“It is both terrible and comforting to dwell in the inconceivable nearness of God, and so to be loved by God that the first and last gift is infinity and inconceivability itself. But we have no choice. God is with us.”

Karl Rahner in *Prayers for a Lifetime*

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
1818 ADVANCED COLLEGE CREDIT PROGRAM
1818.slu.edu
Theological Foundations THEO 100
De Smet Jesuit High School

Rev. Mr. Frank J. Olmsted
De Smet code: 70834-2A1 ACC Theological Foundations
Phone: 314-567-3500,
Office: Faculty Offices

Spring 2014
Email: folmsted@desmet.org
Room 315, period 1
Available Periods: 2, 6

COURSE DESCRIPTION, PURPOSE AND REQUIREMENTS

Our mission as a Jesuit institution of secondary education requires us to educate and formulate “men for and with others”. In response to and as part of that mission, the Theological Foundations Course (1818 Theology) at De Smet “seeks to educate students in a critical discourse with human experience, biblical origins, historical foundation, and historical developments of the Christian tradition” to meet the demands of the modern world.

This course will introduce students to the science and method of theology. It will help them to develop the ability to read, speak and think theologically. By examining some of the great texts and authors of the Christian tradition, students will address, question and reflect upon some of the major questions of theology, particularly the Christ-event. In such an introductory survey as this, students will wrestle with both historical-theological questions as well as more “personal” questions, as to how these questions affect your life. The Christian understanding of God, revelation, faith, creation, covenant and salvation history will be some of our larger topics. And throughout our readings and conversations together, students will hopefully deepen their understanding of self, of others and of God.

This course demands your attention and your desire to work hard. It is not for the faint of heart, but rather for those young scholars who have a desire and passion to more deeply understand the rich Catholic-Christian tradition. I expect you to be able to read complex, college level texts, and a good amount of it. Typically you will be required to read about ten to twenty pages per night. The success and fruitfulness of this course depends heavily on you, as our class discussions will be based on your reading and reflection of the text.

TEXTS

2) Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Credo For Today: What Christians Believe* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009) This text must be purchased separately by the student. **Purchase.**
3) *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, located on the USCCB website
4) *The New American Bible*
5) C. S. Lewis, *The Joyful Christian: 127 Readings*. **Loan copies provided.**

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From Syllabus Template for THEO-100, et al Saint Louis University Department of Theological Studies.

AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM
6) Walter Kaspar, “Theology’s Starting Point,” from Method in Dogmatic Theology. **Provided**
7) Dr. Armand Nicholi, *The Question of God: Lewis and Freud*. **Selections provided.**
8) During the semester, students will receive various articles from some of the great thinkers from the Fathers of the Church to recent writers such as G. K. Chesterton, Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI among others.

**SKILL SET ACQUISITION**

1) To understand the role of theology in the search for truth
2) To begin to read and think critically
3) Reading, writing, and speaking theologically
4) To explore the Christian answers to theological questions
5) To discover how some other theologies and philosophies answer these questions
6) To more fully consider and reflect on their human condition and their place in the world
7) To develop a deeper understanding of the Graduate at Graduation in relation to their studies and their lives

**CIVILITY OF THIS CLASSROOM CLAUSE**

1) In-Class Technology: The study of theology demands critical engagement with the text, and that in turn requires your undivided attention. At De Smet we are blessed to have easy access to the wide-world-web via your laptops; however, your computer is a tool, not an end in and of itself. As such, it should be used for the end for which it was created – your education. Furthermore, your cell phone must be off and in your locker. Phone calls and text-messages are inappropriate during class, for they disrupt the community.
2) Dress: There is an explicit dress code found in our Student Handbook. One of our primary objectives at De Smet is to form the future leaders of the world. Please dress appropriately by following the guidelines in the handbook. I would prefer that “hoodies” were not be worn during our class.
3) Please do not bring food or beverages into the classroom.
4) Respect: By this point in your career at De Smet, this should go without explicitly stating. Be sure to respect all opinions and perspectives that are shared in our discussions. We are a community of learners. Ideas and questions should be stated freely, which requires mutual reverence towards others.
5) Punctuality: Being punctual is necessary for this class. Our time together is valuable and we have much to cover, therefore I expect you to be on time every day.²

**GUEST SPEAKERS**

Our proximity to Saint Louis University provides us with many benefits for this course. In addition to access to the vast resources at Pius Library, we will also profit from SLU professors attending our class and sharing their expertise and love of theology.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY & PARTICIPATION**

Please refer to the De Smet Student Handbook for details regarding absences. In regards to our course, the student is completely responsible for making up any missed work. One should see a peer to garner any notes or assignments. If needed, the teacher and student will make an appointment together to review any missed work. Active participation by each member of our learning community is mandatory. The success or failure of this course rests on you. Each day we will converse about our readings and dialogue with each other. Others must be respectful and reverent of different opinions.

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²The “Civility of the Classroom Clause” was in part modified from Fr. David Meconi, S.J.’s syllabus. A special thanks to him for his guidance and advice on educating young minds.

**AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM**
A quality question/comment in the classroom is defined as: 1) based on the issues raised by the readings and the topic for that session; 2) which aids the flow of the discussion, and does not sidetrack into peripheral or unrelated subjects; 3) and builds on the subjects and ideas explored in previous sessions.

**COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

**Class Participation**
1. Student-led introduction of class material.
2. Overall participation and engagement.

**Writing**
1. Synthesis papers.
   The papers should be one page, 1.5 spaced and include your reactions to the readings, as well as to the material presented and discussed in class. They should also incorporate questions or further probing of the material. I will read them and return them with some brief comments.
2. Short papers (2): 2-3 pages
3. A research proposal and gathering of sources.

**Miscellaneous**
1. Quizzes: announced and unannounced.
2. Projects: Individual or in pairs depending on the final class size.
3. Final Exam: During the assigned exam period in May 2011.

**GRADUATE AT GRADUATION**
The Graduate at Graduation is a document shared by each and every Jesuit high school (over 50) in the United States. These pillars of formation – Intellectually Competent, Loving, Open to Growth, Committed to Justice, Developing as a Leader, and Religious – are areas where the school would like to see students grow during their time at De Smet. Though an examination of these tenets is not explicitly scheduled in our course, they will be discussed at times. Please let me know if you need help in familiarizing yourself with these for your Senior Insignis Project. I am happy to aid you in any way possible with preparation for Insignis project.

**LATE WORK POLICY**
Late work is unacceptable in this course. Any late assignments will be given only partial credit. I do, however, understand that emergencies come up and I am willing to discuss these on a case by case basis with a student.

**ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE**
Acknowledging that one needs help is a sign of maturity and a strong mark of self-awareness. One should not feel embarrassed to seek my assistance. In fact, I encourage you to request my attention. We can make an appointment during a mutual free time to discuss any matter such as during activity period or before or after school.

**CRITERIA FOR GRADING**
Because this course is registered through Saint Louis University, we will be using their grading system criteria aligned with our marks. It is as follows:

A range = Superior, exceptional, outstanding. The assignment demonstrates critical, informed, and creative theological inquiry that reflects superior understanding of essential theological/historical concepts. This means the student demonstrates depth of insight beyond what is normally expected. Carefully nuanced reasoning and writing, free from material, structural and grammatical error are presupposed in this grade.

A+ = 98-100%

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A = 93-97%

B range = Good. The assignment demonstrates ready command of full range of concepts and shows some critical, informed, and creative inquiry that reflects above average understanding of essential theological/historical concepts. This means the student has produced as assignment that is free from material, structural and grammatical errors.
  B+ = 90-92%
  B = 85-89%

C range = Acceptable. The assignment demonstrates satisfactory ability to describe overall picture and essential concepts. This means the student has completed the assignment in manner involving no significant errors. Material may not be free from structural and grammatical errors. Nuanced reasoning is not demonstrated.
  C+ = 82-84%
  C = 78-81%

D range = Below average. The assignment demonstrates reasoning that is neither carefully nuanced nor coherently presented; writing is insufficient in depth of insight and/or use of texts; presentation is not free from material error in structure, spelling and grammar. This means the student failed to respond adequately to the assignment and its intentions.
  D+ = 75-77%
  D = 70-74%

F = Unsatisfactory. In one or more of the following ways the student: 1) failed to turn in the assignment; 2) did not respond to the assignment as given; 3) submitted work so thoroughly flawed as to indicate that the student did not make a serious effort; 4) was involved in plagiarism or cheating.
  F = 70% or below

The final grade will result from all points earned from assignments, projects, quizzes and tests added up and divided by the number possible.

“I have learned much from my teachers, and from my colleagues more than from my teachers, but from my students more than from them all.”

The Babylonian Talmud
Course Topics

1. Introduction to the course, the syllabus and the texts. Expectations and procedures.
2. St. Louis University on-line registration in class and SLU on-line pre-test.
3. Reading as self-enrichment. The necessity of reading for forward movement in life.
4. The importance of having a system of critical thinking.
5. A practical guide to doing theological research. (Theol. Foundations text)
6. Why a Christian anthropology makes a difference (Kreeft).
7. Knowing, believing, doubting, opining (Pieper)
8. What is theology. What is religion? (Sr. Maureen Sullivan, OP)
12. The historical equating of naturalism with the scientific method and why this is not valid.
13. Does God exist? Those who say no. (Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Camus)
14. Does God exist? Those who say they do not know. (Thomas Huxley)
15. God does exist? (St. Anselm, St. Thomas Aquinas, G. K. Chesterton, C. S. Lewis)
16. The conclusion that God does exist through reason or by faith.
17. The debate: The Question of God: Sigmund Freud and C. S. Lewis
18. The Jewish people and their worldview
19. God’s revelation in the Hebrew Scripture
20. Reading and interpreting sacred scripture
21. The TaNaK and Septuagint
22. Genesis and evolution
23. The Psalter and Job
24. The prophetic movement in Israel

AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM
27. Christology: the early controversies and councils and why these matter
28. Ecclesiology
29. Ecclesiology and world religions
30. Trajectories of theology since Vatican II (1962-1965)