111-26 Theological Foundations

Leon Chartrand

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THEO 111-26  
Theological Foundations  
Fall 2014

Class Meets:  MWF, 9:00-9:50am  
Hailstones Hall, Room 9  

Office Hours:  MWF, 11am-1pm; M, 2-4pm  
120 Hinkle Hall  
(or by appointment)  

Instructor: Dr. Leon Chartrand  
Cell: (307) 690-2994  
Theo: (513) 745-2018  
Chartrandl@xavier.edu  
(students welcome to call/txt my cell)

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course introduces students to religious thinking and to the foundations of theological concepts by exploring various ways in which we experience divine mystery in the world and how these experiences transform us, inform our religious faith, shape our moral conscience, and orient how we live in the world.

OUR GOALS

Our overall goals are to:

1. Show measurable growth in articulating the presence of mystery within and beyond our "world".
2. Show how revelatory experience transforms us and informs our religious traditions.
3. Enable students to relate religious experience, scriptural interpretations (as written articulations of religious experiences) in a reflective, inclusive and pragmatic way to one’s life experiences.
4. Demonstrate the integral connection between revelatory experience, religious faith and issues of social and ecological significance.

OUR LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, students will demonstrate measurable growth in their ability to:

1. Define the relationship between experience, faith, theology and religion.
2. Define the relationship between power and holiness.
3. Define the relation between mystery, experience, scripture, and religion.
4. Explain the essence of transformative experiences, especially in terms of the "horizon of interpretation," mystery, power, and "truth/untruth" (i.e, revealing-concealing-illumination).
5. Explain the process of naming something holy and how this process essentially happens.
6. Discuss how our theological relation to divine mystery manifests itself in our relation to the world.
7. Articulate an example of how one can integrate the principles discussed herein into everyday life.

OUR RESOURCES

Resources are available on Canvas under the menu item, “Files.” Readings required for each week, which are provided in the Course Planner below, are in the folder corresponding to each week.

OUR POLICIES:

1). ABSENTEEISM: Attendance is 20% of the final grade or 200 out of 1000 pts. Absences do not excuse students from knowledge about the material discussed or from accepting responsibility for any announcements or syllabus changes or assigned work made while absent. For this course, students are allowed two (2) excused absences for the semester without any excuse. Any absence thereafter shall count as 15 pts off attendance unless the reason is deemed justifiable by the professor. For instance, a person who misses five unexcused days (which means three more than allowed) will have a final
Let's Have Fun and Learn Something New!
participation for that particular class. As an avid texter myself, I am well aware of the ability to text under the desk and I am attuned to the behavior that reveals this is being done. Please note that this will absolutely not be tolerated. Sorry for the harshness, but this has become a necessity in recent years. To be frank, rarely are there daily things we can’t wait 50 minutes to text or snap chat someone about.

5). ACADEMIC HONESTY: Work submitted for evaluation must be that of the student’s whose name is on the paper (for joint projects with classmates, please include their names). The direct and non-attributed use of another’s effort is prohibited. Penalties for violation will be in accordance with Xavier University policies as cited in the catalog. The Instructor reserves the right to instruct students to use “Turn It In” to monitor plagiarism.

6). LANGUAGE: Xavier is committed unreservedly to open and free inquiry, but any abusive, discriminatory, harassing language will not be tolerated. Gender neutral language is expected.

7). INCLUSIVE LEARNING: If anyone needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability, or if you have emergency medical information to share, or if you have concerns regarding offensive language or behavior, I am happy to meet with you in confidentiality. Just see me or e-mail me to set up a time if my office hours are not convenient for you.

OUR REQUIREMENTS

Assigned Readings & Preventable Spontaneous Quizzes
Readings prepare students for active participation. This course is designed to engage students and students are expected to keep up on the assigned readings. It’s easier to read 20 pages between each class than 180 at the end of two weeks! I encourage students to take notes in the margins of your readings, especially since these are available on Canvas. This kind of note-taking will make your life a lot easier and will really make preparing for your assessments, group projects and response papers more efficient. Again, readings can get overwhelming if you do not keep up on them and, in turn, the course can get confusing. If I am under the impression that students are not reading, I reserve the right to assign spontaneous quizzes worth 10 pts each and will add these on to the final grade weight. So do your part: PREVENT POP QUIZZES, and forest fires too!

Reflection Journals (4)
Reflection Journals are also used to monitor if students are keeping up with assigned readings but, more importantly, they are designed to offer students an opportunity to synthesize what they have learned. Each reflection journal will be assigned a week before it is due. This journal will be submitted via email in response to a question the professor raises at the end of class and then posts on Canvas, and the student will have a week to submit his/her response. For instance, on Monday, Sept 8, I will propose a question at the end of the class based on the topic discussed that day. The student will be expected to submit a reflection via blackboard journal to the professor by class time on the following Monday, Sept 15. All reflection papers are LIMITED to 300-600 words, depending on the assignment. I am more interested in quality than quantity. I also expect proper grammar and spelling. So make it count! Papers not meeting these expectations, either too short or too long, may not be accepted or considered late. Papers off topic or lacking relevant substance may or may not be returned to the student to rewrite.

Field Trip/Group Project
At a critical point in the learning process of this course, it is essential to offer an experiential exercise that explores how our social/ecological relations are manifestations of our theological relation to mystery. The bad news is that we will have a field trip on Sunday, September 28, either from 12-4pm or 5-9pm depending on the nature of the trip. The good news is that this will include a bonfire or some time on the river, away from campus in a very pretty and reflective setting. This is one of my students’ greatest experiences, year in and year out! So, trust that this is something you will be glad you did! Even better news is that I will be canceling four classes at desirable times for students as a way to make up for your commitment to this exciting learning experience, which will far outweigh the 4 regular classes combined. These “field trip exchange days” are indicated in the course planner. There will be reading assignments
due PRIOR to this trip and a reflection paper and a group project will be assigned while on the Field Trip to begin working on while at our destination (to be announced). These projects will be based on single, but powerfully symbolic things like water, trees, sky, earth, fire, birds, etc, with respect to fundamental religious and theological ideas. The assigned group projects will culminate in group presentations in October 27-29. It'll be FUN! Every year, that is the overall feedback! Again, this trip is mandatory and equivalent to four classes. Alternative assignments may be possible for extenuating circumstances.

Response Essay
Prompts will be assigned for this paper towards the end of the course. It is designed to challenge students to integrate what they’ve learned theologically to a social or ecological justice issue. Students will be given ample time to complete the paper prior to the final exam timeframe for this course.

Assessments
I’ll be straightforward. I’m not a big fan of exams. They encourage emphasis more on recitation of knowledge than depth of understanding. My interest is monitoring the learning process and so I offer a First Assessment, Second Assessment and a Final Assessment. They will include short answers, short essay questions drawn from class lecture, projects and assigned readings. Again, they are intended to evaluate learning from the initial class to the final class. The best way to prepare for the exams is to attend class and take notes and to take notes on the readings throughout the semester. Many of the questions on the assessments you will have heard in class, sometimes repetitively, and may not be covered in the readings. Again, this is why attendance is critical.

OUR EVALUATIONS

Standards and Scale
Work will be evaluated according to the standards set forth in the Theology Department Guidelines (see www.xavier.edu/theology). These guidelines mandate the following 8-point scale:

- A = 100–92
- B = 91–84
- C = 83–76
- D = 75–68
- F = 67–0

Late Work
Assignments are due at the scheduled time and date as indicated in the Course Schedule. For instance, for instance, Reflection paper # 1 is due Sept 15. This means that the paper must be received via e-mail by the professor by class time on Sept 15. Assignments not turned in on time will be penalized 10 percentage points for every day they are late. (For example, a late paper originally due on Monday would be penalized 20% if turned in on the proceeding Wednesday. Makeup work will be allowed only if negotiated in advance and for a serious reason. No work will be accepted after the final assessment.

Academic Honesty
This course will be conducted in accordance with Xavier University’s policy on academic honesty. In papers and assignments submitted for this course, both the ideas and wording must be the student’s own or must be clearly attributed to their proper sources using full citations. Re-submission of work used for a previous course, even if it is the student’s own work, is also considered a violation.

Final Grade Calculation

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weightage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Attendance/Tardiness</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection Papers (4)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Project/Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>First/Second Assessments</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper/Assessment</td>
<td>15%</td>
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Professor Evaluations
The professor-student relationship is reciprocal. I learn from you as much as you learn from me. Learning and teaching belong together. One realizes the other, one is fulfilled through the other. It is my desire to provide the opportunity for student input on the professor’s teaching and progress. Therefore, I will ask students to complete evaluations at the end of the semester, and feel free to discuss how I can improve without any repercussions. As a teacher, I can better improve if I have your honest input.
COURSE PLANNER
(WITH LECTURE TOPICS & ASSIGNED DAILY READINGS)

PROFESSOR DISCRETION

Each group of students brings new challenges, new insights and possibilities. To address adult Montessori learning nuances, this professor reserves the right to alter or add or detract reading assignments, lecture topics, and assessment or field learning activities and their respective due dates according to pace of the class, discussions of interest as well as any new or relevant topics that may emerge that are pertinent to the direction and dynamic of student learning and course direction.

WEEK 1—INTRODUCTIONS

REQUIRED READINGS PRIOR TO AUG 27

Aug 25 Welcome & Course Overview: “Foundational”
Aug 27 What is God? What is Theology?
Aug 29 Mystery, the Idea of the Holy, and Gods

WEEK 2—FOUNDATIONS

REQUIRED READINGS PRIOR TO FIRST CLASS OF WEEK:

Sep 1 Labor Day—no class
Sep 3 Two Modes of Being-in-the-World
Sep 5 Hierophanies, Theophanies and Kratophanies

WEEK 3—FOUNDATIONS

REQUIRED READINGS PRIOR TO FIRST CLASS OF WEEK:
-Van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*—“Sacred World & Animals,” 75-82.

Sep 8 Power and Holiness; Things and Power—REFLECTION #1 ASSIGNED
Sep 10 Sacred Stones and Trees; Sacred Animals
Sep 12 Sacred Water and Fire; Sacred World Above

WEEK 4—FOUNDATIONS

REQUIRED READINGS PRIOR TO FIRST CLASS OF WEEK:
- Lynn White, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis.”
- Berry, *Befriending the Earth*—“Christology,” 66-82.
- Wilma Mankiller, *Every Day is a Good Day*—“Context is Everything,” 41-74.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 15</td>
<td>Sacredness of Nature and Cosmic Religions—REFLECTION #1 DUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 17</td>
<td>The Divine and Our Present Revelatory Moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 19</td>
<td>Two Scriptures and Context for Theology</td>
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**WEEK 5—FOUNDATIONS**

**REQUIRED READINGS PRIOR TO FIELD TRIP:**
- Aldo Leopold, *Sand County Almanac*—“Thinking Like a Mountain,” 129-137.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 22</td>
<td>REVIEW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 24</td>
<td>FIRST ASSESSMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 26</td>
<td>Field Trip Exchange Day #1—<em>no class</em></td>
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**WEEK 5f—FIELD TRIP**

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<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 28</td>
<td>REQUIRED FIELD TRIP—THE RIVER JOURNEY—12-4pm OR 5-9pm</td>
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<td>GROUP PROJECT ASSIGNED</td>
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**WEEK 6—STORY**

**REQUIRED READINGS PRIOR TO FIRST CLASS OF WEEK:**
- Berry, *Dream of the Earth*—“Creative Energy,” 24-35.
- Ruether, *Gaia & God*—“Introduction,” 1-12
- McFague, *Body of God*—“Ecological Crisis,” 1-25

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 29</td>
<td>Field Trip Illuminations, Group Projects Assigned—REFLECTION #2 ASSIGNED</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 1</td>
<td>Group Project In-Class Work</td>
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<td>Oct 3</td>
<td>Horizon of Interpretation as Grounds for Story</td>
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**WEEK 7—STORY/WORLD**

**REQUIRED READINGS PRIOR TO FIRST CLASS OF WEEK:**
- Berry, *The Great Work*—“Meadow Across the Creek,” 12-20.

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<tr>
<td>Oct 6</td>
<td>Story as Context of Meaning—REFLECTION #2 DUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 8</td>
<td>Field Trip Exchange Day #2—<em>no class</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 10</td>
<td>Fall Break—<em>no class</em></td>
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**WEEK 8—EXPERIENCE/THING**
REQUIRED READINGS PRIOR TO FIRST CLASS OF WEEK:

Oct 13  
*Entering Into an Encounter*—REFLECTION #3 ASSIGNED

Oct 15  
*Encountering Event*

Oct 17  
*Encountering Event*

**WEEK 9—STORY/EXPERIENCE**

REQUIRED READINGS PRIOR TO FIRST CLASS OF WEEK:
-Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*—“Memorial Address,” 43-57.

Oct 20  
*World-Thing*—REFLECTION #3 DUE

Oct 22  
*Story-Experience*

Oct 24  
*Naming and Language*

**WEEK 10—PRESENTATION WEEK**

NO REQUIRED READINGS PRIOR TO FIRST CLASS OF WEEK:

Oct 27  
*Group Presentations*—GROUP PROJECT DUE

Oct 29  
*Group Presentations*

Oct 31  
*Field Trip Exchange Day #3*—**no class**

**WEEK 11—SYNTHESIS**

NO REQUIRED READINGS PRIOR TO FIRST CLASS OF WEEK:

Nov 3  
*Synthesis of Theo Foundations with “Story-Experience-Encounter-Thing-World” relation*

Nov 5  
*Review 2*

Nov 7  
*SECOND ASSESSMENT*

**WEEK 12—FAITH-RELIGION-THEOLOGY**

REQUIRED READINGS PRIOR TO FIRST CLASS OF WEEK:

Nov 10  
*What is Faith?*

Nov 12  
*What is Religion? What Good is Religion?*

Nov 14  
*What is Theology?*
WEEK 13—JOURNEY

REQUIRED READINGS PRIOR TO END OF MOVIE:
- Berry, "Cosmology of Religions," 1-8.
- Knitter, One Earth, Many Religions—"Whose Justice? Whose Liberation?" 97-117.

Nov 17  Shamanic Journey—REFLECTION #4 ASSIGNED
Nov 19  WHALE RIDER MOVIE
Nov 21  WHALE RIDER MOVIE

WEEK 14—HOLIDAY

Nov 24  Field Trip Exchange Day #4—no class—REFLECTION #4 DUE
Nov 26  Thanksgiving Break—no class
Nov 28  Thanksgiving Break—no class

WEEK 15—THIRD MEDIATION

Required Readings Prior to First Class
- Berry, "Reinventing the Human," 1-3.

Dec 1  Break-Out Discussions—FINAL PAPER ASSIGNED.
Dec 3  The Third Mediation and the Call for Ecological & Social Justice
Dec 5  The Third Mediation and the Viable Human

WEEK 16—COURSE REVIEW

Required Readings Prior to First Class

Dec 8  The Fourfold Wisdom
Dec 10  Required Review Day, Evaluations
Dec 12  Optional Review Day

Friday, Dec 19, FINAL ASSESSMENT/FINAL PAPER DUE, 8:00-9:50 am