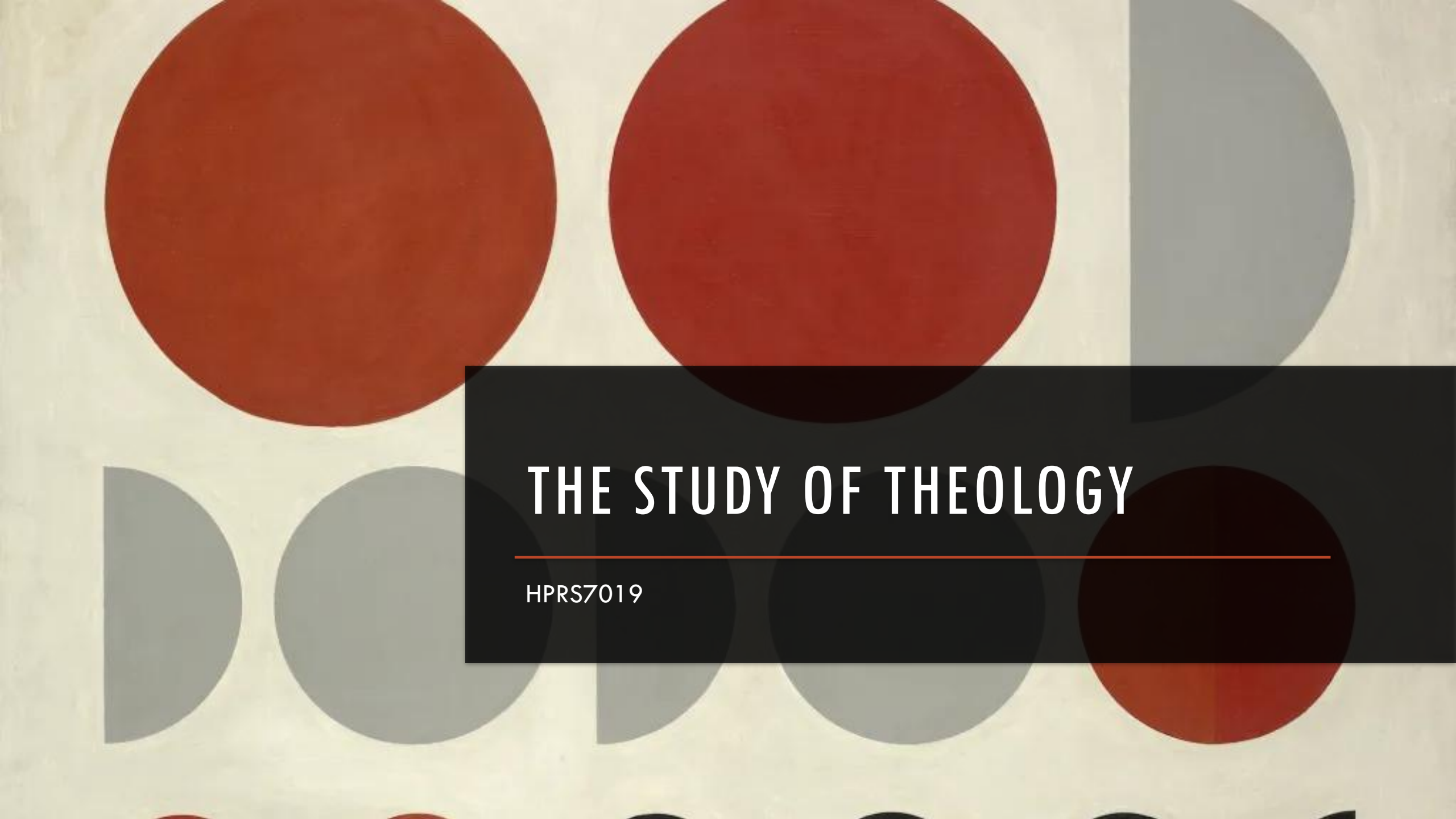




THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY

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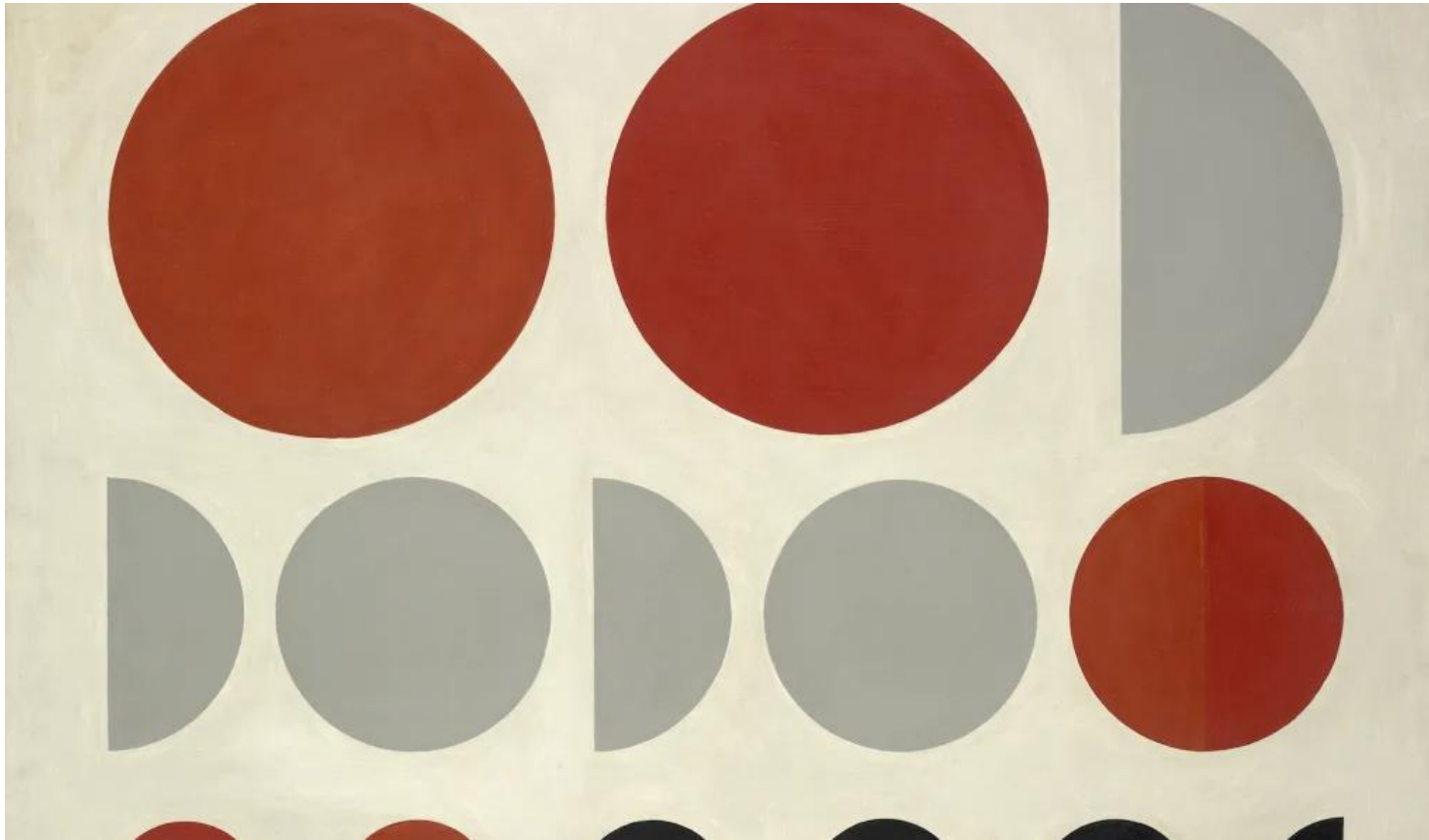
THE SETTINGS OF THEOLOGY



THEOLOGY & EDUCATION

Theology is human conversation: it is a topic of interest because human beings are the kinds of creatures that desire to know God.

This desire is natural — a function of the fact that human beings desire to understand themselves and their place in the world.



THEOLOGY & EDUCATION

Theology has historically formed an integral part of education.

Pre-Christian visions of education regarded theology as crucial domain of human learning because:

- God is the most exalted object of human understanding.
- Knowledge of God orders all other forms of human learning, culture, and society.



THE THEOLOGY OF EDUCATION

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF EDUCATION

A Christian account of education begins with the missions of the Trinity to instruct creatures in the knowledge of Godself.

This is in fact one of the promises of the gospel – “All your children will be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children” (Is. 54:13).

- The work of the Father, by means of creation, communicating knowledge of God’s goodness, wisdom, and power.
- The work of the Son taking on flesh to reveal God’s mercy and justice, and to teach us the way of love and sacrifice.
- The work of the Spirit, overcoming our alienation through his work of illumination, opening the minds of the saints to the truth of the gospel.

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF EDUCATION

The end of these missions was the creation of community through which “the manifold wisdom of God should be made known” (Eph. 3:10)

The church makes known the manifold wisdom of God by 1) its worship, by which it directs its praise to God for his many works; 2) its witness, by which it commends the glory and goodness of God to the world.

These acts require and presuppose education, for which reason Scripture institutes a teaching office “to equip God’s people for works of service” (Eph. 4:12).

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF EDUCATION

This teaching ministry is grounded in the authority of Christ and his dominical command:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age”

Matt. 28:18-20, NIV

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF EDUCATION

The teaching ministry of the church is an embassy of Christ, and its authority is consists in the presence of Christ by his Spirit:

“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us”

2 Cor. 5:20, NIV

FORMS OF
THEOLOGICAL
EDUCATION

FORMS OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Within the context of the church, this instruction takes a number of forms:

Institutions of public worship, i.e., liturgy, preaching, Scripture-reading, observance of the sacraments, & prayer.

Catechesis, i.e., instruction in the elements of the Christian faith, usually in preparation for baptism or first communion.



FORMS OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up”

(Deut. 6:4-7).



THE INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF THEOLOGY

The social & institutional settings, the intellectual cultures, and pedagogical methods of the church's teaching ministry are a prudential matter.

Historically, it has taken a wide variety of different forms:

- Informal education (1st C)
- Monasteries, Cathedral schools, and religious Studia (4th C)
- Universities (12th C)
- Seminaries & Training Colleges (18th C)



THEOLOGY & THE MODERN UNIVERSITY

Theology's relationship with the modern university has always been somewhat uneasy.

The case of the founding of the University of Berlin (1810).

Prevailing understandings of “scientific inquiry” have tended either to marginalise or to “naturalise” theology.



THEOLOGY & THE MODERN UNIVERSITY

Social and political changes in the West have meant theology's place in the university has become less secure in recent decades.

As universities have been sucked into ongoing cultural conflict, the educational priorities of governments have gravitated to economic interests perceived as less ideological, e.g., STEM.

In an increasingly secular setting where resources are scarce, Theology has been required to justify its place in the university, often on pluralistic grounds.

THEOLOGY & THE MODERN UNIVERSITY

Theology faculties have been joined with or subsumed under faculties of Religion, Critical Studies, or Philosophy.

As a result, it often has less scope to pursue priorities internal to itself, and is given more and more to intercultural or inter-disciplinary exchange.

However, this interdisciplinary location has also opened theology up to new comparative work of great depth.

MUST THEOLOGY
BE SAVED?

MUST THEOLOGY BE SAVED?

A number of recent works have explored whether theology's place in the university is worth saving or can be saved.

These have typically argued that retaining a place for theology in the secular university is desirable, but they justify it on different grounds:

- Theology is essential to the coherence of knowledge, and therefore puts the “uni” in universities (A. MacIntyre, J. Milbank).
- Theological understanding is a public good, enriching the peace and reasonableness of any society (R. Williams, D. Ford).



MUST THEOLOGY BE SAVED?

Theology derives a number of benefits from its place in the university; and it is right that it should make some contribution to and engage itself in wider domains of human knowledge.

But theology does not *have* to be done in universities.

And in many respects, theological cultures in modern universities in Britain are much poorer than many training colleges and seminaries.





READING

The reading for this week — two chapters of Mike Highton's book, *A Theology of Higher Education* — looks at two episodes in that history: the Medieval University of Paris, and the Modern University of Berlin.

These two institutions represent two very different ways of conceiving of the study of theology and its place within the world of human learning.

Each has its own distinct vision of the habits and practices of theological reason, as well as the ends to which theology is directed.



READING

Higton, M. (2012). *A theology of higher education*.
Oxford University Press.
Chapters 1 & 2