2014

111-12H Theological Foundations: Honors

Kenneth Overberg

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course has three major objectives:

1. To provide an introduction to theology appropriate to the modern, pluralistic context in which we live, and thereby to provide students with a foundation upon which their subsequent courses in theology can build. To achieve this objective, it will be necessary to:
   a. impart a basic knowledge of the Jewish and Christian traditions, in particular, of the origins and meaning of organized religion
   b. encourage mature, critical reflection upon one's own religious identity, and
   c. foster understanding and respect with regard to other religious traditions and positions.

2. To offer the foundations for a sound method of interpreting the Bible. To achieve this objective, it will be necessary to:
   a. study and appreciate the history of biblical interpretation and develop a contemporary approach
   b. apply this method to biblical texts.

3. To highlight the connections between religious faith and life in our society. To achieve this objective, it will be necessary to:
   a. examine how religion has something to say to the political, social, and economic issues of our day
   b. pay particular attention to caring for creation – humans and the planet – in our daily choices.

N.B. This course is an Ethics/Religion and Society course. The E/RS focus on campus this year is “Justice, Tolerance, and Diversity.”

TEXTS: 

Roots and Branches: Grounding Religion in Human Experience (revised) by Kenneth R. Overberg, S.J. (RB)
Reading the Gospels with the Church, by Raymond E. Brown (RGC)
Everyday Justice by Julie Clawson (EJ)
"The Incarnation" by Kenneth R. Overberg, S.J. (Catholic Update)

(You will also need a Bible.)
PROFESSOR: Kenneth R. Overberg, S.J.
Office: 326 Hinkle Hall
Office Hours: 2:00-4:30 p.m. on M-W-F
and by appointment (745-3635; overberg@xavier.edu)

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Preparation for and participation in the class lectures and discussions are essential.
2. Several written assignments.
3. Four tests.
4. Presentation--about the presentation: groups will be determined in class, allowing plenty of time for the group to prepare its presentation. Your assignment is to highlight key ideas in our reading and lead the class in discussing those topics. Also update the text with the most recent information and statistics on your topic (if necessary). Be creative in your style of presenting and teaching the class.

GRADES:

The final grade will be made up of (in equal parts):
1. The case presentation and participation
2-5. The four tests

N.B.: Grading scale used in the theology department: 92-100=A; 84-91=B; 76-83=C; 68-75=D; 0-67=F; + and – also given within these ranges.

“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.”

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.
OBJECTIVES:
1. To heighten awareness about the ethical and religious dimensions of socially significant issues.
2. To enable students to use philosophical and theological methods and principles effectively in the analysis of socially significant issues.
3. To enable students to understand and to evaluate the ethical and/or religious content of social significance in literary texts.
4. To help students integrate moral reflection and religious analysis into their study of a chosen major or minor.
5. To encourage the development of a world view that is oriented to responsible action.

SOME DATES OF TALKS THIS SEMESTER
(at 7 PM in the Conaton Board Room in Schmidt Hall):

January 23, Robert George on law, politics, and ethics
January 29, Virgilio Elizondo on Latino religion
February 24, Stephen Long on theology, truth, and language
March 17, Thomas Hibbs on ethics and culture

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Jan 13  Introduction of the course; basic questions
15  Introduction of class
17  RB, vii-xi and 135-138
20  FREE (MLK Day)
22  RB, 1-9
24  RB, 9-22
27  RB, 23-28
29  RB, 28-36
31  RB, 37-48

Feb  3  RB, 48-56
  5  Review; paper due
  7  TEST
10  Bible Handout
12  Handout
14  RB, 57-66
   24 “The Incarnation”
   26 “The Incarnation”
   28 TEST

Mar 3,5,7 FREE (Spring Break)
   10 RGC, chapters 1 & 2, and Appendix
   12 RGC, chapters 3 & 4
   14 RGC, chapters 5 & 6
   17 RGC, chapter 7 and exegesis
   19 Shea handout
   21 RB, 79-85
   24 RB, 86-88 and OT readings (Exodus 12:1-28; Deuteronomy 5:1-7:16; 10:1-12:14; Psalm 19)
   26 RB, 89-100, NT readings (Acts 1:1-6:7; 9:1-16:40)
   31 Review

Apr 2 TEST
   4 RB, 101-107
   7 RB, 107-114
   9 RB, 114-134
   11 EJ, 9-30
   14 EJ, 31-51
   16 EJ, 53-74
   18,21 FREE (Easter Break)
   23 EJ, 75-94
   25 EJ, 95-118
   28 EJ, 119-141
   30 EJ, 165-189

May 2 RB, 135-138 and vii-xi, review and preview
   9 TEST (10:00 - 11:50)
GROUP PRESENTATION ON EJ

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Pages</th>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 14</td>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>31-51</td>
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<td>Apr 16</td>
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<td>Apr 30</td>
<td>Debt</td>
<td>165-189</td>
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SOME KEYS FOR THE PRESENTATION

1. Highlighted key ideas from the reading?

2. Updated information and statistics?

3. Clarity and conciseness of the presentation?

4. Imagination and creativity?

5. Started and led the discussion with enthusiasm, insight, and fairness?