



“Inductive Systematic Theology”

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The reference to the world and daily life plays a role in different approaches of theological research: It comes into view as the world of human experience, as an environment to be interpreted, or as a source of theological questions itself. In some approaches, quantitative and qualitative research is also a component of theological work - so far, mainly in practical theology. However, in German-speaking Systematic Theology there is a noticeable gap in the connection between traditional research and reflection on dogmatic topoi and the methodologically grounded research on experience of faith in everyday life and the ecclesiastical access to theology. Overall, only tentative connections seem to be present here, and recent approaches to inductive systematic-theological research seem fragmented and disconnected. Neither methodologically nor epistemologically is it clear where and for what purpose empirical observations and results of social developments or "lived theology" are taken up for systematic theological research.

For research in Systematic Theology, therefore, the question arises to what extent results and observations of social developments are relevant for its own research and what significance they have. For theological ethics on the one hand as a part of Systematic Theology this is very important, since it wants to take a stand on questions of applied ethics based on secure images of reality. For dogmatics on the other hand, several questions arise: How does dogmatics relate to realities of daily life and its religious dimensions, how does it respond to it, and from where does it obtain its material? For example, one can ask to what extent research on the doctrine of God corresponds with ecclesiastical practice and what people believe today. How do these change dogmatic formulation and argumentation? For example, can current conceptions of God be taken up as impulses for the doctrine of God, and is there possibly a necessity for this?

In the theological research landscape, various approaches can be noted that attempt to introduce the contemporary into dogmatics and ethics and mark it as relevant for systematic theological research: Public Theology, Empirical Theology, Experiential Theology, Ordinary Theology, Constructive Theology, Narrative ethics, and qualitative research in ethics.

To explore these and other questions, we plan a workshop at the Institute of Social Ethics of the University of Zurich. The workshop aims to survey and assess the relevance of empirical research in Systematic Theology by contributions from speakers who represent the named research approaches combined with short thesis papers from all invited participants. At the same time, we ask for the contribution of Systematic Theology to empirical research, relating dogmatic, hermeneutic and normative perspectives to empirical research questions in theology. Additionally, the workshop serves as an exploratory meeting founding a network on inductive theology and building an organizational frame for further cooperation networking and publishing.

Venue: “Kutscherhaus”, Ethik-Zentrum UZH, Zollikerstr. 115, 8008 Zürich

Thursday, May 4th 2023

- 01:30 pm **Welcome & Thematic Introduction** “Inductive Systematic Theology” from an ethics (Dr. Lea Chilian) and dogmatic (PD Dr. Frederike van Oorschot) point of view
- 02:00 pm Working on thesis papers: commenting Poster Walk
- 02:30 pm **Empirical Theology:** lived theology (PD Dr. Sabrina Müller, Zurich)



- 03:00 pm short break
- 03:10 pm **Ordinary Theology** (Prof. Dr. Jeff Astley, Durham)
- 03:40 pm Coffee & Tea Break
- 04:00 pm **Narrative Ethics** (PD Dr. Katharina Peetz, Landau)
- 04:30 pm Round of exchanges in small groups and plenum
- 05:20 pm Inductive research in theology – intermediate surveillances
(Prof. Dr. Andrea Bieler, Basel)
- 05:40 pm Coffee, Tea & Refreshments, walk in botanic garden
- 06:15 pm **Evening Lecture:** “Theology and the End of Doctrine”
(Prof. Dr. Christine Helmer, Chicago)
- 07:30 pm dinner

Friday, May 5 2023

- 09:00 am **Experiential Theology:** liberation and pragmatist theology (Dr. Raúl E. Zagarra-Medina, Chicago/Lima)
- 09:30 am **Everyday Theology** (Ass. Prof. Kristin Graff-Kallevåg, Oslo)
- 10:00 am Coffee & Tea Break
- 10:30 am **Constructive Theology** (Dr. Henco Van Der Westhuizen, Bloemfontein)
- 11:00 pm **Public Theology** (Dr. Florian Höhne, Erlangen-Nürnberg)
- 11:30 Round of exchanges in small groups and plenum
- 12.30 pm Lunch
- 01:30 pm Poster Walk and Pair work: additions and synopsis
- 02:00 pm Coffee & Tea Break
- 02:15 pm **Discussion:** Inductive research and interaction in theological disciplines
(Dr. Megan Arndt, Heidelberg; Dr. Kinga Zeller, Kiel; Katharina Merian, Basel)
- 03:15 pm Prospects, Closing and Farewell Note
- 03:30 pm end of workshop

Evening Lecture: 35 min + 15 min discussion
Lecture: 20 min + 10 min discussion
Theses: due to April 24th
Discussion: 7 min Input, followed by plenary discussion