THEO 111-16 Theological Foundations

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Course Description:
A foundational approach to Christian theology as a mutually critical dialogue between human experience and religious traditions, this course will explore ways human experience reveals a deeper reality, especially as mediated through sacred scriptures and religious traditions. Students will do more than come to understand religious doctrines and practices; they will assess the social, political, and moral implications of religious faith for specific socio-cultural contexts and the difference these make for life in the world today.

THEO 111 is part of the Ethics/Religion and Society Focus (E/RS) of Xavier’s core curriculum. As such, this course will partner with the aim of the E/RS program to provide opportunities for ethical and/or religious analysis of socially significant issues in encouraging a worldview that is engaged with questions of peace, justice and responsible action for right-relationships.

Course Objectives:
To successfully complete THEO 111, students will:
1. Think critically and make intelligent judgments about the questions that they encounter in the study of Christian theology. Critical thought is practiced through identifying, analyzing, integrating, synthesizing, and evaluating complex information in a clear and effective manner.
2. Reflect on the varieties of personal experience and come to understand how faith is a developing response to revelatory experiences, both personal and social. Develop an enriched understanding of political, economic, historical, and other cultural forces in the world around them through the study of Christianity as a cultural and still global phenomenon.
3. Examine how revelatory experience is found in and transmitted through story, symbol, myth, doctrine, moral norms, and religious practices. Take part in the traditioning process of Christian theology by engaging biblical criticism and the development of doctrine in various fields (e.g., theological anthropology, Christian ethics, etc).
4. Develop their ability to approach ethical issues from a variety of perspectives through the study of Christianity in various historical and cultural contexts. Demonstrate moral discernment through a Judeo-Christian ethical framework and consider the implications for one’s sense of identity, interpretation of socio-cultural context, and exercise of social responsibilities (e.g., community service, E/RS focus in core curriculum, etc).
5. Read, write, speak, and listen clearly, purposefully, and appropriately in a range of rhetorical situations.

Required Texts:
**Course Assessment:**

1. **Preparation and Participation (15%)**: Students are expected to be present for every class as each class meeting is considered a vital part of the learning process. Accordingly, students should arrive on time, bring a hard copy of the assigned reading and be prepared to speak to/from it, take thorough notes, and participate in discussion through raising questions and comments that will help us (a) identify the main points; (b) analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the argument(s) constructed by the author(s); and (c) apply this material to life in the world today, especially in the area of theological beliefs and practices.
   - Please also note the following expectations:
     a. For every class, students should bring a 3x5 note card that includes (1) on the front: a thesis statement or key quote from the assigned reading that represents a main take-away from what the student learned from this material and (2) on the back: a question for clarification or conversation to help initiate a lively discussion in class. Students should write their name and the corresponding date on each note card and turn in their note card before the start of each class (these will be recorded as part of the participation grade).
     b. As a sign of respect to all, please be on time for class and do not plan to leave until class has concluded. If a student arrives late several times, it may be counted as an absence.
     c. If an absence is unavoidable, please email the instructor beforehand whenever possible. Excessive absences (more than 3) over the course of the semester will result in a lower final grade. More than 6 absences will automatically result in failing the course. No distinction is made between “excused” and “unexcused” absences for this policy.
     d. Students should not use phones, tablets, or laptops (etc.) during class. This also means class meetings should not be recorded. If a student does not comply with this rule, this may result in a grade reduction. (Please note: if a student needs to use technology to accommodate a learning disability, please see the instructor.)
     e. Each student is required to schedule at least one office hour visit before Fall Break to check-in on a personal basis (more than one check-in is welcome, of course).

2. **Quizzes and Worksheets (25%)**: Student comprehension of readings and class conversations will be evaluated by quizzes (that may be scheduled or unannounced) and worksheets (posted on Canvas and due at various points in the semester). Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class and cannot be made up in the case of absence. The lowest quiz or worksheet score will be dropped before calculated for the total grade.

3. **Reflection Essays and Advocacy Project (40%)**: Students will be assigned three 1,200-2,000 word essays throughout the semester and one group social/multi-media advocacy project – worth 10% each. Each task will be an opportunity to demonstrate specific and substantial understanding of the course material and effective reflection, analysis, and application of its relevance for the world today. Please keep in mind that all written work should be formatted in a Word document in standard MLA style (1 inch margins; size 12 Times New Roman font; double-spaced; use parenthetical citations, footnotes or endnotes to properly cite any ideas or phrases that are not your own). Essays and Advocacy Project material (social/multi-media files or links, any data collected, including any evaluative content) should be submitted via Canvas by the deadline noted in the Course Schedule (see below). Additional instructions will be provided later in the semester; feel free to raise questions with the instructor before the due date.

4. **Final Essay (20%)**: In lieu of a final exam, students will be assigned a 3,000-4,000 word summary and synthesis essay, which will be submitted on Canvas by Friday, December 18 by 12pm. Insofar as this essay will cover each of the units of study covered throughout the entire semester, careful reading, taking detailed notes, and making good use of the handouts provided all semester long will vastly improve a student’s ability to excel in this key opportunity to demonstrate the extent of one’s learning.
Grading Scale:
Grading is cumulative over the course of the semester. Student participation and submitted work will earn grades based on the demonstrated level of effort, comprehension of material, thoughtful reflection, insightful analysis, and creative/constructive application following this letter grade scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-94</td>
<td>Superior work. Exceptional academic performance that is an uncommonly high academic achievement. Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, critical analysis, effective communication and creativity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>93-92</td>
<td>Superior work. Exceptional academic performance that is an uncommonly high academic achievement. Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, critical analysis, effective communication and creativity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>91-90</td>
<td>Good work. An academic performance that is high quality. Demonstrates an above average competency in terms of critical analysis, effective communication and creativity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>89-87</td>
<td>Good work. An academic performance that is high quality. Demonstrates an above average competency in terms of critical analysis, effective communication and creativity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>86-84</td>
<td>Good work. An academic performance that is high quality. Demonstrates an above average competency in terms of critical analysis, effective communication and creativity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>83-82</td>
<td>Fair work. A satisfactory academic performance that meets an average level of competency including understanding of basic ideas and concepts with some critical reflection and analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>81-79</td>
<td>Fair work. A satisfactory academic performance that meets an average level of competency including understanding of basic ideas and concepts with some critical reflection and analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>78-76</td>
<td>Fair work. A satisfactory academic performance that meets an average level of competency including understanding of basic ideas and concepts with some critical reflection and analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>75-74</td>
<td>Meeting the minimum academic performance sufficient to pass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>73-71</td>
<td>Meeting the minimum academic performance sufficient to pass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>70-68</td>
<td>Meeting the minimum academic performance sufficient to pass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>67-0</td>
<td>Failure. An unacceptable performance; not college level work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This grade scale is taken directly from the [Theology Department’s Grading Policy](#); please consult this page for more precise guidelines.

Academic Integrity:
All of the university’s policies regarding various forms of academic misconduct are in effect for this course. Xavier’s Academic Honesty policy reads,

> The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record including letters of recommendation. All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student's own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another's efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one's own. Penalties for violations of this policy may include one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an "F" in the course, and expulsion from the University. The dean of the college in which the student is enrolled is to be informed in writing of all such incidents, though the teacher has full authority to assign the grade for the assignment, test, or course.

If a student has any questions about this policy, please consult the full [Academic Honesty Policy](#) and the instructor.

Please note that information about effective and appropriate research can be found at [XU.tutor](#).
Course Policies:

1. Academic achievement: The instructor is passionate about helping students learn and grow in intellectual inquiry, critical thought, and the application of ideas discussed in this course. Toward that end, students are encouraged to communicate any particular interests or needs to the instructor and take advantage of the resources available through the Office of Student Success (CLC 514) and Learning Assistance Center (e.g., for help with study skills, tutoring, or a learning disability).

2. Feedback: Students will receive feedback from the instructor on written work, and as necessary, on quizzes and class participation. Students will have the chance to evaluate the course’s (and the instructor’s) effectiveness around mid-term so improvements can be made before the end of the semester. The instructor is always happy to give or receive feedback, so please feel free to request or provide feedback via phone, email, or an office visit. Please feel very welcome to stop by during office hours. Scheduling an appointment beforehand (during or outside this posted availability) will ensure the instructor’s undivided attention to your comments, questions, or other concerns.

3. Class participation: As noted above, students are expected to be actively engaged in the material and conversations by listening, taking notes, and speaking during class. Students must bring the assigned readings and be prepared to speak to/from the texts during every class meeting. Students may be called on to share their response to the readings and discussions at any time. To establish a classroom environment conducive to active, inclusive participation, we will maintain respect, honesty, and trust among everyone. This is a space that welcomes all (thoughtful and respectful) views and also seeks to get “underneath” current observations or convictions to critically assess the foundational values, perspectives, and biases. As such, students are encouraged to reflect on why they form their comments and questions; the more we can reflect on and share how and why we are developing new inquiry and insights about the course content and its application, the more precise and profound our learning can become. To this end, side conversations, using technology in the classroom (e.g., texting), or consistently refraining from active participation will result in a lower level of learning and, correspondingly, earn a lower participation grade. If a student experiences difficulty in this learning environment, please see the instructor, who is happy to work with you.

4. Written assignments: Please follow the guidelines stated in this syllabus and in the assignment instructions posted on Canvas. All written assignments should follow MLA guidelines and be free of spelling and grammar mistakes. If student work is found to have numerous typographical errors, it may be returned to be corrected and resubmitted. If you would like help with your writing style, please see the instructor or consult the Writing Center before the assignment is due. Ideas and phrases that are not your own must be cited appropriately (parenthetically or with footnotes). In fairness to all students, all assignments must be turned in on time and late work will earn a lowered grade in proportion to how much time has passed since the deadline. Exceptions or extensions can only be granted before the due date of the assignment.

5. Workload: Students are expected to spend 6-9 hours a week outside of class time to complete the assignments for this course. Please discuss any concerns about the workload with the instructor.

6. Extra credit: Work for extra credit – typically an essay relating a current issue, campus event, article, etc. to course material to demonstrate a student’s understanding and application of theological inquiry – is accepted via Canvas on a rolling basis until Monday, December 14 at 5pm. For more detailed instructions, please see the course page on Canvas and/or contact the instructor.

7. Communication: Please check your Xavier email and the course Canvas site regularly for communication about THEO 111, as any changes or updates will be shared therein. The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus as needed, and will do so with as much advance notice as possible.
Course Schedule:

**Please note:** All readings not included in the required texts (i.e., online readings as well as pdfs) are available in the Module and Pages sections of the course Canvas page, designated below with the double asterisk (**).

1) Monday, August 24: Introduction to the Course
   - Discuss in class:
     i. Why Xavier? Why Jesuit? Why study theology?
     ii. John O’Malley, “In this Place” BC Magazine (Spring 2014)**

2) Wednesday, August 26: Theology in College
   - Read for class:
     i. Mark Bauerlein, “What’s the Point of a Professor?” The New York Times (05/09/15)**
     ii. Jana Bennett, “People of No Morals” Catholic Moral Theology (09/06/11)**
     iii. Hunter Rawlings, “College is Not a Commodity…” The Washington Post (06/09/15)**
     iv. Brendan Busse, “Before You Know It” The Jesuit Post (09/30/14)**

3) Friday, August 28: Jesuit Education for the World Today
   - Read for class:
     ii. Peter Hans Kolvenbach, “The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice” (10/06/00)**

4) Monday, August 31: Who is God?
   - Read for class:
     i. Himes, Doing the Truth in Love, pp. 5-22.
     iii. Brendan Busse, “Known Better” The Jesuit Post (06/30/15)**

5) Wednesday, September 2: Who are we?
   - Read for class:
     i. Brendan Busse, “Care-less,” TJP (06/09/13)**
     ii. Sam Sawyer, “Asking for More,” TJP (07/15/13)**

6) Friday, September 4: Seeking God
   - Read for class:
     i. Brendan Busse, “Imaginary Friend Jesus” TJP (08/04/15)**
     iii. Augustine, Confessions, Book I Chapters 1-5; Book II Ch.1-10: Book VI Ch. 5-6; Book VIII Ch. 1, 3, 5, and 12**

7) Monday, September 7: **NO CLASS – Labor Day**

8) Wednesday, September 9: Contemplating God as Love
   - Read for class:
     i. Brendan Busse, “To Be A Better Lover” TJP (06/02/15)**
     ii. Walter Burghardt, “Contemplation”**
     iii. (Bible) Epistle of 1 John (pp. 2072-2078)
9) Friday, September 11: What is theology?
   • Read for class:

10) Monday, September 14: What can we know?
    • Read for class:

11) Wednesday, September 16: The Task of Theology
    • Read for class:
      ii. Matt Spots, “What Does it Mean to Experience God?” *TJP* (07/17/12)**

12) Friday, September 18: Understanding Revelation
    • Read for class:
      i. Migliore, pp. 21-65.
      ii. Pauline Viviano, "Redeeming Bible" *America* (02/05/15)**

13) Sunday, September 20: Theological Autobiography Due (Submit via Canvas by 5pm).

14) Monday, September 21: Trinity: The Living God of Life
    • Read for class:
      ii. (Bible) Matthew 3:1-4:1 (pp. 1671-1672)
      iii. (Bible) John 14:1-31 (pp. 1842-1843)
      iv. (Bible) Acts 1:1-2:47 (pp. 1857-1861)

15) Wednesday, September 23: The Triune God
    • Read for class:
      i. Migliore, pp. 66-90.
      ii. Anna Nussbaum Keating, “Separation Anxiety” *America* (02/17/14)**

16) Friday, September 25: Good Creation
    i. Johnson, pp. 181-201.

17) Monday, September 28: Our Common Home
    • Read for class:
      i. Migliore, pp. 96-120.
      ii. Meghan Clark, “Laudato Si’: On Care for …” *Millennial* (06/18/15)**

18) Wednesday, September 30: Imago Dei
    • Read for class:
      i. Migliore, pp. 143-166.
19) Friday, October 2: *Imago Dei*, continued
   - Read for class:
     i. (Bible) Genesis, Intro and Ch. 1-4:16, 6-9:17 (pp. 3-11, 13-17).
     iii. Eric Immel, “If I Were a Boy: Beyonce, Jesus, and I” *TJP* (09/16/14)**

20) Monday, October 5 – **NO CLASS**

21) Wednesday, October 7 – **NO CLASS**

22) Friday, October 9 – **NO CLASS – Fall Break**

23) Monday, October 12: Human Freedom
   - Read for class:
     i. Migliore, pp. 121-142.
     ii. Sachs, pp. 27-34.
     iii. Jen Owens, “Transfiguration,” *Daily Theology* (03/16/14)**
   - Watch for class:
     i. *Wealth Inequality in America***

24) Wednesday, October 14: The Person in Community
   - Read for class:
     i. Sachs, pp. 35-42.
   - Watch for class:

25) Friday, October 16: The Covenant is for Right-Relationship
   - Read for class:
     i. (Bible) Deuteronomy Intro, Ch 5-8, 15:1-18 (pp. 255-256, 265-270, 279-280).
     ii. (Bible) Amos Intro, Ch 1-6 (pp. 1216-1225).
     iii. (Bible) Acts of the Apostles Intro, Ch. 1-2, 4-5 (pp. 1855-1865).
     iv. Meghan Clark, “A Culture of Sexual Assault” *Millennial* (01/25/14)**

26) Sunday, October 18: *Theology and Culture Essay Due* (Submit via Canvas by 5pm).

27) Monday, October 19: To *Be* Human
   - Read for class:
     i. Sachs, pp. 43-74.
     ii. Why Are Some Bodies More Privileged than Others? – Selections on Canvas
        1. white privilege: https://www.isr.umich.edu/home/diversity/resources/white-privilege.pdf**
        2. male privilege: http://amptoons.com/blog/the-male-privilege-checklist/**
28) Wednesday, October 21: God in Jesus Christ
   • Read for class:
     i. Johnson, 49-69.
     ii. James Martin, “Ten Things I Wish Everyone Knew About Jesus” Faith Street (11/03/14)**
   • Watch for class:
     i. Why I Hate Religion But Love Jesus and Why I Love Religion, and Jesus**

29) Friday, October 23: The Person and Work of Jesus Christ
   • Read for class:
     i. Migliore, pp. 168-174, 179-203.
     ii. John Slattery, “The Resurrection Was Not …” Daily Theology (04/07/12)**

30) Monday, October 26: Jesus Christ in Context
   • Read for class:
     i. Migliore, pp. 205-231.
     ii. Bryan Massingale, “Sharing Our Faith ...” (05/04/05)**

31) Wednesday, October 28: The Good News of Jesus Christ
   • Read for class:
     i. (Bible) The Gospel of Mark (pp. 1722-1740).
     ii. Justin McBrayer, “Why Our Children Don’t Think There are Moral Facts” New York Times (03/02/15)**

32) Friday, October 30: The Good News of Jesus Christ, continued
   • Read for class:
     i. (Bible) The Gospel of Mark (pp. 1740-1758).

33) Monday, November 2: The God Who Liberates
   • Read for class:
     i. Johnson, pp. 70-89, 113-132.
   • Complete for class:
     i. Calculate your Slavery Footprint.**

34) Wednesday, November 4: The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life
   • Read for class:
     i. Migliore, pp. 232-258.
     ii. Meghan Clark, “St. Mary Magdalene,” Millennial (07/22/13)**
     iii. Amanda Osheim, “Fear or Faith?” Daily Theology (07/10/14)**

35) Friday, November 6: The New Community
   • Read for class:
     ii. Lumen Gentium, paragraphs 1-17, 30-39**
36) Monday, November 9: The Church’s Mission
   • Read for class:
     i. Migliore, pp. 286-313.
     ii. Jeremy Zipple, “Global Catholicism” TJP (02/24/14)**
     iii. Elise Harris, “This is Your House” CNA (03/27/15)**

37) Wednesday, November 11: The Sacramental Life
   • Read for class:
     i. Himes, pp. 100-135.
     ii. Jason Brauninger, “Spiritual and Religious,” TJP (05/14/12)**

38) Friday, November 13: Christian Life in the World
   • Read for class:
     i. Himes, pp. 68-82.
     ii. Sachs, pp. 75-102.

39) Monday, November 16: Agape
   • Read for class:
     i. Sachs, pp. 103-112.
     ii. Himes, pp. 50-67 and 136-144.
     iii. Keith Maczkiewicz, “Impoverished Definitions” TJP (05/12/15)**

40) Wednesday, November 18: Hope
   • Read for class:
     i. Migliore, pp. 347-373.
     ii. Jason Welle, “Complicity and the Cross,” TJP (03/29/13)**

41) Friday, November 20: Faith for Unity
   • Read for class:
     i. (Bible) 1 Corinthians, Intro and Ch. 1-3, 5, 8-13 (pp. 1932-1937, 1938-1939, 1942-1950)
     ii. (Bible) 2 Corinthians, Intro and Ch. 1, 3-8 (pp. 1956-1959, 1961-1967)
     iii. Fran Rossi Szypulczyn, “Thinking About the Gospel is Not Living It,” Daily Theology (02/21/14)**

42) Sunday, November 21: Scripture and Ethics Essay Due (Submit via Canvas by 5pm).

43) Monday, November 23: New Questions for Theology
   • Read for class:
     i. Johnson, pp. 90-112, 133-152.

44) Wednesday, November 25: NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break

45) Friday, November 27: NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break
46) Monday, November 30: Generous God of Religions
   •  Read for class:
      ii. Michael Rossmann, “Bedroom Window Spirituality” TJP (10/15/12)**

47) Wednesday, December 2: Buddhism and Christianity In Conversation
   •  Read for class:
      i.  Thich Nhat Hanh, Living Buddha, Living Christ**
      ii. Christian Piatt, “Five Things Christianity Can Learn From Buddhism” Sojourners (04/16/15)**

48) Friday, December 4: Jesus Christ and Religious Plurality
   •  Read for class:
      ii. Jacqueline Lewis, “A Journey Toward Radical Welcome” Sojourners (04/20/15)**

49) Sunday, December 6: Advocacy Project Due (Submit via Canvas by 5pm).

50) Monday, December 7: A Paradigm of Discipleship in the World Today
   •  Read for class:
      i.  Boyle, Tattoos on the Heart, pp. xi-40
   •  Watch for class:
      i.  “LA Gang Members Transformed”**

51) Wednesday, December 9: From Disgrace to Compassion
    i.  Boyle, Tattoos on the Heart, pp. 41-82.
    ii. Kevin Ahern, “From Apathy to Social Action” Daily Theology (09/11/14)**

52) Friday, December 11: Solidarity and Kinship
    •  Read for class:
      i.  Boyle, pp. 167-212.
      ii. Brendan Busse, “The Dirtiest Word in Higher Education” TJP (07/17/14)**

53) Monday, December 14: All Extra Credit, Revised, and Late Assignments Due by 5pm via Canvas

54) Final Essay Due: Friday, December 18 by 12pm (noon) on Canvas