111-25B Theological Foundations

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course seeks to provide an introduction to the study of religion and theology appropriate to the modern, pluralistic context of today’s world, as well as to provide students with a foundation upon which their subsequent courses in religion and theology can build upon. To this end, the goals of this course are to introduce students to the concept of religious experience as rooted in foundational human experience and revelatory of a deeper reality, as well as to explore religion as the context within which most people express and live out such a response. As a required course in the Ethics/Religion & Society (E/RS) component of Xavier University’s undergraduate curriculum, this course is structured to further the E/RS objectives of: (1) heightening awareness about the ethical and religious dimensions of socially significant issues; (2) enabling students to use philosophical and theological methods and principles effectively in the analysis of socially significant issues; (3) enabling students to understand and to evaluate the ethical and/or religious content of social significance in literary texts; (4) helping students integrate moral reflection and religious analysis into their study of a chosen major or minor; and (5) encouraging the development of a worldview that is oriented to responsible action.

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

(1) Attendance and Participation

It is imperative that students: (a) complete all reading assignments before class, (b) attend and prepare for questions, and (c) participate at all class sessions. A 2% point will be deducted for every late arrival. Excuses will be accepted only for grave emergency situations (e.g., major illness with proper written documentation, or death in family) or university-approved activities off-campus (e.g., varsity sports) and only at the instructor’s discretion. More than two absences will result in a failing grade.

Cell Phones/Laptops: Laptops are reserved for those students with special needs, and if that is necessary, said students must sit at the front of class. Cell phones are absolutely not permitted unless a reasonable excuse is given beforehand. Cell phones used during class time can result in a zero on participation for that particular class. Texting during class time will absolutely not be tolerated.

(2) Examinations

Examinations cover materials in the textbooks, classes and films. All examinations must be taken on the assigned date and time. As a rule, substitute examinations will not be given. Exceptions may be made for grave emergency reasons (e.g., major illness with proper written documentation, or death in family) or university-approved activities off-campus (e.g., varsity
sports), but only if: (i) the request was made before the examination, and (ii) at the professor’s sole discretion.

III. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

IV. THEOLOGY DEPARTMENT’S GRADING GUIDELINES
(approved by department: March 20, 2002)

The full version of the Theology Department’s Grading Policy is available on-line at:
http://www.xu.edu/theology/grading_policy.html

In accordance with University policy and the Theology Department grading guidelines, letter grades in undergraduate theology courses mean the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>90-91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>84-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>82-83</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>79-81</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>76-78</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>74-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>71-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>68-70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Grading of Objective and Essay Tests
Grades reflect the accuracy, coherence, clarity, and completeness of answers and essays. In grading your answers, the following elements will be evaluated:

1. comprehension of the materials under consideration,
2. ability to articulate one’s understanding with clarity,
3. correct usage of standard English grammar, spelling and punctuation,
4. organization of material,
5. ability to establish relationships and synthesize ideas, and
6. ability to reflect on the material with an eye to raising serious, critical questions.

V. COMPUTATION OF MIDTERM & FINAL GRADES

Exam #1 (15%)
Exam #2 (15%)
Exam #3 (15%)
Exam #4 (15%)
Exam #5 (15%)
Exam #6 (10%)
Final Exam (15%)

VI. ACADEMIC HONESTY
The professor expects all work that appears under the student’s name to be that student’s own, and will follow up on evidence that a student has copied from another’s work or used notes in examinations. If an incident of cheating is established, the instructor will give a grade of F for the entire course.
VII. COURSE OUTLINE, SCHEDULE & READINGS

3/9  Pre-assignment: Introduction


3/22  Exam 1 on Hinduism
     Buddhism: Introduction to Buddhism; The Four Noble Truths: LR, pp. 137-157

3/29  Exam 2 on Buddhism
     Confucianism: Introduction to Confucianism; Virtues: LR, pp. 207-220

4/05  Exam 3 on Confucianism
     Judaism: Introduction to Judaism; Torah: LR, pp. 246-299

4/12  Exam 4 on Judaism
     Islam: Introduction to Islam, Prophet Muhammad; The Qur’an, Five Pillars; Sunni/Shi’a, Spread of Islam, Muslims in modern societies (Frontline): LR, pp. 377-431

4/26  Exam 5 on Islam
     Christianity I: Life and Teachings of Jesus; Early Church; East-West Division; Scripture: LR, pp. 302-333

5/03  Exam 6 on Christianity part I
     Christianity II: Protestant Reformation; Council of Trent; Second Vatican Council; Central Beliefs in Contemporary Christianity; LR, pp. 333-371

5/10  Final Exam on Christianity part I and II