THEO 266 | The Church in the World

The Theological Legacy of Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) for a Church in transition

THEO 266-A02 | Spring 2018 | Monday 7:00-9:30pm

JFRC

Instructor Information

Fr. Philipp G. Renczes, SJ
Office: JFRC, 103
Office Hours: 6:00-7:00pm
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Email: prencze@luc.edu
Please email to arrange appointments outside office hours.

Course Description

The course will introduce to the former pope’s theological vision of the Roman Catholic Church in interaction with contemporary thought. It will do so by way of a hermeneutic that parallels his central work as theologian, Introduction to Christianity (1968) with successive writings, including Jesus of Nazareth and the Encyclical Letters (Deus Caritas Est, Spe Salvi and Caritas in Veritatem), published during his pontificate. A focus will be placed on topics which are situated at the intersection of Church and modernity, such as Christian Faith in dialogue with Atheism/Agnosticism, Catholic Tradition versus Reform in time (Aggiornamento), the Quest for Justice and economy models and Catholic Church and World Religions.

If numerous portraits label Joseph Ratzinger as conservative or hardliner, at closer inspection it appears that his thought requires careful and measured analysis, revealing the acute awareness of the need to articulate a theology which aims at engaging with the most pertinent incentives and issues that theological thought received from the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) in which Ratzinger himself participated as adviser to highlight the essence of Christian doctrine in dialogue/confrontation with contemporary thought.

Classes will be a combination of lecture, discussion, papers and exams.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- analyze and determine Joseph Ratzinger’s theological stances towards the “dialectics of secularization”, in particular his emphasis on the requirement to (re)build relations between Faith and Reason.

- reach an understanding and articulate a personal judgment regarding the points of continuity and change in Ratzinger’s thought over time, in dialogue and dispute with contemporary thought and different theologies.

- carefully and intelligently apply key concepts found in theological texts to concrete contemporary issues.
Course Required Text and Materials


All additional material (required readings) will be made available through Loyola SAKAI (https://sakai.luc.edu).

Note: Satisfies Loyola’s requirement in the Core area of Theological and Religious Studies Knowledge. Also satisfies the Core value of Understanding Spirituality or Faith in Action in the World

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy:

This course meets once a week, thus a total of one unexcused absence(s) will be permitted. Unexcused absences beyond these will result in a lowering of your final grade.

Requirements for the Course

In accordance with the JFRC’s Academic Policies, it is expected that students will attend and participate actively in all class meetings. Active participation in the class excludes emailing, facebooking, and surfing at random on the internet.

Class will consist of an introductory lecture and the discussion of the primary texts and secondary literature assigned for that day. All lectures, except for the textbook references, will be found on SAKAI, most of them in the Rome Center Library. Students must bring the textbook and (digital) copies of the assigned secondary sources to each meeting in order to facilitate class discussion.

Students are expected to hand in a term paper of 5-7 pages plus bibliography by the date indicated in the schedule of the syllabus. Delay in handing in the paper will result in lowering the final grade. Paper topics must be approved in advance by the instructor. The term paper is to be submitted in both forms, printed and electronic.

Evaluation

- Participation 20%
- Paper 30%
- Midterm Exam 20%
- Final Exam 30%

Grading

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Grading
**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 here: http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml. You are responsible for understanding what constitutes plagiarism according to the LUC Student Handbook.

**Disabilities**

Students with documented disabilities who wish to discuss academic accommodations should contact me the first week of class, as well as the Senior Academic Services Advisor.

**SCHEDULE OF LESSONS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**Introduction**

1. **Jan 15**  *Introduction* to the course; biographical and bibliographical information concerning Joseph Ratzinger.

   **I. Humanity Facing God in Today’s World**

2. **Jan 22**  “I believe – help my disbelief” (Mk 17,24) – Presuppositions of belief

   *Required Readings:*

   “Belief in the world of Today”, *Introduction to Christianity* (German original 1968), pp. 39-81

3. **Jan 29**  “I believe – we believe” Faith in a communion of believers

   *Required Readings:*

   “The Ecclesiastical Form of Faith”, *Introduction to Christianity*, pp. 82-100

   “The spiritual basis and ecclesial identity of theology”, in *The Nature and Mission of Theology. Essays to Orient Theology in Today’s Debate* (German original 1993), pp. 45-72

4. **Feb 05**  “I believe – I think rationally” – Christianity as co-existence of faith and reason in regard with God

   *Required Readings:*

   “Christianity, the Religion according to Reason”, lecture given by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in the convent of Saint Scholastica in Subiaco, Italy, April 1st 2005
   (http://catholiceducation.org/articles/politics/pg0143.html)

II. God Facing Humanity in Today’s World

5. Feb 12  The meaning of “Triune God”

Required Readings:

“Faith in God Today”, “Belief in the Triune God”, *Introduction to Christianity*, pp. 162-190

Encyclical “Deus Caritas est”, Part 1
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html

6. Feb 19  MID-TERM EXAMINATION

III. Jesus Christ

7. Feb 26  The “heart” of Christianity: Jesus the Christ

Required Readings:

*I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord*, *Introduction to Christianity*, pp. 193 - 270

Jesus of Nazareth, Foreword and Introduction, pp. Xi-XXIV; 1-8

8. Mar 12  The “beating of the heart”: Jesus Christ according to the Christological articles

Required Readings:

“The development of Faith in Christ in the Christological Articles of the Creed”, *Introduction to Christianity*, pp. 271-327

IV. The Church as Temple of the Holy Spirit

9. Mar 16  FRIDAY CLASS DAY

The dynamic (eschatological) understanding of the Church’s interaction with the world

Required Readings:

“The intrinsic unity of the last statements in the Creed”, “Two Major Questions posed by the articles on the Spirit and the Church”, *Introduction to Christianity*, pp. 331-359


Encyclical, *In Spe Salvi*, no. 1-15
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20071130_spe-salvi_en.html

LAST DATE TO Submit TERM PAPER TOPICS for approval
10. Mar 19  The Commun(i)al structure of the Church’s interaction with the world

Required Readings:


Encyclical, Caritas in veritate, no. 21-42, 68-79


11. Mar 26  The Liturgical structure of the Church

Required Readings:

“Liturgy and Life: The Place of the Liturgy in Reality” in The Spirit of the Liturgy (German original 2000), 13-61

“Form and Content in the Eucharistic Celebration”, in The Feast of Faith. Approaches to a Theology of the Liturgy, pp. 33-60

12. Apr 09  Israel and the Church/The Church and World Religions

Required Readings:

http://www.communio-icr.com/

The Sermon on the Mount in Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 64-127.

13. Apr 16  From Benedict XVI to Pope Francis

Required Readings:

Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, I. A Church which goes forth, numbers 20-49
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium_en.html#1
A_Church_which_goes_forth

TERM PAPER DUE on this DATE

14. Apr 23  FINAL EXAMINATION (as scheduled by the JFRC)
Examples of paper topics

Faith and Reason: A Return to an Augustinian Perspective in the Theology of J. Ratzinger

The Mystery of the Eucharist as center of a modern theology

How to speak about God with J. Ratzinger’s theology in today’s world

The significance of the “Regensburg” speech for the interreligious dialogue

Salvation for the World: an analysis of its theological significance

Church Reform: what can Theology do to support it?

Grace: a pervasive theme in Ratzinger’s theology and its relation to the current culture