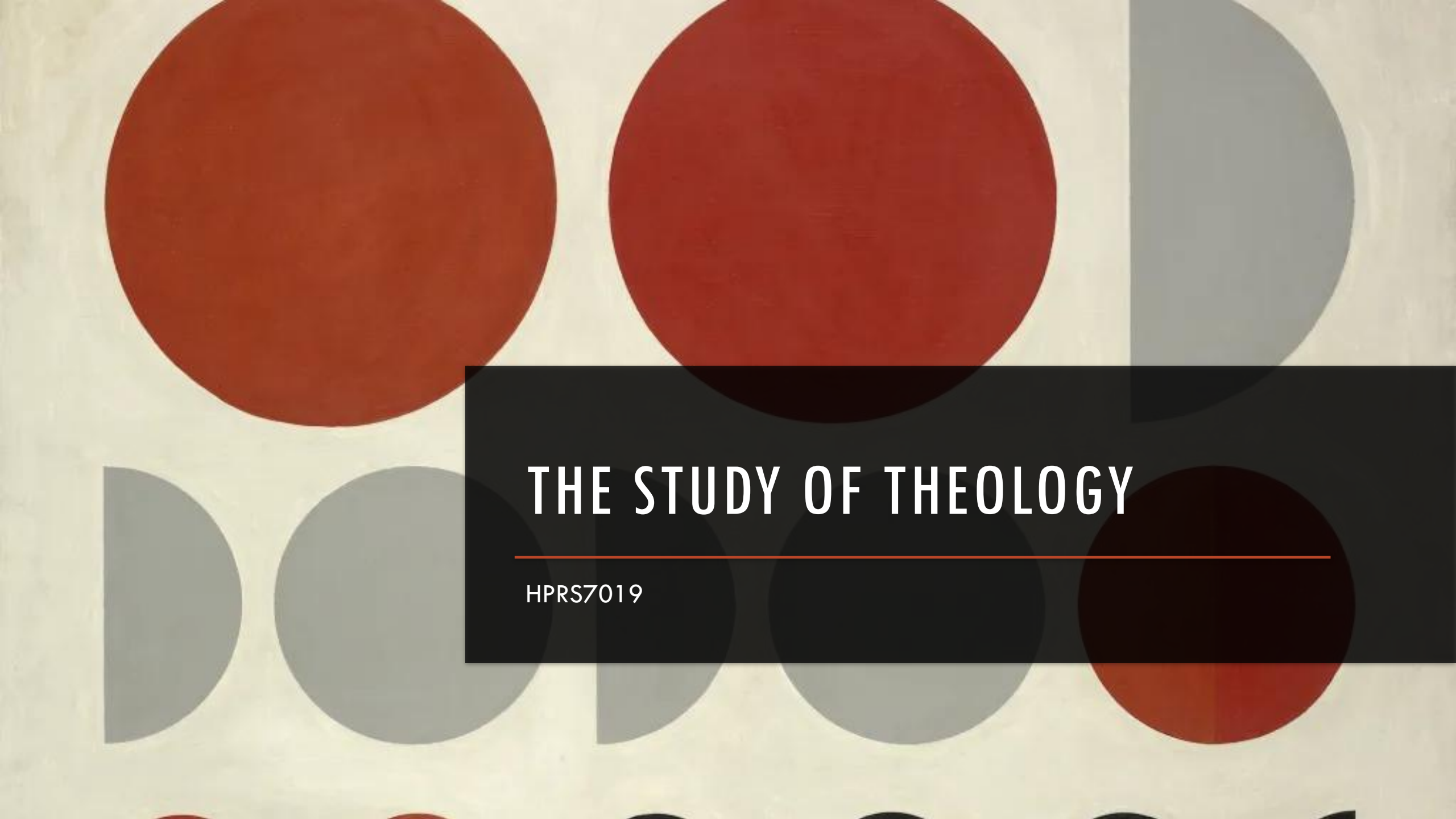
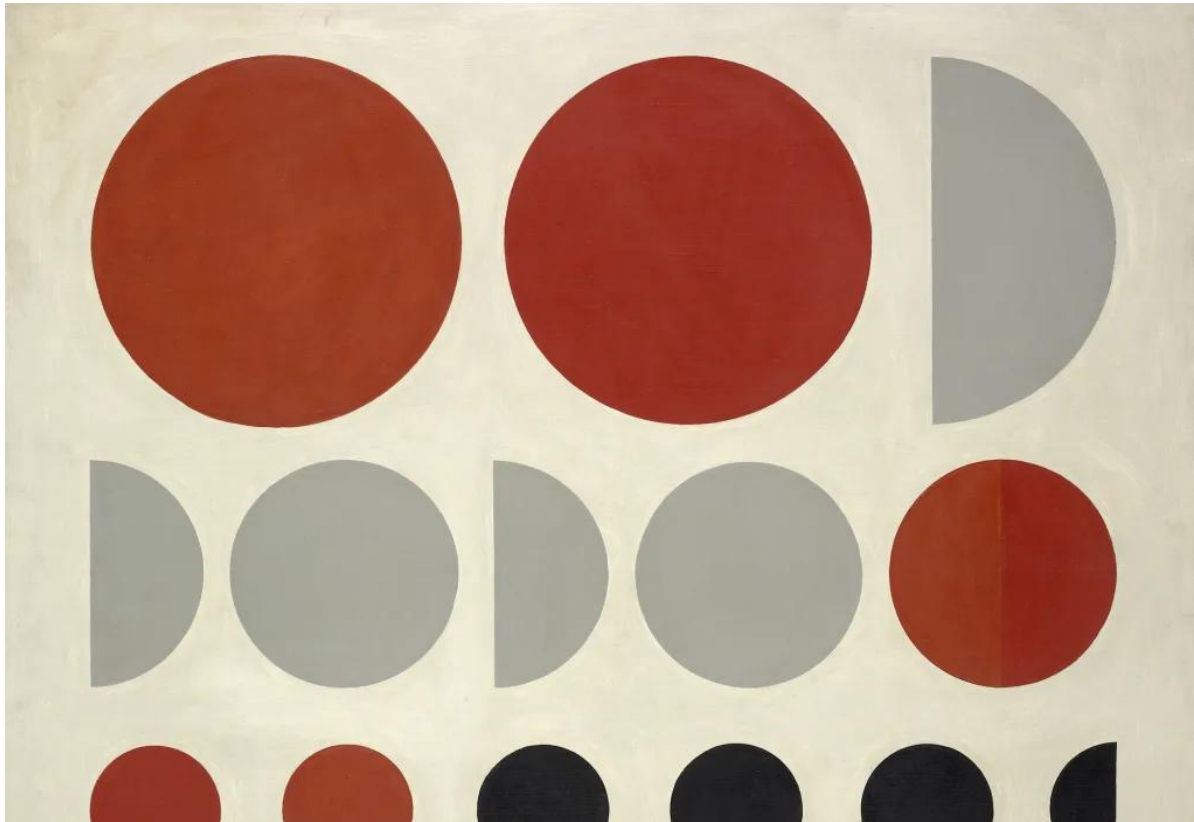




THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY

HPRS7019

THE UNITY AND
ORDER OF
THEOLOGY

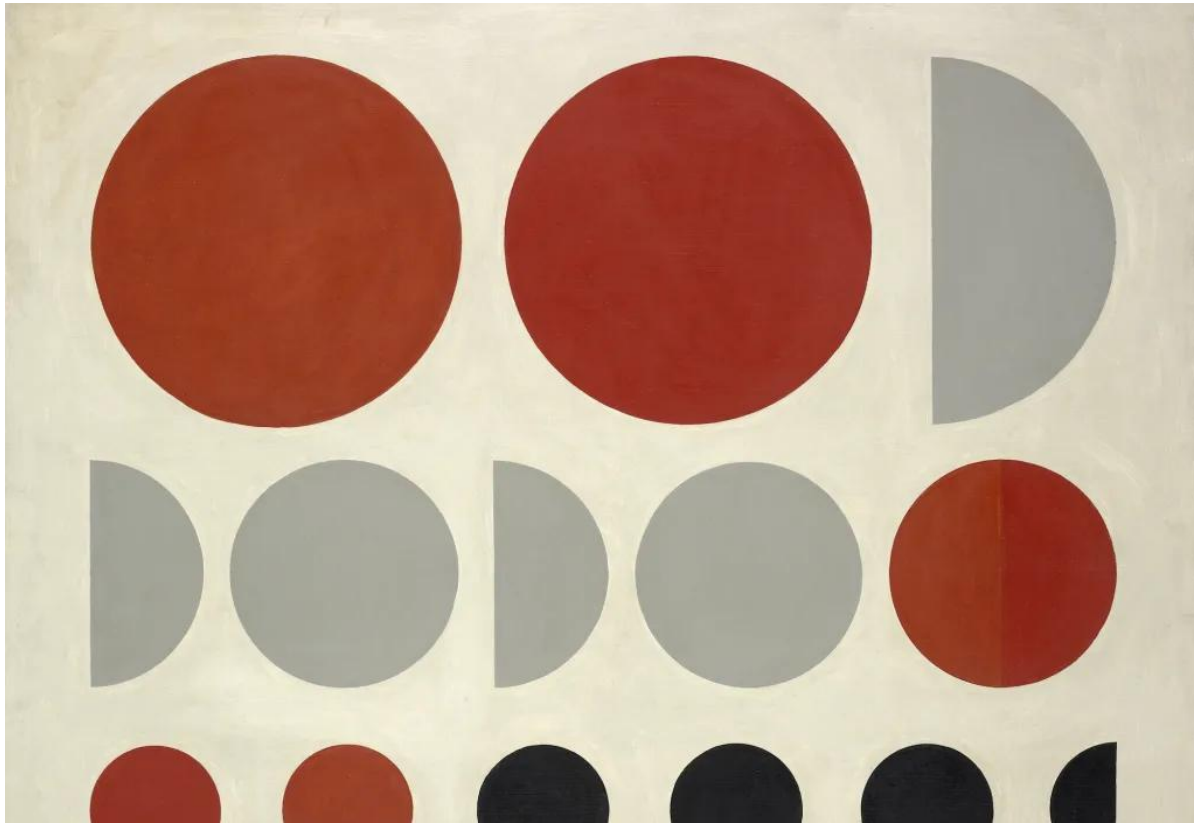


THE COHERENCE OF THEOLOGICAL CURRICULUM

What gives a course of study its unity and coherence?

Students engage in lots of different kinds of tasks when they are first learning theology like reading texts, learning languages, analysing words, studying history, and mastering complex concepts.

To what extent are these one activity, and not many?



THE COHERENCE OF THEOLOGICAL CURRICULUM

This is a question about how the object of theology orders and relates to the sequence of any theological curriculum.

There has not been one fixed answer to this question in the church's history.

THE HISTORY OF
THEOLOGICAL
CURRICULUM

THE HISTORY OF THEOLOGICAL CURRICULUM

“Theology” is originally regarded as a unified science, naming a religious habitus or disposition by which the individual is formed in the knowledge of God as its object and end.

Theological study revolved mainly around an intensive reading of its principal sources: Scripture & tradition.



THE HISTORY OF THEOLOGICAL CURRICULUM

These were taken to be authoritative, and education was primarily oriented toward the skilful curation, enrichment, and application of these sources.

It prioritised knowledge of first principles, which were taken to be determinative of practical matters.



THE HISTORY OF THEOLOGICAL CURRICULUM

3 causes of the fragmentation of theological curriculum:

- “Free inquiry” as an emerging academic ideal.
- Enlightenment emphasis on natural “reason”.
- The theory/practice binary in German Pietism & its defences of theology as a “practical” discipline.



THE HISTORY OF THEOLOGICAL CURRICULUM

Theology as a unified science breaks down.

Subject divisions gradually become distinct “sciences”, governed by methods that are not theologically determined.



THEOLOGICAL ENCYCLOPAEDIA

What aim unifies the circuit of theological education? What disciplines or “sciences” does this require?

The Four-Fold Disciplines of the Theological Curriculum

- Bible
- Church History
- Dogmatics
- Practical Theology





THEOLOGICAL ENCYCLOPAEDIA

“Theology” here names an aggregate - a cluster of scientific activities oriented toward some definable body of information.



THE MINISTERIAL PARADIGM

THE MINISTERIAL PARADIGM

F.D.E. Schleiermacher's Brief Outline of the Study of Theology (1811) offered a "formal encyclopaedia" giving an account of the unity of theological curriculum, its place in the university.

Reformulated theology as a "critical" discipline w/ a three-fold division: Practical, Historical, and Philosophical Theology.

Object: the essence of the Christian Religion; End: Ministerial Formation.

PROBLEMS FACING THE MINISTERIAL PARADIGM

Depends on a theologically dubious distinction between theory and praxis.

Theology becomes professionalised as a clerical activity:

“Its very definition is set by clergy education, and this eliminates in advance attempts to define theology or make sense of theology in settings outside education.”

Farley, *Theologia*, p. 94.

PROBLEMS FACING THE MINISTERIAL PARADIGM

This can minimise or dismiss the theological curiosity and ambitions of our congregants.

It can also give the false impression that theology is merely preparatory for ministry, not the substance of it.

Finally, it may force a false choice between a contemplative and a ministerial vocation

PROBLEMS FACING THE MINISTERIAL PARADIGM

The Ministerial Paradigm also presupposes/requires a fairly stable social, political, economic, and ecclesial context. But . . .

A professional clergy has not always been a given in many parts of the world, and “bi vocational”/lay ministers are becoming more and more frequent in the West.

This renders theoretical studies very vulnerable wherever the scarcity of resources are allowed to determine what is “essential” ministerial training.

PROBLEMS FACING THE MINISTERIAL PARADIGM

In some places, it has tended to privilege strategies and techniques – the “How to” – over principles of ministry. This may make the initial transition into ministry easier, but it leaves students ill-equipped to improvise in different contexts.

Since what is of pressing ministerial concern is subject to change in any context, allowing ministerial interests to dominate can distort the theological curriculum, leaving students without a coherent understanding of the Christian faith.

STRATEGIES FOR RECOVERING THE UNITY OF THEOLOGY

Theology as a species of Religious Studies

Interdisciplinary/Dialogical Approaches – “Theology and” Projects

Renewed Critical Programmes, e.g., Liberation Theologies

Rehabilitation of God as “First Theology” and contemplation as a spiritual therapeutic.



READING

The lecture will survey the history of this relation, arguing that theological curricula in the Modern age have become increasingly fragmented, and proposing some ways that this state of affairs might be remedied.

Farley will outline some of the current challenges facing theological education in the reading.



READING

“Theologia: the fragmentation and unity of theological education” – by Farley, Edward, 1983. Chapters 1 – 5.

“Vision and discernment: an orientation in theological study” – by Wood, Charles Monroe, 1985. Chapters 1 – 5.