2014

111-13 Theological Foundations

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THEOLOGY 111-13
Theological Foundations

Fall 2013
Thursday: 6:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m. Schott 1010
Prof. James Riordan
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COURSE OVERVIEW
The course is designed to introduce students to theology as a mutually critical dialogue between human experience and religions, with a particular eye toward Christianity. Through the readings and discussions, students will be engaged in a dialogue predominantly with the Christian worldview. With a concerted examination on various Christian voices in theology, the student will be able to garner an appropriate hermeneutic for examining scriptural text and further, able to articulate a careful sexual ethic.

A number of questions shall accompany us throughout the semester: How do religions articulate or understand the world and the human condition? Furthermore, how might they shine light upon our own assumptions, our own understanding of life and of what it means to be human? Students are encouraged not just to understand religious doctrines and practices, but to engage them and bring them into conversation with their own context and worldview.

Theo 111 is part of the Ethics/Religion and Society (E/RS) focus of Xavier’s core curriculum. The E/RS focus attempts to provide opportunities for ethical and/or religious analysis of socially significant issues in encouraging a worldview that is engaged with questions of peace and justice and oriented toward responsible action.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
In this course you will-
1) Address and explore important theological concerns and issues
2) Learn to recognize scripture as a series of living texts in which theology was constructed for a particular time and place, even as successive generations use these texts in their own theological exploration
3) Learn and implement new methods of scholarly investigation
4) Develop your own critical thinking and your ability to utilize that thinking in effective discussion
5) Strengthen the reading and writing skills necessary for successful college work
6) Consider the place of faith and theology in addressing concerns of ethical significance (E/RS component)
7) Explore the role of faith and theology in transformative social action (E/RS component)
ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION
Your attendance and participation will be extremely important for your success in this class. This class only meets once a week. You may have one unexplained absences without affecting your grade. However, any further missed classes will require written proof of illness, or my assessment of your situation as a true personal or family emergency, to count as an excused absence. Starting with the second unexcused absence, your final grade for the course will be lowered by three points for each missed class. As part of your attendance and participation grade, you will be expected to be on time and prepared for discussion. Preparation for discussion will include your completion of any readings or writing assignments assigned for that day of class, as well as your willingness to engage your classmates in discussion over the day’s topic.

Please refrain from using cell phones or other electronic devices in class. Laptops should not be in use unless you are taking notes for a lecture. Any repeated warnings about use of electronic devices or web surfing in class will insure a lowering of your participation grade by at least one point.

In the unlikely event that I have to miss a class, I will email you. If it is more sudden, the Theology Department will arrange for you to be notified when you get to class.

Late Work:
For each day any written assignment is late, the final grade of the project will be lowered one full grade from the original assessed grade.

Grade Equivalents (see http://www.xavier.edu/theology/Grading-Policy.cfm)
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 F = 0-67

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. Students who seriously engage this class - the readings, discussions, papers, exams - should do well, and of course will get the most from the experience. Students who do not stay on top of the reading assignments, take poor notes, or regularly drift from discussions will do poorly in this class. The kinds of questions raised here will necessitate close attention to the reading material.

Classroom Protocol. Do not forget to turn off all cellular phones and other electronic communication devices in class since they can be very distracting for others. Furthermore, laptops may be used in the classroom but only for note-taking or for looking up assigned texts. Use of laptops is subject to my review.

Disabilities. If you have a documented physical or learning disability requiring academic adjustments for this course, please contact the Learning Assistance Center (CLC, Suite 514 – x3280) and see me to discuss any necessary arrangements or ways I can be of assistance.

Athletic or academic team commitments. It is your responsibility to ensure that I am aware ahead of time of any scheduling conflicts or absences you may incur 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 class. If the number of projected absences is excessive, it may be recommended that the course be taken at another time.
ACADEMIC HONESTY
This class will require very strict standards of honesty regarding the work for this class. In this class, questionable academic honesty will mainly relate to cheating on any tests and quizzes, as well as any quotation of someone’s words or ideas without giving them direct credit in your papers. I will adhere closely to Xavier’s policy for academic honesty, a policy that states in part:

“The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record, including letters of recommendation. All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student’s own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another’s efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one’s own. Penalties for violations of this policy may include a zero for that assignment or test, an “F” in the course and expulsion from the University.”

COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS
Note: This is a tentative schedule of the readings. Please check Blackboard under “Course Assignments” to know the assigned readings and guide questions for class. I will also announce in class what the readings will be for the next meeting.

Assignments:
1. For this class you must get a passing grade on the quiz that is part of the library’s tutorial, “Preventing Plagiarism.” You will need to get this score to me by January 20th. This tutorial is at: http://www.xavier.edu/library/xututor/plagiarism/index.cfm.
2. You must also take and receive a passing grade on the quiz that is part of the library’s tutorial, “Evaluating Websites.” I should get your score on this quiz by January 20th as well. This tutorial is at: http://www.xavier.edu/library/xututor/evaluating/index.cfm.

Quiz: At the start of every class, we will have a short 10 question quiz to test your comprehension of the reading. If you miss a class without notifying me in advance, you will not be able to make these up. Total quizzes is worth 32% of your grade.

Synthesis Papers: During the semester, I will assign 2, one page synthesis papers. These papers are NOT an opportunity to reiterate what you read in the various essays. It is, rather, an opportunity to place two differing authors in dialogue with one another. You are to cite various authors’ claims and point out how they are distinct from one another. Finally, agree with one author, both authors, or disagree and form your own claim. I will discuss this in more detail as we move closer to the first synthesis paper. The two synthesis papers are worth 18% of your grade.

Mid-Term/Final Examination: You will have two examinations for the course. These are composed of five questions which you will take home and study. Out of the five questions, I will choose three. Out of the three questions, you will choose two on which to write. Your mid-term and final are worth 25% of your grade.

Semester-End Research Paper: At the end of the semester you will turn in a 5-7 page paper (Religious tradition paper) that you will write based on two visits to a worship service or event in a tradition other than your own, and research you have carried out on this tradition. This assignment will be in several parts. On January 20th you will turn in the tradition you have chosen. On January 20th we will have a
tutorial in the library and an opportunity to begin research on your chosen tradition. At the end of the semester you will turn in a 5-7 page paper that will draw on your own experience of witnessing the tradition and as well as the insights you gained about the tradition through your research. You will find a more in-depth description of this assignment on Canvas. Your final research paper is worth 25% of your grade.

Calendar of Readings:

**Pre-Week 1:**

**Homework: Please have this completed prior to our first class meeting**

a) Please read the findings from the Institute for the Study of Societal Issues (University of California, Berkeley. 7 March 2013) Text found here: (http://issi.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/shared/docs/Hout%20et%20al_No%20Relig%20Pref%202012_Release%20Mar%202013.pdf)

**Week 1: Why Atheism?**

**January 16:**

In-Class:

a) Quiz on reading
b) Explanation of syllabus and expectations

Homework:

b) Read “Beyond Theism to New God Images” (Spong). Pp. 56-70 (Canvas)
c) Craft your proposal for your research paper.

**Week 2: Why God?**

**January 23:** Meet in McDonald Library Lab Rm. 134

In-Class:

a) Email paper proposals to me.
b) Discussion of “In Search of God: Is Atheism the only Alternative to Theism?” (Spong). and “Beyond Theism to New God Images” (Spong). Pp. 56-70 (Canvas)
c) Library visitation with Lindsey Ritzert

Homework:

a) Read “What is Theology?” (Hall). Pp. 171-184 (Canvas)

**Week 3: Why Theology?**

**January 30:**

In-Class:

a) Quiz on Jan. 16 & 23 readings
b) Discussion of Hall and Barron’s texts
c) Examination of Negative Theology: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1X2Buxively6g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1X2Buxively6g)
d) Discussion and Reflection on the formation of theology
Homework:
   b) Read, “What Does It Mean to Say the Bible is Inspired?” (Gaillardetz). Pp. 15-28 (Canvas)
   c) Initial bibliography of 5 scholarly articles, 2 books, etc.

**Week 4: What is Inspiration and Revelation?**
**February 6:**
In-Class:
   a) Quiz on Gaillardetz texts
   b) Hand in Bibliography
   c) Discussion on Gaillardetz’s texts
   d) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiscqfMLh4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiscqfMLh4)
   e) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWxt4wXocJU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWxt4wXocJU)

Homework:
   a) Read, “What is the Canon of the Bible?” (Gaillardetz). Pp. 29-39
   b) Read, “What is the Relationship Between Scripture and Tradition?” (Gaillardetz). Pp. 41-53

**Week 5: What is Scripture and Tradition?**
**February 13:**
In-Class:
   a) Quiz
   b) Discussion of Gaillardetz texts.
   c) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htxOjJHB5-8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htxOjJHB5-8)

Homework:
   b) Read, Genesis 1-11

**Week 6: Understanding the Old Testament**
**February 20:**
In-Class:
   a) Quiz
   b) Hand in final draft of bibliography
   c) Reading of Genesis 1-3 and Discussion
   d) Discussion of Pentateuch and Israel’s story

Homework:
   a) Read Exodus 1-6, 11-18
   b) Read “The Exodus From Egypt” (Boadt) Pp. 155-172

**Week 7: The Exodus**
**February 27:**
In-Class:
   a) Quiz
   b) Hand in final bibliography draft
   c) Discussion of Exodus
Homework:
   c) Study for Mid-Term Examination

Week 8: God Becomes Human
March 6:
In-Class:
   a) Quiz
   b) Discussion
   c) Mid-Term Examination
Homework:
   c) Read, “The World of Roman Political Power,” (Harris) Pp. 86-104

Week 9: The World of Jesus
March 13:
In-Class:
   a) Quiz
   b) Discussion of readings
   c) Marty Ferrell - St. John’s Bible Presentation
   d) Examination of 1st Century Roman documents - Cotter
Homework:
   a) Quiz
   b) Complete initial draft of research paper

Week 10: Jesus of History or Jesus of Testimony?
March 20:
In-Class:
   a) Initial drafts of research paper exchanged
   b) Quiz
   c) Discussion of “The Gospels” and Bauckham’s text.
Homework:
   a) Correct, with comments, the research paper of a peer.
   b) Read the Gospel of St. Mark
   c) Read, “Mark's Portrait of Jesus,” (Harris) Pp. 126-153
   d) Read, “Eyewitness Memory,” (Bauckham) Pp. 219-257

Week 11: Gospel of Mark: Eyewitness Memory
March 27:
In-Class:
   a) Peer reviewed drafts returned and then handed in.
   b) Discussion of Mark’s Gospel and Eyewitness Memory
Homework:
   a) Read Luke 10:25-37

Week 12: Parables: WDJS (What Did Jesus Say?)
April 3:
In-Class:
   a) Quiz
   b) Discussion of parables

Group 1 Homework:
   a) Read Luke 15: 11-32
   b) Read, “I Remember Mana,” (Scott) Pp. 99-125
   c) Read, “The Prodigal Son,” (Hultgren) Pp. 70-91

Group 2 Homework:
   a) Read Luke 18:2-8
   c) Read “The Unjust Judge,” (Hultgren) Pp. 252-261.

Week 13: The Lost Son and the Strong Woman
April 10:
In-Class:
   a) Quiz
   b) Examination of parables by group presentation

Homework:
   b) Read, “Perfect Fear Casteth Out Love: Reading, Citing, and Rape,” (D’Angelo) Pp. 175-197

Week 14:
April 17: No class - Easter Holiday

Week 15: Sanctifying Women’s Pleasure
April 24:
In-Class:
   a) Quiz
   b) Examination of texts
   c) Documentary

Homework:
Week 16:
May 1:
In-Class:
   a) Quiz
   b) Discussion of Gudorf readings
   c) Final Examination Preparation