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**Descriptive Summary**

**Identifier**  
ICU.SPCL.GILKEYL

**Title**  
Gilkey, Langdon. Papers

**Date**  
1921-2004

**Size**  
11 linear feet (23 boxes)

**Repository**  
Special Collections Research Center  
University of Chicago Library  
1100 East 57th Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

**Abstract**  
Langdon Brown Gilkey taught at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago from 1963 until his retirement in 1989. He was a prominent protestant theologian, an expert on the relation between science and religion, and a key respondent to the rise of intelligent design as a way of teaching creationism. During 1940-1945 he taught at Yenching University (now part of Peking University) in Beijing, China, then occupied by the Japanese, and from 1943 to 1945 he was interned along with other Allied civilians at the Weihsien Internment Camp (or Weihhsien Civilian Assembly Center). The collection contains official and personal correspondence, notes, manuscripts and typescripts, newspaper clippings, postcards, periodicals and other publications, photographs, and administrative documents dating between 1934 and 2004. The bulk of the material dates between 1940-1945 and 1954-2004. The papers primarily document Langdon Gilkey’s life in China during the Second World War and his professional career as theologian, academician, and professor at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago and other institutions.

**Information on Use**

**Access**

Series VI of the collection contains evaluative student materials, which are restricted for eighty years after the date of record creation.

**Citation**

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Gilkey, Langdon. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

**Biographical Note**

Langdon Brown Gilkey (b. 1919 and d. 2004) was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois. His father, Rev. Charles W. Gilkey (1882-1968), was chaplain of the Rockefeller Memorial Chapel.
on the campus of the University of Chicago and Associate Dean of the Divinity School. Langdon Gilkey acquired his A.B. from Harvard University in 1940 and a joint Ph.D. from Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary in 1954. Gilkey taught at Union Theological Seminary in New York from 1949 to 1950, Vassar College from 1951 to 1954, and Vanderbilt University from 1954 to 1963. In July 1963 he was appointed to the faculty of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. After his retirement in 1989, Gilkey taught periodically at the University of Virginia and Georgetown University.

From 1940 to 1942, Gilkey taught at Yenching University (now part of Peking University) in Beijing, China, which was then occupied by the Japanese. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States and Japan formally entered into war, and Gilkey was interned along with other Allied civilians by the Japanese in the Weihsien Internment Camp in Shandong, China from 1943 until the end of the war; this act may be seen as a retaliation to the forceful relocation of Japanese Americans by the United States. Gilkey discussed the formative impact of this experience in Shantung Compound: The Story of Men and Women Under Pressure (1968), and he revisited the compound in 1995.

A prominent American Protestant Theologian, Langdon Gilkey authored fifteen books and several hundred scholarly articles during his career. He systematically outlined his theology in three major works: Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God-Language (1969), Repeating the Whirlwind: A Christian Interpretation of History (1976), and Message and Existence: An Introduction to Christian Theology (1979). He is best known for his writings on science and religion, including Creationism on Trial: God at Little Rock (1985) that builds upon his testimony at McLean v. Arkansas, a landmark case on the teaching of creationism in public schools. Gilkey wrote authoritatively on twentieth-century theologians Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich; both were his teachers at Union Theological Seminary. Gilkey also fostered exchanges between theological traditions. He offered a Protestant perspective on the theological movements of Vatican II in Catholicism Confronts Modernity (1975). He authored articles and reviews on Christian-Buddhist dialogues and taught at Kyoto University in Japan in 1975.

Scope Note

The Langdon Gilkey Papers are organized into six series: Series I: Personal; Series II: Correspondence; Series III: Teaching; Series IV: Writings and Research; Series V: Audio-Visual; and Series VI: Restricted. The collection contains official and personal correspondence, notes, manuscripts and typescripts, newspaper clippings, postcards, periodicals and other publications, photographs, and administrative documents dating between 1934 and 2004. The bulk of the material dates between 1940-1945 and 1954-2004. The papers primarily document Langdon Gilkey’s life in China during the Second World War and his professional career as theologian, academician, and professor at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago and other institutions.
Series I, Personal, contains materials primarily related to Gilkey’s pre-professional life and personal activities. Highlights of the series are materials documenting Langdon Gilkey’s activities in Japanese-occupied China during the Second World War from 1940-1945. These materials include letters between Gilkey and his family. Many of them show the difficult modes of communication between Allied-controlled and occupied territories during the Second World War; after Pearl Harbor, Gilkey had to rely on middlepersons or the Red Cross to contact his family. Also notable are records of the kitchen of the Weihsien Internment Camp (1943-1945); the Japanese let the civilian internees govern the Camp by themselves, and from 1943 to 1945 Gilkey worked as a manager of the Camp’s kitchen. Also included are pamphlets, maps, and other materials related to Yenching University (now part of Peking University). This series also includes some of Charles Gilkey’s papers.

Series II, Correspondence, contains Gilkey’s letters from and to his professional colleagues, including his past students, and other academic institutions. Due to their evaluative nature, letters of recommendation are included in Series VI, restricted. Gilkey’s personal correspondence from China is included in Series I, Personal.

Series III, Teaching, contains Gilkey’s lecture notes, syllabi, and other materials related to his teaching at Union Theological Seminary, Vassar College, Vanderbilt University, the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, the University of Virginia, and Georgetown University. It also contains materials documenting Gilkey’s teaching at Japan (1975) and Hong Kong (2001-2002).

Series IV, Writings and Research, constitutes the bulk of the collection. It mainly consists of Gilkey’s writings in a variety of formats: notes, conference presentations, articles, talks, speeches, sermons, and court testimonials. It also includes his collection of academic essays, articles, and periodicals, as well as the travel documents, pamphlets, and correspondence specifically related to the academic events he attended. Highlights of this series are drafts of Gilkey’s publications and different versions of his articles or conference presentations.

Series V, Audio-Visual, consists of portraits of Gilkey and a few unidentified photographs, which could be family pictures.

Series VI: Restricted, contains Gilkey’s evaluated work from college and graduate school, and student grades, letters of recommendation, and other evaluative materials from his teaching. Materials are restricted for eighty years after the date of record creation.

Related Resources
The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:
Gilkey, Charles Whitney Papers

Subject Headings

- Gilkey, Langdon Brown, 1919-2004
- Gilkey, Charles Whitney, 1882-1968
- University of Chicago
- Theology—Study and teaching—United States
- Theology—United States
- Creationism—United States
- Weihsien Civilian Assembly Center

INVENTORY

Series I: Personal

This series mainly documents Gilkey’s pre-Professional life and personal activities. It also includes Charles Gilkey’s correspondence in relation to Langdon Gilkey’s activities in China, as well as Charles Gilkey’s papers. Materials are ordered chronologically.

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  Correspondence from China [2/3], 1941
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  “Life in an Internment Camp,” 1945
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    Correspondence of Charles Gilkey, 1928-1945
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    Harvard 25th Reunion, 1965
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    Koinonia Partners, Brochures and Newsletters, 1973-1975
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    Memorial Service for Ioan Culianu, University of Chicago, 1991
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    Miscellaneous materials on health and medicine, 1991
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    “Fifty Years Later: Shantung Compound Revisited,” 1995
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    Newspaper Clipping – The Highlander, 1996
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    Newspaper Clipping – Washington Post, 1999
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Series II: Correspondence

This series mainly contains Gilkey’s correspondence with professional colleagues and academic institutions. Materials are ordered according to the last names of the correspondents.

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   Hartshorne, Charles, 1965

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   Hersey, John, 1984-1985

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   Lippitz, Charles, 1991

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   O'Brien, Bill, 1993

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   Ogletree, T.W., 1969
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  Olivetti, Marco M., 1991
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  Pasewark, Kyle, 1993-1995
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  Payne, Richard J, 1986
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  Pool, Jeff D., 1994-1995
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  Pultz, David, 1996
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  Reeves, Gene, 1995
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  Scharf, Uwe Carsten, 1993-1994
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  Sifton, Elisabeth, 1997
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  Spahn, Jeffrey, 1992
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  Wilson, Richard F, 2003
Box 3
Folder 9
  Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1990-1998
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Series III: Teaching

This series contains Gilkey’s lecture notes, syllabi, and other materials related to his teaching. Materials are grouped according to the related courses and institutions and are ordered chronologically.

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Vanderbilt University – Seminar on Augustine, 1955

Box 3
Folder 13
Vanderbilt University and University of Chicago – “History of Christine Doctrine,” 1955, 1964

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Folder 14
Vanderbilt University – Lectures for Ministers Conference, 1955-57

Box 3
Folder 15
Vanderbilt University – Seminars on Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich, 1956-1961

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Box 3
Folder 18
Vanderbilt University – Courses on Luther and Calvin, 1962-1963

Box 3
Folder 19
Vanderbilt University – REL 356 “Development of Liberal Theology,” 1963

Box 3
Folder 20
University of Chicago – “The Nature of the Church,” 1962-75

Box 3
Folder 21
University of Chicago – “History of Christian Thought,” 1965

Box 3
Folder 22
University of Chicago and University of Virginia – Miscellaneous, 1966-93
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Folder 2
University of Chicago – “Philosophy of Religion II,” circa 1970

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Folder 3
University of Chicago – Courses on Alfred North Whitehead, 1972-1976

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Folder 4
University of Chicago – “Religious Thoughts to 1500,” 1975

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Folder 5
University of Chicago – CT 305 “Introduction to Theology,” 1976-1980

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University of Chicago – “Theology of History II,” 1976

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University of Chicago – Courses on Niebuhr, 1977-1984

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Folder 10
University of Chicago – Various Lecture Notes, 1984-1987

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University of Chicago – CT 457 “Religion and Science”

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Folder 12
University of Chicago – CT 405 “Søren Kierkegaard,” 1986-1987

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Folder 13
University of Chicago – “Doctrine of God” and “God and other Religions,” 1987

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University of Chicago – Teaching Notes, 1990

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University of Virginia – RELG 562 “The Development of Liberal Theology,” 1993

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University of Virginia – Theology 320 “The Issue of Religious Pluralism,” 1993

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Lecture at George Washington University, 1994

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Folder 1
Courses on Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr at Various Institutions, 1995-1999

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Lecture Notes for Teaching in Japan, 1973-1975

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Folder 6
Teaching Materials for Seminars in Japan, circa 1975

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Folder 7
Chung Chi College, the Chinese University of Hong Kong – RST 2232 “God, Creation, and Eschatology,” 2001-2002

Box 5

Folder 8
Lecture on Reinhold Niebuhr, 2001

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“Secularism, Fundamentalism, and the Religious Dimension,” ND circa 2000s

Series IV: Writings and Research
This series mainly consists of Gilkey’s academic writings and other documents related to his professional activities. Materials in this series are ordered chronologically.
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“Leibniz and Santayana: a Rationalist and a Naturalist Compared,” 1940

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Folder 11
Writings of Reinhold Niebuhr, 1942-1945

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Folder 12
Notes on Alfred North Whitehead, 1948-1969

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Notes on Classical Backgrounds, circa 1950

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Luther Reading Notes, circa 1950

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Notes on John Dewey, circa 1950-1954

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Folder 2
  Two Essays on Biblical Theology, circa 1960

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Folder 3
  Articles at Vanderbilt University, 1961-1962

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  Articles and Reviews at Vanderbilt University, 1962

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  Lectures on Romans in Nashville, 1962

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Folder 8
  Original Manuscripts of New Published Materials, 1963-1969

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  “Some Problems in the Concept of Providence,” circa 1963

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“How I am making up my mind,’ 1964-1965
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Article in The Baptist Student, 1965
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“Dissolution and Reconstruction in Theology,” 1965
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Folder 13
“Is God Dead?” 1965
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Notes on Alfred North Whitehead, 1965-1983
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Preface to “Man is Estrangement,” 1965
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Paul Tillich’s Christology, 1965-1980
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Review, Adams, Paul Tillich’s Philosophy of Culture, Science, and Religions, 1965
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Review, Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, 1965
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Review, McKelway, The Systematic Theology of Paul Tillich, 1965
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“Secularism’s Impact on Contemporary Theology,” 1965
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“The Darwinian Controversy and Christian Thought,” circa 1965
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Miscellaneous Articles, 1966-1975
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“American Policy and the Just War,” 1968
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Review, Jenkins, The Christian Belief in God, 1968
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Review, Rahner, Spirit in the World, 1970
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Review, Pannenberg, Basic Questions in Theology, 1973-1974
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“The Problem of a Nineteenth Century Theology,” 1973

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“The Structure of Academic Revolutions,” 1973

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“Reinhold Niebuhr’s Theology of History,” 1973-1974

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Review, Heilbroner, The Human Project, 1974

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“The Contribution of Theology to the Comprehension of History,” 1976

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Review, Nishitani, Religion and Nothingness, circa 1982

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“Theological Frontiers: Implications for Bioethics,” 1983

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“Events, Meaning, and the Current Tasks of Theology,” 1984
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Articles for The New Handbook of Christian Theology, 1990
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“Assessment of David Tracy’s Plurality and Ambiguity, 1990
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“Three Lectures on Science and Religion,” circa 1990

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“What of Value does Religion have to say to Science?” 1990

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“Christian Faithfulness: Culture as Ally and Enemy,” 1991

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This series consists of student grades, recommendations, and other evaluative records, as well as college and graduate school papers of Gilkey himself. Folders dedicated to particular students are ordered alphabetically and other folders chronologically. Materials are restricted for eighty years after the date of record creation.

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