111-20 Theological Foundations

Martin Madar

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Office Hours: by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**
Theo 111 is an introduction to theology understood as a critical correlation of a religious tradition and contemporary human experience. As a key building block in the Xavier Core Curriculum, it is a study of faith, religion, spirituality, and theology as significant dimensions of human life. Its purpose is to engage students in a critical reflection on the questions that are significant at this moment in history. The course is rooted in the recognition of the dynamic interrelationship among faith, religion, spirituality, theology, and praxis and as such it encourages a spirit of intellectual inquiry on the part of its participants.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**
In this course students will:
1. develop critical thinking and interpretative skills and apply them to fundamental theological sources such as scripture, tradition, and human experience
2. understand how the lived experience of different peoples has shaped the way they conceive of God and the critical theological questions they ask
3. learn and implement contemporary methods of scholarly investigation
4. strengthen the reading and writing skills necessary for successful college work
5. consider the place of faith and theology in addressing concerns of ethical significance

**COURSE TEXTS**


Additional reading assignments will be posted on CANVAS (hereafter CNVS)

**LEARNING METHODS**
This class blends teacher input, student participation, and class discussion with an emphasis on the interaction between theory and praxis. Consistent completion of reading assignments is essential to accomplish course aims.

**CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS**
You are expected to attend all classes, to arrive promptly and well-prepared, and to conduct yourself respectfully in your interaction with class members. Violation of respectful conduct will be grounds for removal from the class, judicial proceedings, or failure of the course. If warranted, students engaging in such behavior will be removed from class by security personnel and may be required to undergo counseling.
You are expected to always have your own access to the assigned readings for the day, either as a hard or an electronic copy.¹

If for any reason you need to leave before class is dismissed, whenever possible please let me know before class begins. Bathroom emergencies are an obvious exception.

The use of electronic devices such as notebooks, tablets, and phones is allowed for educational purposes only.

All assignments are to be submitted on the due day or they may not be accepted.

ATTENDANCE POLICY
Regular and punctual attendance is essential for your success in the course. You may miss up to six (6) classes without penalty. Missing more than six classes may result in a grade reduction, or withdrawal from/failure in the course.

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to inform me of your presence in the class, otherwise you will be marked absent. Three (3) tardies will count as one absence.

Athletes, it is your responsibility to ensure that I am aware ahead of time of any scheduling conflicts or absences due to university sponsored athletic events. Please provide a letter from your coach or adviser with the team schedule and dates highlighted that will necessitate absence from this course. If the number of projected absences is excessive, it may be recommended that the course be taken at another time.

MAKE-UP POLICY
Students are required to make up exams (Midterm, Final). There will be no make-up opportunities for missed quizzes. Missed quizzes will result in a grade of zero or they will be excused depending on why you missed the quiz.

XAVIER’S POLICY FOR ACADEMIC HONESTY
This course will be conducted in keeping with Xavier University’s policy on academic honesty (see http://catalog.xavier.edu/content.php?catoid=9&navoid=359&hl=academic+honesty&returnto=search#Academic_Honesty)

In all materials submitted for this course both the ideas and wording must be your own, or must be clearly attributed to their proper source(s) using full citations. Violation of academic honesty may result in a penalty such as a zero on an assignment or test, an “F” in the course, and expulsion from the university.

DISABILITY STATEMENT
If you have a documented physical or learning disability requiring academic adjustments for this course, please contact the Learning Assistance Program (Kuhlman Hall, 513-745-3280), and see me in the first week of class to discuss any necessary arrangements or ways I can be of assistance.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

• To develop skills in theological reflection, students will submit
  Four [4] reflection papers  20 %

• To integrate and assess knowledge gained through reading assignments, class discussions, and teacher-input, students will prepare for and complete:
  Quizzes, both announced and unannounced  15 %
  One [1] Midterm Examination  20 %
  One [1] Final Examination  20 %

¹. Mobile phones will not count for this purpose.
• To promote active engagement with the course material, students will regularly submit Course Engagement Posts 15%

• To develop skills in theological reflection and dialogue, students will participate in regular class discussions based on assigned readings. Participation 10%

TOTAL: 100%

GRADING
Work will be evaluated according to the standards set forth in the Theology Department. For grading guidelines see http://www.xavier.edu/theology/grading-policy.cfm


According to Theology Department standards, the grade of “A” does not mean “average” or “good” work, or “strong effort,” but is reserved for exceptional academic performance.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND REQUIREMENTS
Detailed schedule of readings and requirements will be posted on CNVS (see MODULES). Below are some important dates.

(8/25) 1st DAY OF CLASS

(9/1) NO CLASS (Labor Day Holiday)

(10/3) MIDTERM EXAM

(10/10) NO CLASS (Fall Holiday)

(11/26) NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Holiday)

(11/28) NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Holiday)

(12/1) NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Holiday)

(12/12) COURSE WRAP UP

(12/17) FINAL EXAM 12:00–1:50 PM

2. For the grading rubric see page 6.
3. Decimals will be rounded up to the next whole number beginning at .5 (e.g. 85.5 will become 86).
Guidelines for Reflection Papers

For this course you will be required to submit four [4] short reflection papers. Each will be due after a completion of a course unit. These reflection papers are an opportunity for you to reflect on the course material, and to develop skills in theological reflection and academic writing.

WHAT IS THE TASK?
Identify a concept or an insight that caught your attention during a unit of the course. Describe/define the concept/insight, and continue with further reflection on it. Explain what you found about the particular concept or insight interesting/striking and why. You may make connections with your life, the lives of others, and/or with current events. You may critique the concept or idea both in terms of agreement or disagreement.

You are expected to reference the course readings. Research outside the course material is not necessary, though not prohibited. One thing to remember is that the paper should reflect primarily your ideas, not only those of others.4

FORMAT
MLA or Turabian
Margins: 1”
Font: Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, Cambria
Font Size: 12 pt
Spacing: Double
Length: 2–3 pages
Electronic submission on CNVS

NOTA BENE: As a prerequisite to this assignment you must get a passing grade on the quiz “Preventing Plagiarism,” which is part of the library’s tutorial. You must submit the score for this quiz to me no later than January 30, 2014. To access the tutorial go to: http://www.xavier.edu/library/xututor/plagiarism/index.cfm

DON’T FORGET: BEFORE TURNING IN THE PAPER, PROOFREAD YOUR WORK CLOSELY, AND EVEN BETTER, VISIT THE WRITING CENTER FOR FEEDBACK

Guidelines for Course Engagement Posts

Knowledge is not something which we merely receive, rather we construct it. Learning is a process in which formulating questions plays a key role.5 In light of this understanding of knowledge and learning, you will be asked on a regular basis to articulate questions you have with regard to a particular unit/topic of the course. Specific directions will be given for each post.6

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4. See the grading rubric on page 5.
6. See the grading rubric on page 6.
## Grading Rubric – Reflection Papers

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>100-92</strong></td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>The paper has a clearly articulated focus, good organization with natural flow of ideas which cohere well and convey the content clearly and effectively.</td>
<td>The content is sometimes unclear due to problems with focus, organization, and/or style.</td>
<td>The paper has a discernible focus, organization, and good style conveying the content clearly.</td>
<td>The paper was either not turned in or what was turned in could not be interpreted as the paper because: • directions were not followed and/or the assigned task was not executed at the minimal level</td>
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<td><strong>91-84</strong></td>
<td>The paper clearly identifies a concept/insight and describes/defines it with precision while referencing the source(s). Both “what” and “why” of the assigned task are present.</td>
<td>Both “what” and “why” of the assigned task are present, but they are both weak. They lack clarity and precision.</td>
<td>The paper clearly identifies a concept/insight but its description/definition lacks precision. Both “what” and “why” of the assigned task are present.</td>
<td>One of the assigned tasks is missing.</td>
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<td><strong>83-74</strong></td>
<td>The reflection offers student’s own thoughtful engagement with the material.</td>
<td>Student’s own engagement with the material is weak.</td>
<td>Student’s own engagement with the material is weak.</td>
<td>Student’s own engagement with the material is weak.</td>
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<td><strong>73-68</strong></td>
<td><strong>Style, Grammar &amp; Syntax</strong></td>
<td>The paper has several mechanical or grammatical errors. The style is clear, interesting, but not eloquent. It is characterized by correct sentence structure, with minimal errors in English grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Incorporating some theological terms precisely and in their proper context.</td>
<td>The paper has many mechanical or grammatical errors characterized by improper sentence structure, significant errors in English grammar, punctuation, and spelling. The style is awkward, unclear, and difficult to read. Theological terms are avoided.</td>
<td>The paper has many mechanical or grammatical errors characterized by improper sentence structure, significant errors in English grammar, punctuation, and spelling. The style is sometimes awkward, unclear, and difficult to read. Theological terms are avoided.</td>
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<td><strong>&lt; 68</strong></td>
<td>The paper follows the format as assigned without any or just very minor problems.</td>
<td>The paper contains a few deviations from the assigned format.</td>
<td>The paper contains many deviations from the assigned format. The paper will not be accepted.</td>
<td>The paper contains many mechanical or grammatical errors. The style is awkward, unclear, and difficult to read.</td>
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**Grading Rubric – Class Participation**

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<td>100-92</td>
<td>91-84</td>
<td>83-74</td>
<td>73-68</td>
<td>&lt; 68</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The student is consistently well prepared for class, actively listens, and contributes though-provoking insights.</td>
<td>The student is prepared for class and demonstrates thoughtful engagement with the material.</td>
<td>The student is inconsistently prepared for class and is infrequently engaged with the material.</td>
<td>The student is minimally prepared for class and shows a lack of interest in the course material.</td>
<td>The student is regularly not prepared for class and demonstrates lack of commitment to the course.</td>
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**Grading Rubric – Course Engagement Posts**

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<tr>
<th>Full Credit (FC)</th>
<th>Partial Credit (PC)</th>
<th>No Credit (NC)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The assigned task is completed in all its elements.</td>
<td>The assigned task is completed only partially</td>
<td>The assigned task is not completed.</td>
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**NOTA BENE: THE SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE**