



**Summer Term 2026**  
**Theological Studies 520 - Theology of Artificial Intelligence**  
**Course Syllabus**  
**“God, the Machine, and Everything in Between”**

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### **Huron University College Land Acknowledgment**

Huron is situated on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Attawandaron, and Lenape peoples, whose sharing and stewardship of the land has been governed by the Dish with One Spoon treaty since time immemorial. We are guided by this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship, and respect. Huron University College acknowledges its past role in perpetuating colonial and exclusionary relations. Because religious and ecclesial institutions were instrumental in such relations, we consider it our particular responsibility as a Faculty of Theology to work towards justice and reconciliation.

**Course Dates:** June 13, 27, July 11, 2026

**Time:** 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM (CT), 10:00 AM – 4:30 PM (ET), with scheduled breaks

**Delivery:** Hosted via Zoom

**Instructor:** Dr. Erin Green, BSc, MDiv, MA, PhD

**Contact:** erin@thejoyfullbot.com

### **Course Description**

Artificial Intelligence is shaping human culture, relationships, and even religious imagination. In three intensive days, we will explore theological questions raised by AI: Is a chatbot my neighbour (Ammon & Reed)? Could a robot bear the image of God (Dorobantu; Burdett)? What might incarnation, sin, and salvation mean in an algorithmic age (Herzfeld; Weissenbacher)? And how should the Church respond to both the promise and perils of AI (COMECE; CEC; Pope Francis)?

Through theological reflection, hands-on experiments, and engagement with current scholarship, students will develop a critical and creative theological framework for AI in ministry and society.

### **Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, students will:

1. Identify key theological themes like creation, image of God, and redemption, in relation to AI.
2. Critically engage theological, ethical, and policy perspectives on AI.
3. Apply theological reflection to practical ministry questions involving AI.
4. Experiment with AI tools to explore theological implications.
5. Formulate an informed theological position on AI.

### **Required Text(s) [or Study Documents]**

All readings will be provided digitally. Key sources:

- Noreen Herzfeld, *In Our Image: Artificial Intelligence and the Human Spirit* (Fortress, 2002).
- Ilia Delio, *Re-Enchanting the Earth: Why AI Needs Religion* (Orbis, 2020).

### **Course Outline/Plan**

#### **Week 1 (June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026) Creation, Image, and the Machine**

**1. Pre-Class Reading:**

- a. Herzfeld, Ch. 1-2
- b. Dorobantu & Green, "Theologies of Artificial Intelligence."

**2. Topics:**

- a. What is AI? Origins, definitions, and theological perspectives
- b. Creation narratives and human making
- c. Imago Dei: relationality, creativity, embodiment

**3. Activities:**

- a. AI image generation of "Genesis 1" in multiple styles; theological reflection
- b. AI-written scripture, prayer and sermons

#### **Week 2 (June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026) Sin, Incarnation, and Salvation**

**1. Pre-Class Reading:**

- a. Foerst, Ch. 1-2

**2. Topics:**

- a. Systemic bias and broken algorithms
- b. The incarnation and the challenge of disembodied intelligence

- c. Redemption and eschatology for humans, machines, and hybrids

**3. Activities:**

- a. Bias testing in AI tools, results and theological analysis
- b. Interact with an AI pastoral care chatbot, critique theological soundness and authority
- c. Write a short “sermon.”

**Week 3 (July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026)**

**1. Pre-Class Reading:**

- a. Delio, “The Forgotten Openness of a Closed World,” Chapter 4

**2. Topics:**

- a. Christian ethics and public policy on AI
- b. Lethal autonomous weapons and church advocacy
- c. Practical ministry applications: preaching, administration, pastoral care
- d. Future trajectories: AI as parable, partner, or problem?

**3. Activities:**

- a. Role-play a church ethics committee debating the adoption of a controversial AI tool
- b. Workshop: design an AI experiment for your own ministry context
- c. Student presentations: “My Theology of AI”

**Course Bibliography**

Delio, Ilia. *Re-Enchanting the Earth: Why AI Needs Religion*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2020.

Dorobantu, Marius and Erin Green, “Theologies of Artificial Intelligence,” *Oxford Handbook of Digital Theologies* (Forthcoming, 2026)

Foerst, Anne. *God in the Machine: What Robots Teach Us About Humanity and God*. New York: Dutton, 2004.

Geraci, Robert M. “Apocalyptic AI: Religion and the Promise of Artificial Intelligence.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 1 (2008): 138-166.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfm101>.

Herzfeld, Noreen. *In Our Image: Artificial Intelligence and the Human Spirit*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.

**Method of Evaluation and Criteria for Grading**

(only for students choosing to be evaluated for full course credit)

**Participation (20%)** Students are expected to attend all three sessions, actively participate in discussions, and engage meaningfully with in-class activities, including AI experiments, online activities, and interaction with other students. This includes asking questions during the sessions and responding thoughtfully to peers' ideas and the input of the instructor. Participation also involves completing pre-class readings and bringing questions related to these to each session.

**Reflection Journal (20%) – Three entries, 200-250 words each.** After each intensive day, students will write a brief reflection responding to the day's themes, readings, and activities. Reflections should demonstrate theological thinking and personal engagement with the material, not just summarize content. Prompt questions will include:

- What theological questions or insights from today's session are staying with you?
- How did today's readings and activities challenge or confirm your existing assumptions about AI? What surprised you?
- Where do you see the benefits of AI intersecting with your own ministry context, theological tradition, or personal faith journey? Where do you see the drawbacks or harm?

**AI Experiment Report (20%) – 2-3 pages** Students will conduct a small experiment using an AI tool in a context relevant to their ministry, studies, or personal theological exploration. The report should describe what you did, analyze the theological implications of what you discovered, and reflect critically on both the promise and limitations of the tool. Examples might include testing AI for sermon preparation, pastoral care responses, Bible study facilitation, or church administration.

**Final Project: Theology of AI (40%) – 5-7 pages or creative equivalent.** Students will articulate their own theological position on AI, drawing on course readings, discussions, and experiments. Written papers should engage at least three course sources and address key theological themes (creation, image of God, incarnation, ethics, etc.). Creative projects (such as a sermon series outline, church policy document, artistic response, or multimedia presentation) must include a rationale explaining the work's theological grounding.

### Huron Grade Descriptors

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

### Student Code of Conduct

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work, and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at:

<https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

### **Statement on the Recording of Class Activities**

Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student’s own private use.

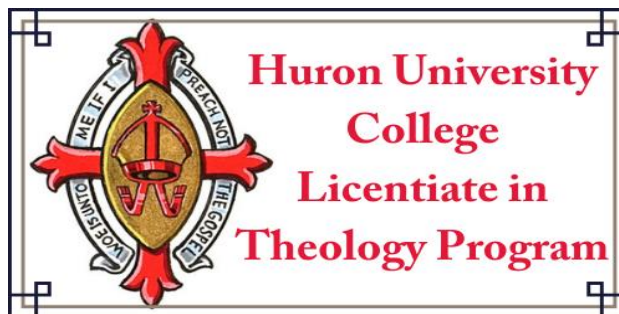
Online courses within the Licentiate in Theology Program are recorded for student engagement purposes. These recordings are only used by the registered students of the class and made available through a restricted video hosting site to respect both privacy and intellectual property. Should a student be uncomfortable with this practice, they can contact the course instructor or the LTh Program Director, Dr. Grayhame Bowcott at [grayhame.bowcott@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:grayhame.bowcott@huron.uwo.ca)

### **Statement of Prohibition on the Use of AI**

As the primary purpose of Huron’s Licentiate in Theology Program is to enable critical thinking, spiritual growth, the cultivation of individual ministry skillsets, and personal discernment for future ministry leadership, this means that we expect our students to offer up only their own ideas and original contributions of writing, assignments, and evaluative content. Any and all use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) is strictly prohibited within this program. Any student who violates this prohibition will be disqualified from receiving credit for the course they are taking. Any student who repeatedly violates this prohibition may risk expulsion from the LTh Program.

### **Support Services**

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should contact the LTh Coordinator, Chris Travers, at [chris.travers@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:chris.travers@huron.uwo.ca)



THIS COURSE HAS BEEN APPROVED BY HURON’S FACULTY OF THEOLOGY COMMITTEE FOR THE SUMMER TERM OF THE LTH PROGRAM, 2026.