

RE 205: Foundations of Christian Theology
Fall 2001
Syllabus

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Office hours: MWF 9:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m., T/Th 9:40 a.m.-12:30 p.m. or by appointment

Course Goal

To study and discuss the theological foundations of Christianity from a contemporary Catholic perspective, probing concepts fundamental to formulating a coherent and systematic faith-vision within a diverse multi-cultural society. Central themes include revelation and faith, grace and Jesus, religion and salvation, scripture and tradition, church and mission, ethics and ecumenical dialogue. Contemporary debates on fundamental concepts in theology will be offered in a spirit that is catholic, Christian and ecumenical.

Course Objectives

- ◆ To gain a basic understanding of Christian theology as it is applied in today's world;
- ◆ To introduce the student to some of the current theological trends;
- ◆ To examine in depth the essential themes of Christian theology;
- ◆ To assist the student with developing theological reflection in one's life by applying it to a contemporary situation.
- ◆ To provide a systematic study of Catholic Christianity in comparison to and contrast with other Christian confessions in a spirit of charity and dialogue.

Required Texts and readings

Hymes, Michael A. and Gearon, Liam., eds. *Contemporary Catholic Theology: A Reader*. New York: Continuum Publishing, 1999.

Lane, Dermot. *The Experience of God: An Invitation to Do Theology*. New York: Paulist Press, 1981.

Handouts as given out in class.

Course Requirements

a) Attendance and class participation	20%
b) In-class writing assignments	20%
c) Written assignments	15%
d) Group project	15%
e) Mid term exam	15%
f) Final exam	15%
Total	100%

Attendance and class participation

Students are expected to attend all sessions of the course and to contact the instructor in case of absence. Three or more unexcused absences could result in a lower overall grade for the course. Participation includes preparing readings and written responses as assigned. Students are expected to have read the material and be prepared to discuss the content.

In-class writing assignments

In-class writing assignments will consist of responding to one thematic essay question. Students will be given time during class to respond to the essay question and are expected to complete the answer(s) and turn it in by the next class. These in-class writing assignments will not be scheduled in advance but will be given at the discretion of the instructor.

Written assignments

Students will be given three written assignments in class that will require some analysis or additional research. The response should be about 2-3 pages.

Exams (Mid-term and Final)

The exams will consist of multiple choice and essay questions. Essay questions will be given in advance to assist the student in preparation but notes will not be permitted during the test.

Group project

The team will explore an aspect of contemporary issues or challenges that confronts us today using the tri-polar method of theological reflection. Some samples of issues are abortion, euthanasia, ordination of women in Roman Catholicism, economic inequity, consumerism, debt relief in developing nations, distance learning via internet, pre-marital sex, Hawaiian sovereignty, post-colonialism, Christian unity, among others.

The team must work together to write a final paper and give a class presentation. Theological method will include personal experiences of the team members, Scripture and tradition, and contemporary viewpoints from societal contexts among which are, but not limited to, media reports, historical developments, natural and social sciences. Grading will be based not on the conclusion the team reaches but how well the team uses the method and resources to substantiate the conclusion.

Organizational Themes: Marianist Educational Philosophy and Diversity

Organizational themes refer to underlying structural links that contribute to the choice of content, the pedagogy selected for participation of the teacher/learner and student/teacher in bringing the content to life, and fulfillment of the course objectives within a broader frame of education and building community.

1. The first set of organizational themes around which the course is constructed is drawn from the "Characteristics of Marianist Universities."
 - ❖ Educate for formation in faith;
 - ❖ Provide an integral quality education;

- ❖ Educate for family spirit;
- ❖ Educate for service, justice and peace; and
- ❖ Educate for adaptation and change.

2. The second major organizational theme is diversity and the complex issues that arise when we look at peoples' experience of God worldwide.

Two explicit outcomes arise from these organizational themes:

1. The students will incorporate into their essays and group project an awareness of the Marianist educational characteristics and how they impact on their reading of the sources and themes for the course and their own personal theological reflection.
2. Students will develop an awareness and deeper appreciation for the diversity of theories and experiences throughout the Christian community worldwide.

Course Outline (*subject to revision*)

Date	Topic	Readings for following session
Week I		
Aug. 27	1. Course introduction	article: "The Clumsy Embrace"
Aug. 29	2. What is theology/theological reflection	Hymes: pp. 13-24, 109-126
Aug. 31	3. Scripture: source of revelation	Hymes: pp. 3-12, 25-39
Week II		
Sept. 3	Labor Day holiday	
Sept. 5	4. Scripture	Hymes: pp. 40-61
Sept. 7	5. Hebrew Scripture	Hymes: pp. 62 -108
Week III		
Sept. 10	6. Hebrew Scripture	Hymes: pp. 126-130, 135-164
Sept. 12	7. Christian Scripture (<i>Video: From Jesus to Christ</i>)	
Sept. 14	8. Christian Scripture – Gospels	Hymes: pp. 130-134, 165-180
Week IV		
Sept. 17	9. Christian Scripture - Paul	
Sept. 19	10. Themes of covenant and revelation	Lane: pp. 1-31
Sept. 21	11. Experience, God and Theology	
Week V		
Sept. 24	12. Experience, God and Theology	Lane: pp. 34-62
Sept. 26	13. Nature of Revelation	
Sept. 28	14. Nature of Revelation	Lane: pp. 63-89
Week VI		
Oct. 1	15. Activity of Faith	
Oct. 3	16. Activity of Faith	
Oct. 5	17. Stages of faith development	

Week VII

- Oct. 8 Discoverer's day holiday
Oct. 10 18. Stages of faith development
Oct. 12 19. Review

Week VIII

- Oct. 15 20. Mid-term exam (Scripture/Revelation) Hymes: pp. 184-208
Oct. 17 21. Christology – Person of Jesus Hymes: pp. 209-233
Oct. 19 22. Incarnation Hymes: pp. 234-250

Week IX

- Oct. 22 23. Jesus, Savior and Son of God Hymes: pp. 251-258
Oct. 24 24. Jesus to Christ
Oct. 26 25. Development of the Early Church Hymes: pp. 316-334

Week X

- Oct. 29 26. One, holy, catholic, apostolic Hymes: pp. 349-368
Oct. 31 27. Ecumenism Hymes: pp. 434-444
Nov. 2 28. Sacramental theology Hymes: pp. 484-499

Week XI

- Nov. 5 29. Sacramental theology Hymes: pp. 369-388
Nov. 7 30. Christian morality Hymes: pp. 401-433
Nov. 9 31. Sexual morality and social justice

Week XII

- Nov. 12 Veterans' Day holiday
Nov. 14 32. Theology in art and film
Nov. 15 33. video (Chocolat)

Week XIII

- Nov. 19 34. video (Chocolat)
Nov. 21 35. Video discussion
Nov. 23 Thanksgiving Holiday

Week XIV

- Nov. 26 36. Emerging theological trends
Nov. 28 37. Emerging theological trends
Nov. 30 38. Group presentations

Week XV

- Dec. 3 39. Group presentations
Dec. 5 40. Group presentations
Dec. 7 41. Review for final exam

- Dec. 13 8-10 a.m. Final exam