effectively in a variety of Christian communities.

This course will serve these ends in various ways. (1) “Biblical theology” is the focus of the course, insofar as its object is the relationship between theology and exegesis in a significant Christian theologian. (2) Every tradition with any roots in the Reformation has some relation to Luther. An exploration of Luther’s theology is therefore a relevant context for students’ growth in their understanding of their own traditions, all the more so because “biblical, systematic, and pastoral theology” are inseparable in the texts which we will be studying. (3) The goal of Luther’s theology is to communicate the gospel, and he does so in a way that has been found at the very least provocative by a considerable “diversity of people” for five centuries. (4) Attending to the concrete ways in which Christians of the past communicated the gospel to their communities is essential preparation for going on to communicate the same gospel in new situations.

REQUIRED TEXTS (With Links to Amazon and the Publisher)

Martin Luther, [SERMONS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 14-16 LUTHER’S WORKS VOL. 24](https://www.amazon.com/Sermons-Gospel-John-Luthers-Works/dp/3260108702) or order it from [Concordia](https://www.concordia-pub.com/)

Martin Luther, [LECTURES ON GALATIANS 1-4 LUTHER’S WORKS VOL. 26](https://www.amazon.com/Lectures-Galatians-Luthers-Works-Vol/dp/3260108698) or order it from [Concordia](https://www.concordia-pub.com/)

Martin Luther, [LECTURES ON GALATIANS 5-6 LUTHER’S WORKS VOL. 27](https://www.amazon.com/Lectures-Galatians-Luthers-Works-Vol/dp/3260108710) or order it from [Concordia](https://www.concordia-pub.com/)
RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND READING


EXPECTATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

1. The main goal of a seminar is the conversation between its members over significant texts. It will be especially important for students in this course to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading.

2. Each student will be responsible for presenting assigned reading and leading class discussion at least once but no more than twice, depending on enrollment. At least one day before the class session, the student leading discussion will circulate to the instructor and the other members of the class an approximately 2000-word analysis and summary of the reading, with two or three questions for discussion. Presentations should be primarily descriptive rather than critical.

   The grade will be given for the total presentation, not only the written summary. Evaluation will consider the student’s familiarity with the assigned text and ability to identify relevant issues in it, as well as the clarity and focus of the written summary.

3. **MDiv. students** will submit a final paper based on a classroom presentation, which is to be revised and expanded in light of the class discussion and the course as a whole (3000 words). Not primarily a research assignment. Due Date TBA.

4. **STM students** will each read a significant secondary study of Luther’s theology and email a 3000-5000-word book review to the instructor and the other members of the class by the assigned date. A list of suggested secondary studies will be provided. Due Date TBA.