

THEOLOGY (THE)

THE 100. Catholic Theological Reflection on Service. 3 Credit Hours.

This course analyzes and explores the theological dimensions of service in critical dialogue with the Catholic tradition, thereby introducing students to a central question or questions in Catholic theology, as per the specifications of the Core IV document.

THE 125. Biblical Women. 3 Credit Hours.

Focusing on close readings of stories of biblical women, this course introduces students to both the Old Testament and the New Testament, with attention to the social and historical contexts of those writings and to gender theory. The course also traces the afterlives of biblical women in later religious and cultural traditions, with a special emphasis on the representation of biblical figures in the visual arts.

Cross-listed Courses: GWS 125

THE 175. Catholic Theology. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will introduce the student to contemporary understandings of Catholicism. The development of the church's tradition will be traced from its foundations in Scripture and the Councils of the Church to the present day. Topics to be covered include Christology, ecclesiology, morality, and sacramental theology.

THE 184. Christian Creed: Mystery and Symbol. 3 Credit Hours.

An exploration and critique of the beliefs of Christianity through an examination of its expression in the ancient creeds of the church. The course will relate the Nicene Creed common to nearly all Christians to its roots in the Bible and then develop a commentary of the contents of the creed from a contemporary perspective.

THE 200. Theology in a Secular World. 3 Credit Hours.

This course is an introduction to theology and its relevance to other academic disciplines. How does theology relate to other fields in the natural and social sciences? How are its truth claims to be understood and evaluated? And what are the practical benefits to studying theology in the twenty-first century? In this class we will read theological and biblical texts side by side with works from such contemporary disciplines as psychology, religious studies, and environmental science. We will analyze how prominent theological writers translate a number of concepts into the language and categories of modern thought, and how they seek to find meaning in the data uncovered by the modern sciences. Readings will include works by a number of prominent Catholic writers—including Thomas Berry, Paul Knitter, Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen, and Richard Rohr—as well as texts from other religious traditions and secular fields.

THE 201. Old Testament. 3 Credit Hours.

A general introduction to the literature of the Hebrew Bible (the Christian Old Testament). The course will consider different approaches to this material, such as historical criticism, rhetorical analysis, etc. Students will also explore the history of biblical Israel within the context of the ancient Near East. Selections of the Torah (Pentateuch), the prophets and the writings will be studied.

THE 202. A Rabbi Meets Jesus: a Jewish-Christian Encounter. 3 Credit Hours.

In the context of contemporary Jewish-Christian encounter, it is important to identify and to evaluate critically theological concepts which each of these religions teach and believe, including the idea of God, Law, Kingdom, Covenant, messiah, Holiness, and Sabbath. These theological concepts will be central to this course and will be explored through the study of primary religious texts, doctrines, and theological arguments.

THE 203. Prophets. 3 Credit Hours.

This course concerns the prophetic writings of the Hebrew Bible. The class will study the phenomenon of prophecy in the ancient Near East in general and in biblical Israel in particular. Using the work of anthropologists and social scientists, the class will also consider briefly prophecy in contemporary tribal societies in order to understand the role of prophecy in Israelite society. The class will meet the prophetic books on their own terms, as the works of theologians and thinkers, influenced by their social contexts, with specific notions about God, history, the future and the role of human choice and behavior in shaping national and personal destiny.

THE 204. Biblical Spiritualities. 3 Credit Hours.

This course approaches the Bible as a resource for those seeking to live a spiritual life. Particular attention will be given to contemplative spiritualities, the spirituality of social justice, eco-spirituality, and the spirituality of community. The course will incorporate close readings of biblical texts in their centuries, attention to contemporary spiritual practices inspired by these sources, and openness to emerging expressions of spirituality.

THE 206. Theology of Christian Art. 3 Credit Hours.

The course will explore Christian art as symbols which promote human faith and the consequent creative and redemptive work of God. This course explores the works of Christian art in tandem with Christian expressions of and/or reflection upon that faith which those works seek to promote. Through the study of primary texts which elucidate that faith in its historical contexts the course will seek to understand the role which art plays in God's work of creation and redemption. Readings will be drawn from key texts from Scripture, the early Christian apologists, patristic writers, ecumenical councils, mystics, theologians and reformers. Art works will range from frescoes in the catacombs through medieval, renaissance, and modern architecture, sculpture and painting.

Fulfills Core Requirement(s): Visual and Performing Arts (VPA)).

THE 210. Faith and the Religious and Theoretical Roots of Social Justice. 3 Credit Hours.

This course is an introduction to the notion of faith (broadly-conceived), the biblical foundations for justice, the basic principles of Catholic social teaching, and an introduction to social justice that emphasizes the tensions and opportunities for furthering the common good within existing social, political and economic systems. It serves as the introductory course for the Faith and Social Justice minor.

THE 211. Johannine Literature. 3 Credit Hours.

An in-depth examination of the fourth Gospel and Johannine epistles. The distinctive Johannine theology will be assessed, with some attention to the differences (literary and theological) between John and the synoptic Gospels. The course will also discuss theories of the history of the Johannine community, with consideration for how the community's situation may have affected its theology.

THE 212. Pauline Epistles. 3 Credit Hours.

The course has two main purposes: (1) to answer the question, "What gospel does Paul preach?"—that is, to come to an understanding of Paul's rich theology; and (2) to learn, through the epistles, more about the milieu in which Paul worked: the social conditions, competing theological movements within early Christianity, issues of community life. As time permits, the course may also include an overview of the images of Paul preserved by other writings such as Acts of the Apostles and the deuteropauline Letters.

THE 213. Synoptic Gospels. 3 Credit Hours.

An in-depth examination of Matthew, Mark and Luke. This course will examine what is common to the first three Gospels, including, but not limited to parables, healing stories, controversy stories and accounts of the passion and resurrection. Questions of methodology and background will be treated as necessary. The emphasis will then shift to close readings of each Gospel in order to gain an appreciation for the distinctive theology and literary structure of the the three.

THE 231. Christian Ethics. 3 Credit Hours.

An introduction to significant approaches to religious ethics and the study of particular personal and social problems from religious perspectives. Examples of topics included might be marriage, abortion, homosexuality, nuclear warfare and world hunger.

THE 232. Catholic Social Thought. 3 Credit Hours.

This course aims to help students clarify their unexpressed values as a step toward developing a value system. It seeks to develop habits of re-examining the student's purposes, aspirations, attitudes and feelings to find an intelligent relationship between his or her life and the world. The course begins with a consideration of the viability of Christian ethics as applied to the personal and social aspects of life. It evaluates the value presuppositions of both students and leaders and applies these values to case studies.

THE 235. Eco-Theology and Film. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will introduce the rising field of Eco-Theology, presenting many of the ways in which humanity's relationship to nature has been understood. Our approach will be interdisciplinary, and students will be encouraged to explore the issues and materials from a range of perspectives, both theological and artistic.

Fulfills Core Requirement(s): Visual and Performing Arts (VPA)).

THE 237. Christian Social Ethics. 3 Credit Hours.

This course offers an approach to contemporary social issues and underscores the importance of the Christian ethical dimension in these issues and in character formation. Students will be introduced to the methods and resources for ethical analysis and decision making. Issues addressed will include the family, liberation, violence, non-violence, the environment, sexuality, the economy, life and death and medicine.

THE 238. Black/Womanist Theology & Social Justice. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will explore the categories of Christian theological discourse (about God, Jesus Christ, the Church, etc.) through the lens of Black and Womanist theology and their implications for social justice (racial, sexual, economic, criminal, ecological, etc.).

THE 240. Theological Responses to Suffering. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will examine the various types, causes, and dimensions of suffering, as well as traditional and contemporary religious responses to human suffering. While the course will draw from the wisdom of both Eastern and Western theological and spiritual traditions, particular attention will be given to the Christian/Catholic tradition.

THE 247. Christian Life: Symbol and Practice. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will explore various components of Christian life as it is contemporaneously experienced and symbolized. To achieve this, the topics of religious experience, faith belief and conversion will be treated in the context of various modes of symbolization: scripture, sacrament and liturgy, doctrine and literature.

THE 248. Christian Spirituality. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will provide the student with an overview of Christian spirituality. It will consider the biblical foundations of Christian spirituality and its historical development through the centuries. A major portion of the course will look at the contemporary practice of Christian spirituality, including prayer, discernment, spiritual direction and the usefulness of insights from psychology regarding dreams, personality and gender. Students will be introduced in-class to various methods of Christian meditation.

THE 250. Sacred Geometry: Art, Cinema and Spirituality- Special Topic. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will provide a comparative study of ancient cultures in their use of symbolism, geometry, art and cosmology to define reality. "All of life in its entirety," wrote Pier Paolo Pasolini, "is a natural, living film," and in this course students will explore a series of twelve "art films" to discern ways in which symbols derived from nature can function within a variety of spiritualities and belief systems. Course topics will provide symbolic representations of the structure of the universe, expressing the notion of reality as an organized and unified whole.

THE 267. American Catholicism. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will introduce the student to the history of American Catholicism from colonial days to the present. Special emphasis will be placed upon a consideration of the problems which the church faced as it tried simultaneously to be American enough to please a frequently skeptical and sometimes hostile American culture; conspicuously Catholic enough to please Rome and Catholic enough in the forms of piety and governance to please the diverse ethnic groups that comprised its membership. Topics covered will include Catholic patriotism, Americanization, the Americanist crisis, nativism and American Catholic intellectual life.

THE 274. African Christian Theology. 3 Credit Hours.

The course examines the encounter between African traditional religions and cultures and European Christianity during nineteenth century missionary expansion into sub-Saharan Africa. It also explores the movements that gave rise to contemporary African Christian theology. Although the course is ecumenical in scope, it places particular emphasis on the Roman Catholic theological tradition.

THE 277. The Church: Community in Christ. 3 Credit Hours.

An exploration of the community of Jesus' disciples which developed into a worldwide, multi-faceted and structure communion of communions. This study will consider the scriptural roots of this communion and its subsequent theological development. It will also propose and critique contemporary concepts of the church.

THE 278. Jesus Christ Through History. 3 Credit Hours.

From the time of the historical Jesus until the present, the figure of Jesus has undergone significant changes in interpretation. This course will trace these changes and assess the reasons for them. The course will also allow students to assess contemporary interpretations of Jesus.

THE 281. Christianity in Dialogue With World Religions. 3 Credit Hours.

If Jesus is the only Way what does that mean for our brothers and sisters of other faiths? What does the Catholic Church really teach about the possibility of salvation for those who do not become Catholic? Can Catholics and other Christians engage in respectful dialogue and active cooperation with people of other faiths? How might interfaith dialogue enhance and deepen the faith one already holds? In this course students will explore a number of different theological answers and perspectives that address these and other questions with special emphasis on official Catholic teaching. In addition, we will be introduced to a number of concrete examples of Christians engaging in dialogue with the faithful of other religions. In the second half of the course, students will choose one particular non-Christian tradition and enter more intensively into examples of dialogue between Christianity and that particular faith with the goal of considering and questioning more deeply their own understanding of the world and their position in it.
 Fulfills Core Requirement(s): Diversity (DIV).

THE 284. Christian Mysticism. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will trace mystical theologies and the practices tied to them within Christianity, as well as outlining issues of definition and method in the study of mysticism. It will explore the roots of Christian mysticism and the development of various forms of mysticism from late antiquity to modern era.

THE 285. Eating As a Sacred Act: an Intellectual And Gustatory Exploration of Food and Faith. 3 Credit Hours.

The fundamental aim of this course will be to articulate a theology of eating. In many ways, food is a simple thing. Someone grows it; someone prepares and eats it. But in reality, food/eating is perhaps one of the most complicated of human acts since it involves so many facets of creation and human ingenuity. Eating does not merely fill our bellies. Eating has a transcendent dimension to it as well. In the Christian tradition, there exists an obvious connection to Eucharist, eating, that leads to communion through creation, humanity and ultimately God. Food and eating will be viewed through multiple academic lenses: theological (principally), ritual, sacramental, cultural, agricultural, ecological, and moral. The aim is to lead the student to a deeper awareness of this ordinary but complex act that joins one to the entire cosmos. There will also be a gustatory component in which the student will explore the local food shed that will include shared meals.

THE 390. Independent Study. 1-3 Credit Hours.

A student who wishes to pursue an independent study for academic credit must submit, prior to registration, a proposed plan of study that includes the topic to be studied, the goal to be achieved, the methodology to be followed, the schedule of supervision, the end product, the evaluation procedure and the number of credits sought. All proposals must be approved by the supervising faculty member, the department chair and the academic dean. They will be kept on file in the academic dean's office. Prerequisite: REL 200.
 Prerequisite: Junior standing required.