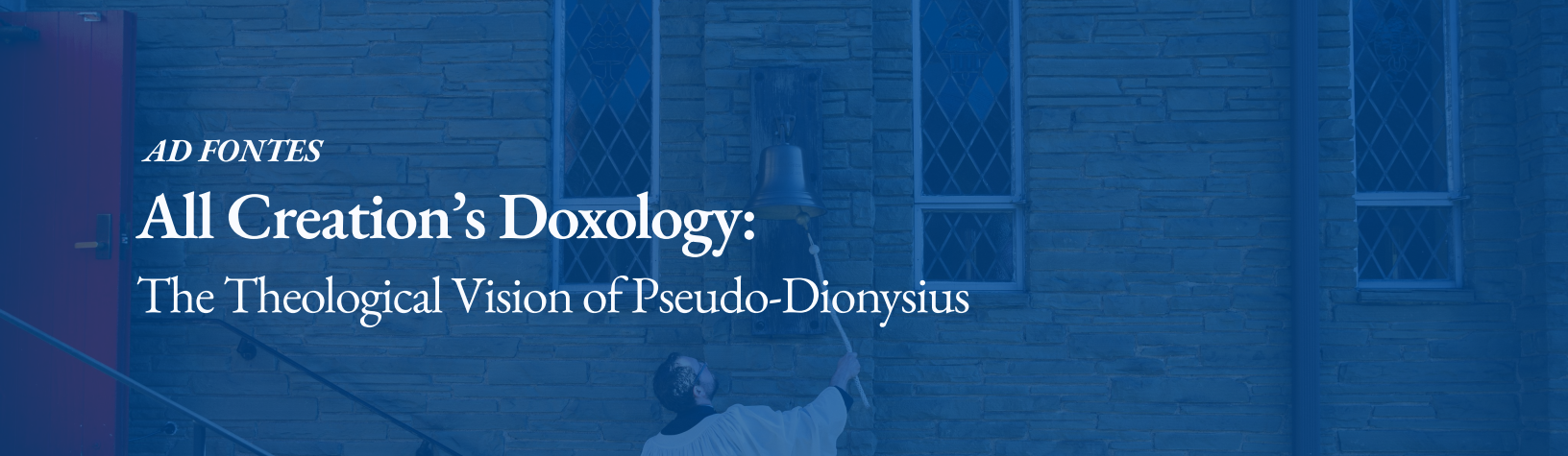




AD FONTES

All Creation's Doxology:

The Theological Vision of Pseudo-Dionysius

Track: Early Christian Theology

Course Instructor: Dr. Thomas Breedlove

Fall 2026

About The Course

Few theologians have been more influential on the shape of Christian faith and practice than the mysterious fifth-century writer, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. His writings played a significant role in Christian spirituality and ecclesiology, and he remains a crowning example of the intersection between philosophy and theology. He is also synonymous with the development of apophatic theology—the principle that God transcends human understanding and language. Apophaticism was central to Trinitarian orthodoxy and remains a key component of Latin, Greek, and Protestant thought. But apophaticism also raises critical questions for Christians today: If God exceeds every thought or imagination, what sort of relationship remains between God and the world? How does the infinite and finite come together in Christ, the Christian, and the church?

This seminar presents a unique opportunity to study one of the most important theologians of both the Greek and Latin traditions, and perhaps the most influential voice in the development of apophatic theology. Taking a slow path through the writings of Dionysius, we will explore the ongoing significance of apophatic theology not only for Christian understandings of art and aesthetics and revelation, but also for church life, enriching our understanding of the roles of bishops and priests, of ecclesial practice, liturgy, and the sacraments. The goal uniting these different conversations will be to perceive in and with Dionysius where creation, theology, and liturgy meet in doxology.

Course Format

The format consists of 1 in-person retreat and 7 virtual sessions (2 hours each). The in-person retreat will be hosted at Trinity Anglican Seminary on September 14-15 (cost of lodging and meals is included in the course registration fee). The remaining virtual sessions will be held through seminar-style discussions based on careful reading of the text for that day. For each virtual session, at least one student will present a short summary introduction of the reading and assist in leading discussion. On average, students will be expected to read about 50-75 pages of text for each session.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

*****All virtual sessions will be held Tuesdays from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. EST***

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| 1. Sept 1 (virtual): Introduction to Pseudo-Dionysius and Apophaticism <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Optional reading: Denys Turner, <i>The Darkness of God</i> | 5. Oct 27 (virtual): Revelation and Ecclesia (1) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading: <i>Ecclesiastical Hierarchy</i> (1) |
| 2. Sept 14-15 (In-person retreat at Trinity Anglican Seminary): Ascent and Descent <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading: <i>The Divine Names</i> | 6. Nov. 10 (virtual): Revelation and Ecclesia (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading: <i>Ecclesiastical Hierarchy</i> (2) |
| 3. Sept 29 (virtual): Negating Negation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading: <i>Mystical Theology</i> | 7. Nov. 24 (virtual): Symbol and Incarnation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading: <i>The Letters</i> |
| 4. Oct 13 (virtual): Heavens and Angels <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading: <i>The Celestial Hierarchy</i> | 8. Dec. 8 (virtual): Apophaticism, Imagination, and Practice Today <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading TBD |
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Required Texts

Pseudo-Dionysius. *The Complete Works*. Translated by Colm Luibheid. New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1987.

Denys Turner. *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

About the Instructor

Dr. Thomas Breedlove is the Director of Ad Fontes, a continuing education initiative at the Robert Webber Center at Trinity Anglican Seminary. Thomas received his Ph.D. in theology and ethics from Baylor University and M.Div. from Duke Divinity School. He is the author or co-author of several books, including *A Phenomenology of the Divine Image: Gregory of Nyssa and the Veil of the Flesh* (Bloomsbury, 2026) and dozens of articles and book chapters. Thomas's research focuses on dialogues between philosophy and theology, but much of his attention is turned to the resources theological learning offers to ministerial and ecclesial practice today.

