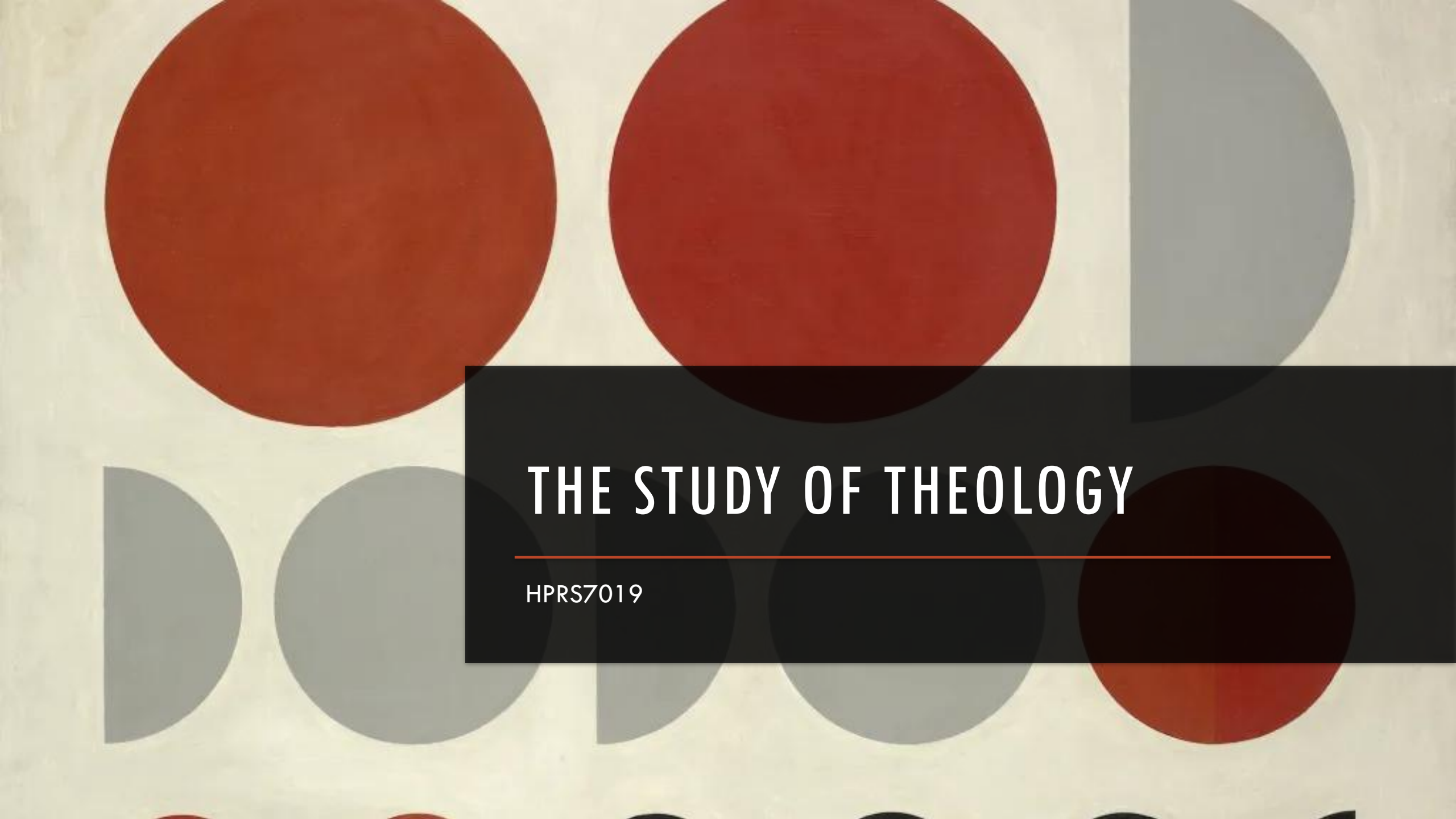
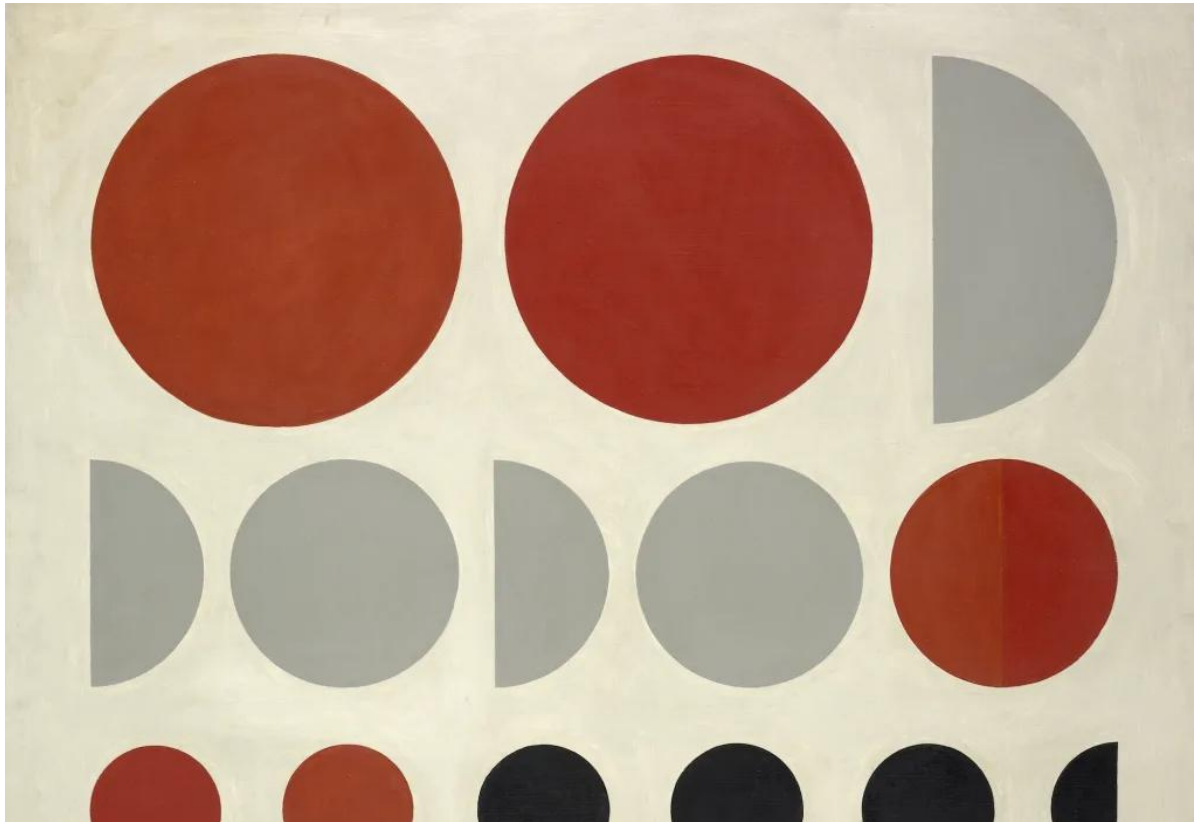




THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY

HPRS7019

THE COGNITIVE
PRINCIPLES OF
THEOLOGY

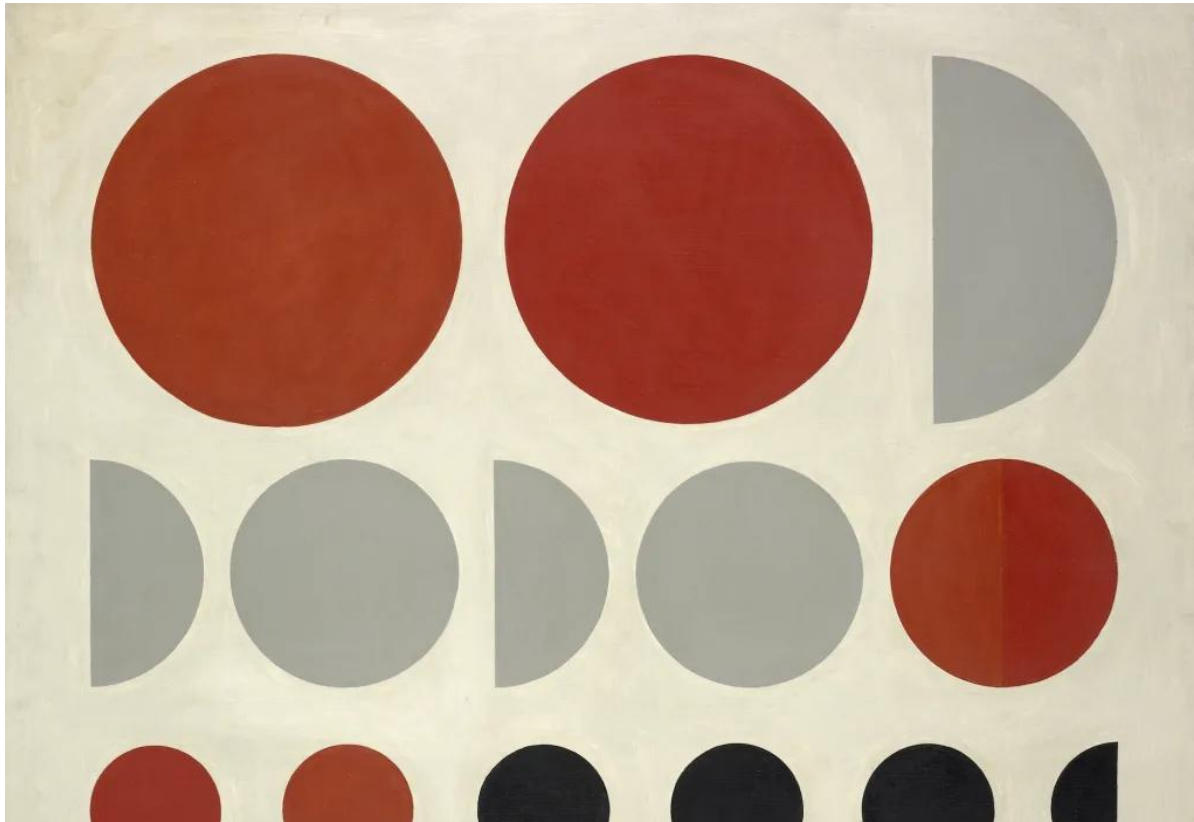


THEOLOGY AS A HUMAN ACT

Theology is an act of created intelligence.

The activity of intellect after the Enlightenment.

- Knowledge limited to the sphere of experience.
- Reason a “constructive” work of the intellect.
- Is knowledge of God possible?



THEOLOGY AS A HUMAN ACT

Modern theology a kind of
“apophaticism”.

Theology as criticism or “poiesis”.

Increasingly gravitates toward acts of
human knowing in the service of
theological creativity:

- Phenomenology
- Epistemology
- Hermeneutics

A “SUBALTERN”
SCIENCE

AQUINAS — TWO KINDS OF SCIENCES:

1. Those proceeding from principles examined through the “natural light of intelligence”.

e.g., Geometry or Arithmetic

2. Those proceeding from principles established by “the light of a higher science” (STh Ia, q. 1, a. 2).

e.g., the way Optics depends on Geometry, or music on Arithmetic.



A “SUBALTERN” SCIENCE

The older theology understood itself as a “subaltern” science in the sense that it does not naturally have access to (all of) its principles, but rather must receive them from God by means of divine revelation.



A “SUBALTERN” SCIENCE

This sets all acts of human knowledge of God against the background of God’s knowledge of God as the objective ground and source of all true theology.

It did this by distinguishing between Archetypal & Ectypal Theology.





ARCHETYPAL THEOLOGY

ARCHETYPAL THEOLOGY: GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

God's knowledge is an incomprehensible perfection of his nature:

- “O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!” — Rom 11:33 (NRSV)

God's knowledge is infinite:

- “He counts the number of the stars, he calls them all by name. Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; his understanding is infinite.” — Ps 147:4-5 (NKJV)

ARCHETYPAL THEOLOGY: GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

God's knowledge is innate and non-discursive:

- "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." — Acts 15:18 (KJV)

God's knowledge has no external cause:

- "Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as his counsellor has instructed him? Whom did he consult for his enlightenment, and who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?" — Is 40:13-14 (NRSV)

GRACE AND REVELATION

As God knows himself fully, so also God communicates the knowledge of himself to his creatures by:

- Revelation
- Illumination

In this way, all acts of human knowing take place within a wider economy of divine redemption.

It is the end of Christ's saving mission:

- "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." — John 17:3 (NIV)



GRACE AND REVELATION

It is rendered effectual by the work of the Holy Spirit:

‘What no eye has seen,

what no ear has heard,

and what no human mind has conceived’

the things God has prepared for those who love him

these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

1 Cor 2:10-12 (NIV)

GRACE AND REVELATION

To engage in theology, then, is to enter into the school of God in some respect — to become a student under God's own tutelage.

This act of divine instruction is necessary and irreplaceable in order for creaturely knowledge of God:

- To have some objective rule.
- To be a participation in God's knowledge.
- To be a product of God's grace



NATURAL REVELATION

Natural Revelation

- Knowledge of God available by means of “the things that have been made” (Rom 1:20).
- The natural order the locus of divine instruction: “What can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them” (Rom 1:19).
- A sign of God’s generosity, but partial and incomplete: “his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity” (Rom 1:20).



SPECIAL REVELATION

Special Revelation

- Knowledge of God communicated by means of the teachings of Christ, the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, and the witness of Holy Scripture.
- Accommodated to human understanding.
- Compliments and perfects true knowledge of God held by means of natural revelation.



ECTYPAL
THEOLOGY

ECTYPAL THEOLOGY: THE CREATURE'S KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

It is always mediated in this life.

It is partial and imperfect.

- As God is infinite, God remains incomprehensible to us. Ectypal theology is never finished is not perfectible.
- Theology must make room for an “apophatic” or negative moment to indicate the accommodated nature of ectypal theology, and to register the ways creaturely concepts fall short of God’s majesty and perfection

ECTYPAL THEOLOGY: THE CREATURE'S KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

However, accommodated, the creature's knowledge of God is genuine knowledge.

- There is a likeness of the creature's knowledge of God and God's knowledge of God.
- Our language and concepts do “refer” to God, even if imperfectly.
- There are true and false ways of speaking of God.

It is the work of God's grace.



READING

The selections about Thomas Torrance's *Theological Science* examine how theology is oriented within the economy of God's works.

While the reading by John Webster, "On the Theology of the Intellectual Life", reflects on the nature of the mind and the manner of its service to God.

In each essay, theology is not seen, not as an act that is independent of God, but one in which God is also active, instructing, guiding, and directing created intelligence so that it might find its rest in the contemplation of God.



READING

Purves, A. (2009). The shape of Torrance theology. *Theology in Scotland*, 16, pp. 23-39.

Klinefelter, D. S. (1973). God and Rationality: A Critique of the Theology of Thomas F. Torrance. *The Journal of Religion*, 53(1), 117–135.

Webster, J. (2015). *God without measure : working papers in Christian theology. Volume 2, Virtue and intellect*. Bloomsbury.