Course Description
The course will give the student an overview of the beliefs and practices of Roman Catholics, both in written text and visual monuments. Students will gain an understanding of the historical development of the Church, the different aspects of its doctrine, and the developments in spirituality. Students will gain a broad grasp of the elements common to all Christian confessions and the particular aspects of the Roman Catholic vision. All aspects will be studied in their historical perspective while asking how this bears on today’s church in dialogue with the world.

Learning Outcomes
At the conclusion of the course, the student will be able to

• Explain key concepts in Christian theology
• Express the meaning of different aspects of Catholic practice, including the church & papacy, sacraments, the communion of saints, and the liturgy
• Assess how differences in the Christian arts respond to different historical and theological concerns
• Determine how different movements and times in the Church are reflected in different art and architecture styles
• Identify the similarities and differences across Christian denominations
• Give an account of the Roman Catholic self-understanding in the 21st century

The course seeks to promote both accurate understanding and critical theological reasoning.

Required Materials

• The Bible (any reliable translation, also available at bible.com)
• Assigned readings posted on Sakai

Attendance Policy
In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student.

• For all classes meeting once a week, students cannot incur more than one unexcused absence.
• For all classes meeting twice a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.
• For all classes meeting three times a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.

This course meets once a week, thus a total of one unexcused absence(s) will be permitted. Unexcused absences beyond these will result in 1% lowering of the final course grade, for every absence after the “approved limit”. The collective health of the JFRC is everyone’s responsibility. DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF YOU ARE ILL.
Other Expectations

- Class will normally meet at a site in the city. It is important that the student dress respectfully, with no shorts and no shoulders showing.
- The student should be on time for class, allowing enough time for the commute. Excessive lateness can also count as absence.
- Students may not listen to music devices, use a cell phone, or use a computer during class time.
- When the class takes place in the classroom, students may not leave the classroom during class time, except for real emergencies. Breaks will be scheduled at least every hour and a half.
- Visitors may attend classes only with the express permission of the professor and visitors are limited to close family members.

Assessment Components

- Participation 15%
- Midterm Exam 25%
- Paper 20%
- Presentation 10%
- Final Exam 30%

Grading

94-100: A
Excellent. Demonstrated a thorough understanding and appreciation of the issues raised by the text and the historic, cultural, social, and religious contexts. Demonstrated a nuanced understanding of the contribution and limitation of contexts in the application of the issues and was able to critically compare the text and its contexts with other texts of the course and their contexts. Presented a clear, well-organized, and convincing argument. Evidenced exceptional engagement with the issues involved beyond the mere requirements of the course.

90-93: A-
Qualities of an A, with a lesser degree of organization and expression (grammar, style, content).

87-89: B+
Qualities of a B, with excellent organization and presentation of the material, evidencing a thorough grasp of the issues involved.

84-86: B
Good. Demonstrated a close reading of the texts and a nuanced understanding of its contents. Developed an informed opinion of the text and was able to argue this position through understanding of the issues in their historical, cultural, social, and religious contexts; critically comparing the texts with other texts of the course; and pointing out different methods of analysis and problems of interpretation.

80-83: B-
Qualities of a B, with a lesser degree of organization and expression (grammar, style, content).

77-79: C+
Qualities of a C, with some awareness of the application of the issues to modern contexts and the complexities involved in analysis and interpretation.

74-76: C
Fair. Demonstrated an adequate knowledge of the texts and a basic understanding of the issues involved. Good summaries of the arguments made in the text. Some conclusions drawn. Position expressed is made with some reference to the text.

70-73: C-
Qualities of a C, with a lesser degree of organization and expression (grammar, style, content).

67-69: D+
Qualities of a D, with some evidence of awareness of the implications of the claims raised by the text.

60-66: D
Poor. Some awareness of the issues. No clear treatment of the text nor an organization of the issues. Opinions merely asserted and not argued for with reference to the text itself.

59 or lower: F
Fail. Assignment not completed or not completed successfully.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago’s guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola’s standards.
Late or Missed Assignments
Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor.

Accessibility Accommodations
Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.
Course Schedule

Friday Class Day: Friday, November 18

Week One, Sept 6
The Christian Vision and the Catholic Church
Background reading: Genesis 1:1—2:2, Exodus 12—15:1, Isaiah 7-12, 49-55, 66, the Gospels

Week Two, Sept 13
Peter and Paul and the beginnings of the church
Readings
1 Peter
Revelation, chapters 1-7, 21-22
Masson, Companion Guide to Rome, chapter 23 and 1-3
Sites: Basilica di S. Paolo fuori le mura, Monastero delle Tre Fontane
Meet at: Basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura, in the front of the church

Week Three, Sept 20
Christian martyrs and Christian death
Readings
Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Ephesians, Letter to the Romans
Masson, Companion Guide to Rome, chapter 15
Sites: Catacombe di Priscilla, Basilica di S. Agnese fuori le mura
Meet at: Catacombs of Priscilla, Via Salaria 430

Week Four, Sept 27
Articulating the faith: The Bible
Readings
Irenaeus of Lyon, Against Heresies (excerpt)
Vatican II, Dei Verbum
Sites: S. Sabina, S. Alessio, S. Anselmo
Meet at: Piazza dei Cavalieri di Malta

Church presentation due: September 30

Week Five, Oct 4
Articulating the Faith: Living the Gospel
Readings
Life of St. Francis of Assisi
Masson, Companion Guide to Rome, chapter 24-25
Sites: S. Maria in Trastevere, S. Cecilia, S. Francesco a Ripa
Meet at: San Francesco a Ripa

Week Six, Oct 11
Articulating the faith: Dogma
Readings
Athanasius, On the Incarnation, chapters 1-5
Masson, Companion Guide to Rome, chapter 17
Sites: S. Pudenziana, S. Prassede, S. Maria Maggiore
Meet at: Santa Maria Maggiore, in the front

Midterm due: October 14
Week Seven, Oct 25  The Development of the Papacy  
Readings  
Fourth Lateran Council decrees (excerpts)  
Sites: S. Giovanni in Laterano, SS. Quattro Coronati, S. Clemente  
Meet at: San Giovanni in Laterano, in front  

Week Eight, Nov 1  Christian worship and sacraments  
Readings  
Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogia*  
Litany of the Saints  
Sites: San Lorenzo fuori le mura, Campo Verano  

Week Nine, Nov 8  The Reformation  
Readings  
Martin Luther, *On the Freedom of a Christian* (excerpts)  
Sites: S. Maria del Popolo, Chiesa di Gesù e Maria, S. Ambrogio al Corso  
Meet at: Piazza del Popolo  

Week Ten, Nov 15  The Catholic Response to the Reformation  
Readings  
Decrees of the Council of Trent (excerpts)  
Sites: Chiesa Nuova, S. Agnese in Agone, S. Agostino  
Meet at: Chiesa Nuova  

Week Eleven, Nov 18 (Friday class)  
Ignatius Loyola and the Baroque  
Readings  
Ignatius Loyola, *Autobiography*  
Sites: Il Gesù, S. Ignazio  
Meet at: Il Gesù  

Paper due: November 25  

Week Twelve, Nov 22  The Church  
Readings  
Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*  
Site: S. Pietro in Vaticano  
Meet at: San Pietro in Vaticano  

Week Thirteen, Nov 29  Pope Francis and the Church today  
Reading  
Francis, *Laudato Si’*  
Sites: Churches of Monte Mario  
Meet at: Chiesa di San Fulgenzio
How to make the most of the class

Note taking

- At least a day before class: (1) read the assigned text(s) carefully. Take notes on the relevant points and any questions that arise. Write a short summary of the main points. (2) Read the chapters from Masson carefully, following the itinerary on a map. Look up pictures of the sites discussed. Take notes on the most important points. Make a list of the sites covered.
- During class, stay alert, follow the presentation. Take notes on the content covered and on the presentation of the sites. Think about how the texts and lectures relate to the sites. In your notes, take down the most relevant points without trying to copy down everything the instructor says. Ask questions and offer your informed opinion on the readings and the topics being discussed.
- After class, sit down and rewrite your notes in a more organized form, including any new insights that may arise in the process. Go back to the readings as you do this to pick up any aspects you may have missed. Imagine yourself presenting the sites to a new visitor and reflect on how you would draw out their meaning.

Engagement

- All of the texts studied were written to communicate the significance of Jesus, the joy of the Christian life, and the fulfillment and salvation that comes through living in the Holy Spirit. Let the texts speak to you. Continue to seek out the passion that moved the writer to write and that moved the construction and decoration of the churches. Ask yourself what is at stake. Consider how the historical circumstances shaped the concerns. Apply the texts to life today, reflect on what the particular church means today.
- The material in the course will enhance your experience of Rome as a whole as well as other places you travel. Bring the questions raised in the class with you as you journey around Rome, Italy, and Europe. Visit as many churches as you can and spend time asking yourself what the church architecture and the art you find there are saying about life in Christ. Put the texts in dialogue with the art and notice how new places relate to the places visited in class. Attend various worship services in your travels and allow yourself to be enriched by the different approaches to celebrating Christian life.
- Theology is in continual dialogue with the various ways that humans search for meaning. Actively think about how what you are learning in the other classes relates to the theological questions.
- The Christian life is fundamentally communal; this applies also to the life of the mind and especially to the life of the spirit. Talk about the issues together with your classmates and friends. Discuss the texts, debate the issues. The more you make the issues your own, the better you will understand them, and the richer your experience will be.
Spirituality

- The course is designed to give you a basic competence in the history of Christian reflection through the ages, particularly from a Roman Catholic perspective. Your progress in the course will be measured on your ability to understand and express this at the rational, intellectual level. You are encouraged to do more, though. Challenge yourself to go beyond the merely academic aspect and use this time to enrich your own spirituality and sense of the meaning of life. You will find somethings familiar and some things surprising. This will happen in different ways, depending on your background:
  
  (1) If you are Roman Catholic, use this time as a way of learning about and deepening your own engagement with the faith.
  
  (2) If you are Christian but not Roman Catholic, a good bit of the material will apply to your own faith tradition, which you can use to engage that at a deeper level. As you learn about the Roman Catholic issues, ask yourself how your perspective differs and why. Use your encounter with the Catholic perspective as a way to deepen your relationship to Christ.
  
  (3) If you are not Christian but are a member of one of the great world religions, you will be gaining an in-depth perspective on Christian and specifically Roman Catholic concerns. Use this engagement as a means to reflect on your own religious commitments in dialogue with Christian concerns.
  
  (4) If you find yourself distanced from specific religious concerns at this point in your life, use this class to reflect on why. Take seriously the claims raised by the texts and use them to come to a deeper understanding of the meaning of life and the role that spirituality has played in people’s lives throughout history.