2014

111-16 Theological Foundations

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Theo 111-16  
Theological Foundations  
Monday, Wednesday, Friday; 12:00-12:50 p.m.  
Smith Hall, room G27  
Instructor: Mary Anne Bressler  
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Texts: *Faith Religion & Theology* by Brennan Hill, Paul Knitter, Bill Madges
Students will need a Bible. A study Bible such as the Oxford Annotated is helpful but not required.  
Paraphrase Bibles are not acceptable.  
Handouts and/or e-reserves will be assigned.

Objectives:
To examine the nature of faith, religion and theology and to explore their interconnections, specifically through the lens of the Christian tradition.  
To provide a basic introduction to the fundamental beliefs of major world religions.  
To introduce sound methods of interpreting scripture.  
To examine the connection between faith and moral decision-making.

Overview: This course will introduce the academic study of theology. The starting point will be an examination of faith as a personal experience of some kind of Ultimate Reality. How does that faith develop in community? How does one come to faith in a deity? What role does religion play in individual faith development and in the academic study of theology? In what ways do major world religions express faith and theology? How do these beliefs inform the development of conscience and the process of ethical decision making? Students will examine the scriptures of the Christian traditions and research methods of critical interpretation.

PURPOSE OF E/RS: The E/RS Focus endeavors to realize Xavier University's mission and philosophy of education by providing substantive opportunities for the ethical and/or religious analysis of socially significant issues. In keeping with its Catholic and Jesuit tradition, Xavier promotes critical attention to the underlying philosophical and theological implications of issues as well as encourages a worldview that is engaged with issues of peace and justice and oriented to responsible action. The E/RS Focus of the core curriculum is directed towards this end.

Expectations/grading:  
Attendance/participation Students are expected to come to class prepared. This implies attending every class, arriving on time with all required reading and assignments prepared. If, for a good reason, a student must miss a class, the professor should be notified ahead of time. More than three unexcused absences will lead to a deduction in the final grade.  
Tests If, for a good reason, a student misses a test the professor must be notified as soon as possible, preferably before class. The test must be made up as soon as possible depending on the circumstances that caused the absence. Tests will generally be a combination of objective (multiple choice, short answer, etc.) and essay.
Written assignments

Friday reflections: Each week a topic will be posted, of which you are required to answer five. The reflection is due by midnight Friday of the week it is assigned. These papers need be two to three paragraphs long. They may be submitted in hard copy or by email.

Research/Experience Papers: There will be four papers due over the course of the semester. Some will require taking part in some kind of experience or activity. Some will require research. Each paper will be four to five pages in length. Research papers must have a works cited page, which is not counted in the four pages.

PLAGIARISM IS A CRIME! Plagiarized assignments will receive a zero. More than one such infraction will result in the student receiving an F for the course. Per the university website, plagiarism is:

- Plagiarism is using the work of another as if it were your own, without enclosing the words of others in quotations.
- Plagiarism is copying from the Internet, from a web page, or from another person without giving credit.
- Plagiarism is using ideas which are not your own without citing those ideas.
- Plagiarism can be applied to ideas, research, art, music, graphs, diagrams, websites, data, books, newspapers, magazines, plays, movies, photos, and speeches.

Grading will follow the Theology Department guidelines:

A=94-100; A-=92-93; B+=90-91; B=87-89; B-=84-86; C+=82-83; C=79-81; C-=76-78; D+=74-75; D=71-73; D-=68-70

“A = exceptional academic performance, that is, uncommonly high academic achievement . . . .”

“B = good academic performance, that is high quality academic achievement....”

“C = satisfactory academic performance . . . .”

“D = minimal academic performance . . .”

“F = failure.”

Grading breakdown:
Tests (4 tests, 100 points each) 400
Papers (4 papers, 100 points each) 400
Attendance/participation 100
Weekly reflections (5 essays, 20 points each) 100

Grades will be determined based on the percentage of points achieved out of the total 1000 points available. (e.g., 935 points would yield an average of 93.5, A-)

Grading criteria for essays and papers: There are two elements that need to be incorporated into a successful essay or research paper. (1) Clear explanation of course material: accurately stating the main points of the text, video, speaker. (2) Originality or insight of analysis/interpretation of the material: Do you agree with the theories presented? Why or why not? Apply the material, provide an example that relates to the topic, give an alternate interpretation, share an insight that you drew from it. In other words, expand on the course material with your own thoughts.