091 Fall Semester
Title: Theology 100-10/ 393-01 RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
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Purpose: This course combines classroom study with service outreach, and thereby extends the mission and identity of SLU as a Jesuit, Catholic University where excellence in academics is combined with service as "men and women for others." It is a service-learning course that is open to every student, and most especially appropriate for Calloway, Ignatian and Xavier scholars who are required to do service as part of their scholarships. It requires interaction between fellow students and the professor in order to intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually examine the religious experience and social responsibility surrounding the meaning of human beings and God. Theology, after all, is about people and God, in all its various dimensions. It requires participation and commitment both to one's fellow students in the classroom and to those one serves outside the classroom. The course uses theological texts that speak to themes in this course and also draws upon many other academic disciplines that help integrate learning and service in holistic way. The use of BlackBoard Campus Edition (BBCE) contains hundreds of pages of handouts, readings of many kinds that fit the syllabus, helps, mission and identity, study habits, biographies, booklists to pick from for your choice of 3 books during the semester (cf below), maps, biographies, self-contained learning modules on PowerPoint, Poetry, Music, Holy Women and Men biographies, and more. It is the glue to the entire course.

Goal: This SLUVISION PROGRAM is limited to 17 students, is 6 hours of credit in the theology (2 courses in theology, the 100 and 300 course requirement), and an approximately 5 hours per week of supervised community service with the marginalized poor. A grade is not given because of the service alone but requires the integration of the service into the course itself. Because the course combines high academic quality with a strong service component, the class will draw upon both at times as well as frequent analysis and critical discussion of the different components within the context of the class.

Time: Mon., Wed., & Fri. 9:00-10:50. Laclede Classroom Building Room 212. (Please do not be late and attendance is mandatory because the whole class is responsible for the material.)

Outline of the Course: #1. The Method through Common Written Texts studied:

The only required text for purchase is Theological Foundations: Concepts and Method for Understanding Christian Faith from St. Mary’s Press, available in the Bookstore under either Theo 100-5 or Theo 393-01. This book will be used throughout the following sections.

1) Theology and Human Experience: An Overview of the different areas of theology done from an experiential starting point. It grounds our entire approach and explains how to understand the various parts the course explores, along with a fundamental concepts and background which provides the class and teacher with a common vocabulary. TEXT #1: Mueller; What is Theology? + BBCE (=BlackBoard Campus Edition)

2) The Classic Experience: An examination of the earliest Christian experience as found in its classical texts, which still remain at the heart of interpreting present day experience. Two other areas will be needed: A comparative study in Judaism and an examination of the world of that time, specifically its socio-cultural context and its history, in order to understand these texts. TEXT #2: Gospel of Mark + Galatians, BBCE
3) The Historical context: some attention will be paid to the major historical developments of faith in culture: Early church, Christological councils of the first five centuries, the 16th c. Protestant Reformation, Modernity, Enlightenment, and Post-Modernity. TEXT #3: BBCE.

4) United States context: the U.S. sociocultural history and its narratives that describe to the identity of U.S.A. peoples. This section will examine the historical context of the Christian tradition in the U.S. along with its attendant social problems. TEXT #4: BBCE.

5) Contemporary theologies and social responsibility: an examination of how to integrate culture, gospel, and spirituality into a responsible Christian discipleship for today. TEXT #5: Mueller: BBCE documents

#2 Chosen Texts and Aesthetic Components: Integration

An integral part of the course will be the examination of the religious spirit manifesting itself in a variety of cultural and historical situations and expressions. The assignments and schedule will be on our restricted class BBCE site. (Web Course Tools=“BBCE”) Much of the student-needed material will be on this site.

1) The student, with the approval of the teacher, will be responsible to analyze 3 works (religious works, novels, biographies, and/or nonfiction work) on religious experience that primarily deal with people on the margins of life. (An approved and annotated list is provided for the students on the BBCE some examples are: W.E.B. Dubois' classic 1902: Souls of Black Folks, first woman Nobel Peace prize winner Jane Addams' Twenty Years at Hull House, Pulitzer Prize winner Toni Morrison's Beloved, and the urban bombshell of the 1880 tenement houses in New York and their exposure by Jacob Riis' How the Other Half Live; or the autobiography of a WWII concentration camp survivor Elie Weisel's haunting work Night.)

2) The student will also be responsible for a loaned CD-ROM by the professor which contains the music selections for our common examination with a written commentary on the BBCE that explains each music selection. This CD-ROM will be returned to the professor at the end of the semester. Any loss or damage to the CD will result in a $20 fee.

3) Visual art in the history of religious and culturally relevant painting will be presented and discussed by the students in class. Some of this visual art is contained on the BBCE. Outside the classroom exposure to art will also be possible, perhaps MOCRA and the ART MUSEUM.

4) The BBCE also contains religious poetry which will be presented at times in class and other poetry will be the responsibility of the student to read.

5) The student will be expected to participate and discuss the material every class and to bring insights from his or her own experience and insight. Group work and interaction is very important and these skills will be assiduously worked on. We will also try to find some way of involving ourselves in the social world examined by the material.

6) The course will require an exam over each section covered by a text (5), short written and oral presentations of the assigned reading material, discussion of the topics, and several short quizzes on informational material that needs to be under control. Students will also be asked to help create appropriate grading tools for their work, in collaboration with the teacher and class.
7) At times, the student will be asked to do “hands on learning” which are our laboratories of research, utilizing the media center, the internet, Cupples House art, MOCRA, the St. Louis Art Museum, library, and other resources as they become available.

Finally, changes in this course syllabus are subject to changes by the class and professor, depending on the needs of the students.

**Grading:** There will be approximately 3-4 written exams encompassing the five areas which will comprise (60% of grade). One page reflection papers are to be written every week that examine the relationship between class and work experience. Note: one does not get a grade credit for doing the service but learning from and integrating it into the course. At least 3 required book analyses of 2 pages on the novel, biography or nonfiction work must be done. (Book analyses will substitutes for the reflection papers for the week that the books are due.) The reflection papers and book review(s) and readings of biographies of Holy Women and Men will constitute 20% of the grade. Another 20% will come from the graded work experience. Attendance is mandatory. Remember this is two courses and is 6 hrs of credit. In general, a student should figure to put in 2 hours of study for every one hour of class. A=93+%, B=86+%, C=78+%, D=70+%. F is anything below 70%.

**GRADE STANDARDS BY THE DEPARTMENT:**

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.

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 an assignment that is free from material, structural and grammatical errors.

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

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 that the student failed to respond adequately to the assignment and its intentions.

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.

**I. Targeted Outcomes: (What the students learn)**

**A. Cognitive/Conceptual Outcomes:** overall outcome - ability to demonstrate a fundamental grasp and appreciation of the connections among sacred text, essentials of doctrine, history and tradition, and the relationship of Christianity to one or more other faith
traditions, as developed through study of major categories of theologically significant
texts and specific case-studies selected by the instructor to illustrate the conceptual
categories listed here.

Specific cognitive/conceptual outcomes: (note especially nos. 1, 2, & 3.)

1. Ability to demonstrate familiarity with at least one major text of the Hebrew Bible, one
from the New Testament, and one ecclesiastical/conciliar document. Assessment target: read,
summarize content of documents and indicate major theological themes.

2. Ability to demonstrate an appreciation of the nature and function of the major literary
forms that comprise the above mentioned biblical texts, of the concept of Biblical Criticism, and
of the overall makeup and development of the scriptural Canon. Assessment target: explain the
general significance of the diversity of literary forms, describe at least three different modes or
levels of Biblical interpretation, and explain the concept of canon formation.

3. Ability to demonstrate knowledge of the overall structure of Theology as a discipline,
of its major sub-disciplines, of general outlines and significance of the systematic/doctrinal sub-
disciplines known as Christology and Trinitarian theology. Assessment target: summarize three
areas of theological inquiry and discourse, and describe at least three essential features of
Christian understanding of Christ and Trinity and how the doctrines interconnect.

4. Ability to compare one theological Christian doctrine with a parallel one in a non-
Christian theological tradition. Assessment target: describe at least three aspects of
similarity/difference between the doctrines or practices of two faith traditions.

5. Ability to demonstrate and understanding of the distinctively theological approach to
dealing with one complex ethical problem (social, sexual, bio-medical, business-related).
Assessment target: explain how theological ethics differs from philosophical or other approaches.

6. Ability to demonstrate an appreciation of the concept of the historical development of
doctrine and/or praxis. Assessment target: explain main outlines of early Church Christological
controversies.

7. Ability to demonstrate knowledge of the concept of theological interpretation of
history. Assessment target: describe two examples of A sacred history in the Bible.

B. Values outcomes: overall outcome Can appreciation of the ethical, social, public, personal and
affective implications of religious faith and its relation to social justice.
Specific values outcomes:
- Appreciation of the significance of the service to the marginalized in theology and one’s
own experience. Assessment target: service reflections and discussions in class.
- Appreciation of the relationships between theology and spirituality. Assessment target:
reading and evaluation of the lives of Holy Women and Men, and the evaluation of the aesthetic
components in writing and in class.

Fundamental awareness of how the Mission Statement of SLU bears on, and is informed
by, the study of theology. Assessment target: approximately fifty hours of service-oriented
activity with the marginalized people of society with supervision.

This is a recognized program of distinction by Fiske’s Guide to universities (1998, p 573), and I
find an exciting course in its creative possibilities, designed to understand the meaning of
religious experience from the perspective of Christian tradition within its various cultural contexts and executed by the students as co-creators of the course. (The teacher’s own perspective is the Catholic tradition and other perspectives are greatly welcomed.) In this service-learning course, the students are asked to bring their service work together with their lived experience to examine the origins, developments, and issues that form our present U.S. and global context. Good scholarship along with imagination, interpersonal skills, and exposure to human expressions in its many forms will guide this service-learning course.

Policies of St. Louis University:

1. Academic Integrity and Honesty

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the student’s own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

Any clear violation of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. Possible sanctions for violation of academic integrity may include, but are not limited to, assignment of a failing grade in a course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University. Students should review the College of Arts and Sciences policy on Academic Honesty, which can be accessed on-line at http://www.slu.edu/colleges/AS/ under “Quicklinks for Students” or in hard copy form in the Arts and Sciences Policy Binder in each departmental or College office.

2. Students with Special Needs - Disability Services

Any student who feels that he/she may need academic accommodations in order to meet the requirements of this course—as outlined in the syllabus, due to presence of a disability, should contact the Office of Disabilities Services. Please telephone the office at 314-977-2930, or visit Room 131 in the Academic Resources Center, 3840 Lindell Blvd. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.