

**SOCL 370/CATH 390 – SPIRITUALITIES IN A SECULAR AGE**  
**Loyola U. Chicago – Fall 2023**

**Time:** Thurs, 4:15-6:45pm  
**Instructor:** Fr. Patrick Gilger, SJ  
**Office:** Coffey 429

**Classroom:** Cuneo Hall, Room 104  
**Email:** [pgilger@luc.edu](mailto:pgilger@luc.edu)  
**Office Hours:** Thurs, 1:30-3:30pm

**Course Description:** From TikTok to hot yoga, from Etsy to the Esolen Institute, spirituality talk is everywhere. But where did it come from? When did we start understanding ourselves through the language of spirituality? And just how did spirituality get juxtaposed to religion such that we can now describe ourselves as spiritual but not religious? Just what are we talking about when we talk about spirituality today? – these are the questions we will ask together this semester.

In this class we will try to answer them by looking at spirituality from a variety of perspectives. In our first class, I am going to, metaphorically, push you into the deep end of the pool by asking you read some sociology of contemporary religious practice, some theory about “enchantment” and “disenchantment,” and some philosophy that will help us begin to imagine how whatever we mean by “secularity” is affecting all of this. After that baptism by fire, our course will have three more units – one on secularity, a second on spirituality, and a third on how we negotiate the challenges of “being spiritual” in our secular context.

In the first unit, we will become familiar with what it means to say that we live in “a secular age” by reading parts of Charles Taylor’s great book of the same name (along with some commentaries on it and contextualizations/evocations of its themes). After those four weeks, we will spend three weeks thinking about spirituality. There we will learn a bit about where the term comes from and how it looks in its Christian, atheist, and non-religious forms. We’ll close this second unit by paying some attention to some suspicions that scholars have about spirituality – what it might be vulnerable to, in other words. Our third and final unit will be an attempt to confront some of the dilemmas we face in the spiritual negotiations we undertake in our own lives. Here we will consider themes like the spiritual self, freedom and authenticity, the creation of (nonreligious?) rituals, and how spirituality is affected by contemporary capitalism. Having done this, as students you will have two weeks at the end of the course to present ideas for your final papers and to work on an interview project with a partner.

All told, then, “Spiritualities in a Secular Age” is an interdisciplinary course that will help you become familiar not just with *your* spirituality in the singular, but how the many spiritualities in which we all swim today were generated and are shaping us whether we are aware of it or not.

**A Few Idiosyncrasies:** Since this is a seminar, let’s try our best to have our attention be collective. One of the biggest inhibitors to collective attention is, sadly, technology. In all honesty, I don’t know how to best handle this. Just eliminating computers/iPads doesn’t seem helpful. But, having been a student for a long time myself, I know that laptops often serve as a kind of... psychic buffer to the kind of shared attention that lets a class come alive. In light of this I want to ask you to consider:

- Not bringing technology to class.
- Taking notes by hand.
- Buying hard copies of the books with which we will spend more time.
- Printing off the readings instead of reading them on your computer.
- (N.B., I have had students in the past bridge this gap nicely by using tablets.)

*\*\*N.B., you are adults; I leave this to your freedom.\*\**  
*These are considerations made in hopes of helping us achieve shared attention.\*\**

**Recommended Texts:** You will not have to buy any books for this class. If you would like to read any of them in hard copy, however, here are the texts I would recommend (considering especially the depth of our engagement with them).

1. Charles Taylor. 2007. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press.
2. James K.A. Smith. 2014. *How (Not) to be Secular*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co.
3. Tara Isabella Burton. 2020. *Strange Rites*. New York: Public Affairs.

**Course Requirements:** There are three requirements for our course: (1) weekly participation (evaluated by a written “precis”), (2) a class presentation, and (3) a final paper. All three of these requirements are meant to support the central goal of the course: to help you engage the classical social tradition with critical rigor. Detailed descriptions follow.

1. *Weekly Participation* – **90 points** = 9 precis’ at 10 points each.
  - There are 11 class sessions with readings assigned. You are responsible for writing precis’ for 9 classes. I will accept, and include in your final grade, up to 11 total precis’.
  - Weekly precis’ are due by midnight the day before class; Wednesday night. I will grade them and bring copies with me to class for you.
2. *Class Presentation* – **45 points**
3. *Final Paper & Interview* – **115 points**

*What is a precis?* A precis is a short summary and analysis of the week’s assigned texts. Often I will pose questions to you about the text. If I do so, these should constitute the focus of your short papers. Speaking of “short,” I would like these papers to be ~500 words, or about one single spaced page (going just over is fine).

N.B., your precis should look like this:

- Top: your name, etc.
- Front: single-spaced analysis of the assigned texts.
- Back: one quote from *each* assigned reading that either *confused* you, *consoled* you, or *clarified* the text’s meaning.
  - Think: what did you *not* understand? Pick a quote that seems important but was hard to grasp. We will discuss it.
  - Think: what is the *key* point of the reading? Pick a quote that explains, for you, the main thing that the author is arguing.

N.B., If I do not pose questions for you, a strong precis can be written by doing three things: (1) very briefly laying out the main themes discussed in the readings and then (2) *select one set of ideas* and (3) how those ideas unfold and what kinds of questions they raise. Precis’ of the highest quality will not only do the preceding but also track arguments taking place between various theorists.

*How to prepare a presentation:* Each week one or two members of the class will present on the readings of the day. Preparing well to present for a given class means, more or less, being prepared to teach one particular reading. To do this, I would suggest doing three things. First, give careful attention to the preparation of your precis. It is perfectly acceptable, for example, to read your precis

to the class as an opening statement on the main themes of what we have read. Second, it may be helpful to have an outline of the reading for which you will be responsible – including key quotes, major ideas, etc. – that can help you keep track of how the ideas we are discussing flow into one another. This will allow you to help the class walk through what the author(s) are trying to do. You may, if you like, use power point or a show a short video clip, etc. during your presentation to help us engage with the material in the way you are imagining.

Third, I would recommend preparing questions that you can pose to the class. These can be of two types: comprehension or analysis. Questions of the first type help ensure that the class is on the same page and grasps the author’s argument. Questions of the second type build from shared comprehension and seek to open up lines of criticism, engagement, and public relevance. Successful presentations will help the class with both comprehension and analysis. You should plan for your presentation – *including the class discussion* – to take just under a half hour.

*Notes for the final paper:* My hope is that, after spending eleven weeks thinking together about these topics, you will be prepared to write a final paper that answers the question of how either you or another person you have interviewed has constructed their spirituality. I will give you more details on the final paper after the midterm, but here are some details to help you imagine it:

- Length: between 3000 and 3500 words (just over 12 double spaced pages)
- Due Date: Thursday, 12/14 at 4:15pm
- Content: there should be three parts to your paper.
  - First, you will need to show that you understand the social-theoretical background within which this person is constructing their spirituality. That will require using the sources we have read in class to describe the “social imaginary” within which this person’s spirituality exists.
  - Second, you will need to pick a particular dilemma or point-of-negotiation that the person’s spirituality helps them deal with. Here you can use the examples we have taken up in the class (the self, freedom, capitalism; ritual) or you can pick another that is particularly important for you (or them). These other dilemmas might include: race, gender, self-care/mental health, the environment, politics; etc.
  - Third, your paper will show how this person’s spirituality negotiates the particular dilemma you have chosen from within the context you described in your first part. The aim of the paper, in other words, is to show how a given person’s spirituality helps them to navigate one particular dilemma in our secular age.

As you can see in the course schedule below, we will spend an entire class on November 30<sup>th</sup> presenting and discussing ideas/sketches/outlines of your final papers.

**Point Totals & Grading Scale:** 250 points are available in our class. Here’s the breakdown:

Precis’ = 90/250 = ~35% of total grade  
 Presentation = 45/250 = ~20% of total grade  
 Final Paper = 115/250 = ~45% of total grade

POINTS EARNED	PERCENTILE	LETTER
232+	93+	A
225	90-92%	A-

217	87-89%	B+
207	83-86%	B
200	80-82%	B-
192	77-79%	C+
182	73-76%	C
175	70-72%	C-
167	67-69%	D+
150	60-66%	D
Below 150	0-59%	F

**Class Organization:** although we will certainly have to be flexible in our execution, my ambition is to split each class into five segments.

Each class will **(1)** begin by discussing three of Alan Jacob’s “These on Attention.” This will take perhaps 10 minutes, following which, we will **(2a)** break up into small groups in order to read and discuss each other’s written precis’. This will take perhaps 30 minutes and will **(2b)** be followed by a large group discussion of confusions, consolations, and clarifications unearthed by your discussions. At this point we will take a short break.

When we return from the break we will **(3)** then have scheduled class presentations. As noted above, this consists in an organized, synthetic statement on the assigned readings and the conducting of class discussion over what is most essential in what we’ve read. It is expected that each presentation *and discussion* will last just under a half hour. With the time remaining two last things will be accomplished: **(4)** I will take you through anything our group discussions and class presentations have missed so that I am confident you have a firm grasp on the material. Depending on what each presentation covers, in other words, this will consist either in a *deeper dive* into particular questions that have been raised or a *review of key topics* that may have been overlooked. If we’ve hit our marks, this will **(5)** leave me 10 minutes for the final segment of our class: a pre-lecture on the readings for the coming week. This short lecture aims to orient your attention to what is most essential in the upcoming week’s assigned readings.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Four notes precede the daily schedule:

1. Because of intellectual property laws, the digital materials we use in the course ought not to be shared elsewhere.
2. I will do my best to help us stick to the schedule below. But... you know... life. So, the plan is for us to do our best to follow this calendar. If changes are required, we’ll discuss them together.
3. All of the readings for the course can be found either on Sakai or the embedded link below.
4. Most importantly, because I have tried to organize each class as an experience more than just a task to be accomplished, I suggest that you do each of these things in the order listed.

**Class 1 – (8/31) – CANCELLED** (conflict with *Jesuit Scholarship in a Secular Age* conference)

**Class 2 – (9/7) – Into the Deep End: Spirituality and Secularity (and Religion?)** (~90 pages)

- CONTEMPLATE – the first three of Alan Jacobs’ “Theses on Attention”
- READ – the Intro and first chapter of Tara Burton’s Strange Rites – 31 pages
- WATCH – the [trailer for American Gods](#) – 2 minutes

- READ – David Morgan’s essay, “Enchantment, Disenchantment, Re-Enchantment” – 17 pages
- CONTEMPLATE – Friedrich Nietzsche’s story “The Madman” – 2 pages
- READ – the essay “Spirit” by Courtney Bender – 12 pages
- WATCH – some TikToks/YouTube on astrology or Tarot reading (like [this](#) or [this](#)) – 5 minutes
- READ – the blog “What Does it Mean to Have Faith Now?” by Jennifer Freed – 6 pages
- READ – the Intro to Charles Taylor’s A Secular Age – 22 pages

*Recommended*

- Watching this 12 minute [dive into the backstories](#) of the gods in *American Gods*

**Class 3 – (9/14) – A Brief History of Secularity, Part 1 (~75 pages)**

- CONTEMPLATE – #5-7 of Alan Jacobs’ “Theses on Attention”
- READ – the Intro to Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age – 30 pages
- ENJOY – some Calvin & Hobbes comics – 4 minutes
- READ – “Reforming Belief,” ch.1 of Smith’s How (Not) to Be Secular – 21 pages
- ENJOY – a few pages from the beginning of JRR Tolkien’s The Hobbit – 5 pages
- READ – Alan Jacobs’s essay “Fantasy and the Buffered Self” – 18 pages

*Recommended*

- Watching the [trailer for “Lady Bird”](#) (or the whole thing)
- Stephen Adubato’s short essay, “[Lady Bird and the Buffered Self](#)”

**Class 4 – (9/21) – A Brief History of Secularity, Part 2 (~75 pages)**

- CONTEMPLATE – #9-11 of Alan Jacobs’ “Theses on Attention”
- READ – “The Impersonal Order,” ch.7 of Charles Taylor’s A Secular Age – 25 pages
- WATCH – from 23:42 to 41:07 of [Smith’s 2008 lecture](#) on MTD – ~18 minute
- READ – Christian Smith’s essay, “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism,” an executive summary of his book Soul Searching – 12 pages
- LISTEN – to [this podcast](#) about one modern Deist’s journey to Deism – 15 minutes
- READ – Ryan Burge’s essay “Religion has Become a Luxury Good” – 8 pages
- READ – excerpts from Peter Manseau’s The Jefferson Bible – 32 pages

**Class 5 – (9/28) – A Brief History of Secularity, Part 3 (~80 pages)**

- CONTEMPLATE – #13-15 of Alan Jacobs’ “Theses on Attention”
- READ – “The Malaise of Immanence,” ch.3 of How (Not) to Be Secular – 20 pages
- ENJOY – some Mary Oliver poems (on Sakai)
- READ – “Evolutionary Naturalism & the Fear of Religion” by Thomas Nagel – 17 pages
- WATCH – [Charles Taylor talk](#) about the “kind” of religion that fits our secular age:
- READ – “The Age of Authenticity,” ch.13 of A Secular Age – 31 pages
- LISTEN – to the following songs (and/or others that evoke the cross-pressure for you):
  - “Helplessness Blues” by the Fleet Foxes;
  - “Everything in it’s Right Place” by Radiohead;
  - “As It Was” by Harry Styles;

- “I Can’t Give Everything Away” by David Bowie;
- “Turtles All The Way Down” by Sturgill Simpson;
- “Every Time I Hear That Song” by Brandi Carlisle;
- “Shine” by Joni Mitchell
- READ – Devin Kelly’s essay “I Miss it All” – 10 pages

**Class 6 – (10/5) – A Brief History of Secularity, Part 4 (~60 pages)**

- CONTEMPLATE – #16-19 of Alan Jacobs’ “Theses on Attention”
- WATCH – [Charles Taylor give a very rapid overview](#) of *A Secular Age* that leads him to discussing forms of religious *and* spiritual belonging today – ~30 minutes
- READ – “Religion Today,” ch.14 of *A Secular Age* – 34 pages
- LISTEN – to Justin Welby, who is the Archbishop of Canterbury, [interview the great goth-punk singer-songwriter Nick Cave](#) – ~30 minutes
- READ – Kaya Oakes’s essay on Nick Cave as a “secular” spiritual director – 4 pages
- LISTEN – to some Nick Cave songs. Here are a few of my favorites:
  - “Red Right Hand” from *Let Love IN*
  - “Into My Arms” from *The Boatman’s Call*
  - “Dig, Lazarus, Dig!” from *Dig! Lazarus Dig!*
  - “The Ship Song” from *Idiot Prayer*
  - The album *Ghosteen*
- READ – part of ch.5 of JKA Smith’s *How (Not) to Be Secular* – 18 pages
- READ – a few of Nick Cave’s short letters to fans. You can go to the [Red Hand Files](#) and pick some you’re interested in; here are a few I love:
  - [Issue #207](#), which is on inspiration
  - [Issue #240](#), which is on self-identity
  - [Issue #242](#), which is on “conversion”
  - [Issue #245](#), which is on loss and mourning

10/9-10 = LUC Midwinter Break

**Class 7 – (10/12) – Spirituality, Part 1: Just What (& Who) Are We Talking About? (~80 pages)**

- CONTEMPLATE – #21-23 of Alan Jacobs’ “Theses on Attention”
- READ – “Mystic Club,” the first chapter of Leigh Eric Schmit’s *Restless Souls* – 38 pages
- READ – “‘Spirituality’ and ‘Religion’: What Are We Talking About?” ch.2 of Nancy Ammerman’s *Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes* – 33 pages
- READ – “Today’s Great Awakening,” ch.3 of Burton’s *Strange Rites* – 9 pages
- READ – Ryan Burge’s short essay, “Gen Z and Religion in 2022” – 3 pages

*Recommended*

- Wade Clark Roof’s essay “Religion and Spirituality” – 12 pages

**Class 8 – (10/19) – Spirituality, Part 2: With and Against Christianity (~95 pages)**

- CONTEMPLATE – #25-27 of Alan Jacobs’ “Theses on Attention”
- READ – Fiona Ellis’ short essay – “Desire and the Quest for God” – 4 pages

- WATCH – Tevye sing “[If I Were A Rich Man](#)” & Bono sing “[Desire](#)”
- READ – some excerpts from the writings of Evelyn Underhill – 32 pages
- READ – Fr. Michael Buckley S.J.’s retreat talk “What do you seek?” – 8 pages
- LISTEN – to Leonard Cohen’s “[Take This Longing](#)” & Lady Gaga’s “[Bad Romance](#)”
- READ – the intro & ch.1 of Alexandre Lefebvre’s [Liberalism as a Way of Life](#) – 10 pages
- TRY OUT – a few of [Headspace’s mini-meditations](#) (or the App) – each run ~1 minute
- READ – a selection from Comte-Sponville’s [The Little Book of Atheist Spirituality](#) – 19 pages
- EXPERIENCE the folk artist Howard Finster by...
  - READING – the McLauren essay on him from the NYT – 5 pages
  - WATCHING – [this short doc](#) on him – 6½ minutes
  - LOOKING – at some of his artwork (just google him + artwork)
- READ – “Liquid Spirituality” by Matthew Zurcher, S.J. (forthcoming in *Nexus*) – 14 pages
- READ – Fr. Buckley S.J.’s retreat talk “Do You Believe in the Son of Man?” – 7 pages

*Recommended*

- James Twitchell’s essay “Two Cheers for Materialism” – 11 pages
- Linda Woodhead’s essay “Spirituality and Christianity” – 17 pages

*10/19 – Hank Center Event: “Religions: Leading the Way Towards a Peaceful World,” an evening with Dr. Marco Impagliazzo (Professor of History at University of Roma Tre and President of the Community of Sant’Egidio).*

**Class 9 – (10/26) – Spirituality, Part 3: Some Suspicions about Spirituality (~80 pages)**

- CONTEMPLATE – #29-31 of Alan Jacobs’ “Theses on Attention”
- READ – ch.4 of Burton’s [Strange Rites](#) – 28 pages
- ENJOY – Christian Wiman’s poem “All My Friends Are Finding New Beliefs”
- READ – a snippet of the Intro + ch.3 of Chen’s [Work, Pray, Code](#) – 38 pages
- SAVOR – flipping through the collection of memes I sent you
- READ – Whatley’s essay “Toward a Leisure Ethic” in *The Hedgehog Review* – 14 pages
- BREEZE THROUGH – the conclusion of Burton’s [Strange Rites](#) – 7 pages

**Class 10 – (11/2) – Negotiations, Part 1: Nonreligious Ritual (~65 pages)**

- CONTEMPLATE – #33-35 of Alan Jacobs’ “Theses on Attention”
- READ – the Post’s news article “The Radical Religion of Burning Man” – 5 pages
- LISTEN – to [this episode of the How God Works podcast](#) on Burning Man – 37 minutes
- READ – ch.3 of Lee Gilmore’s book on ritual and spirituality at Burning Man – 34 pages
- READ – James Comb’s short essay “Celebrations: Rituals of Popular Veneration” – 7 pages
- LISTEN – to [this podcast from The Revealer](#) with Ann Duncan, author of [Sacred Pregnancy: Birth, Motherhood, and the Quest for Spiritual Community](#) – 43 minutes
- READ – “Ritual,” ch.2 of Scott Beauchamp’s book [Did You Kill Anyone?](#) – 18 pages

*Recommended*

- Joshua Glasgow’s essay “The Real Fan: A Love Story” – 14 pages

- Watching one of the two recent documentaries on Burning Man (“Spark” or “Burning Man: Art on Fire”)
- A short essay by Morehead from the book The Sacred and Fantastic Fandom on Star Trek, Burning Man, and cosplay – 10 pages

**Class 11 – (11/9) – Negotiations, Part 2: Technology & Attention (~70 pages)**

- CONTEMPLATE – #37-39 of Alan Jacobs’ “Theses on Attention”
- READ – Justin E.H. Smith’s essay “It’s All Over” from *The Point* – 8 pages
- CONTEMPLATE – paragraphs 42 & 43 of *Fratelli Tutti* by Pope Francis – 1 page
- SIT THERE – and stare at something beautiful in your room – 2 minutes
- READ – this interview with Justin E.H. Smith on his new book, The Internet Is Not What You Think It Is – 19 pages
- WATCH – “Piety is No Substitute for Technique” (which I found through [this blog post](#)) – 4 min
- READ – “An Endless Seeing” by Jacqueline Rose – 15 pages
- LISTEN – to [Ezra Klein’s interview](#) of L.M. Sacasas – 1 hour
- READ – L.M. Sacasas’s essay “The Pathologies of the Attention Economy” – 7 pages
- STAND THERE – and stare at something beautiful outside your room – 4 minutes
- READ – some excerpts from Simone Weil’s The Need for Roots – 16 pages
- GO FOR A WALK – 10 minutes
- READ – “From Distraction to Dedication,” Fr. Adolpho Nicolas, S.J.’s notes for an unpublished letter he considered writing to the Society of Jesus – 7 pages

*11/9 – Annual Teilhard Lecture: “The Subject of Public Religion” by Fr. Patrick Gilger, S.J.*

**Class 12 – (11/16) – Negotiations, Part 3: Sex, Beauty, and the Body (~70 pages)**

- CONTEMPLATE – #41-43 of Alan Jacobs’ “Theses on Attention”
- READ – Christie “My Beautiful Friend (Envy as a Way of Life)” – 10 pages
- WATCH some TikToks like [this one](#) or [this one](#)
- READ – Channi Silence et. al.’s “Life after lockdown” – 6 pages
- ENJOY – Jane PSmith’s review of the children’s book The Philharmonic Gets Dressed – 5 pages
- READ – “Sex and Sensibility” by S.G. Belknap – 32 pages
- WATCH – [this short doc](#) on Antoni Gaudi & the Cathedral of the Sagrada Familia – 18 minutes
- READ – Wesley Hill’s essay “Love, Again” – 9 pages
- READ – Coakley’s analytic reflection “Prayer as Crucible” – 8 pages

*LUC Thanksgiving Break = no class on Thursday, 11/23*

**Class 13 – (11/30) – Student Presentations**

**Class 14 – (12/6) – Spiritualities in a Secular Age (~55 pages)**

- READ – “The Practice of Spirituality,” ch.7 of Wuthnow’s After Heaven – 31 pages

- READ – Jake Meador’s short essay “The Misunderstood Reason Millions of Americans Stopped Going to Church” – 4 pages
- DWELL – with Walker Percy’s “Loss of the Creature” – 18 pages

\*\*\* Final Paper due on Sakai on Thursday, 12/14 at 4:15pm \*\*\*

### Remaining Policy Notes:

*Academic Calendar:* The academic calendar can [be found here](#).

*Academic Integrity:* Please be sure that the work you submit is your own. The easiest way to do this is to cite your sources. While I will fit the consequences to the level of academic dishonesty, the first time that dishonesty occurs you may expect to receive a zero on the assignment without the opportunity to make up the grade. If it happens a second time you may expect to receive a zero in the course along with a written report to the Dean of the College.

In my experience most students who plagiarize do not intend to do so. Let me recommend three bumpers that can keep you from plagiarizing unintentionally: First, whenever you’re unsure, cite. It’s better to have an awkward looking paper with too many citations than an accidental plagiarization. Second, please remember, just changing the wording/phrasing of another’s work is still plagiarizing. Third, if you still have questions read the info in the links I’m including below.

Three last notes. First, you should be aware that when you turn in written work to Sakai it is automatically run through a plagiarism-checking software program. Second, if, to my great chagrin, I find that you plagiarized, I will send you an email letting you know, *and I have to report the incident to the Dean’s office – including a record of our emails about the incident*. Third, we have much to learn regarding the benefits of tools such as ChatGPT or Google’s Bard. Let us all make sure we are learning and sharing best practices and not allowing AI to do the learning for us. Please use AI only for research or for organization, not for creativity or synthesis – in other words, do not use it to write your papers.

Alright, enough of this, here are the links:

1. [http://wpacouncil.org/aws/CWPA/pt/sd/news\\_article/272555/ PARENT/layout\\_details/false](http://wpacouncil.org/aws/CWPA/pt/sd/news_article/272555/ PARENT/layout_details/false)
2. [https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicintegrity.shtml](https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml)

*Accommodations:* The office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) coordinates accommodations and services for students with disabilities. The SSWD Office is located in the Sullivan Center for Student Services, 6339 N. Sheridan Rd, Suite 117. If you have a disability, you can request services by calling 773-508-3700.

*Authorized Class Absences:* If you need to miss class for a university-sponsored event (i.e., official athletic games, etc.) please let me know as soon as possible (one week ahead is great). Come see me during office hours and we can talk.

*Mental Health:* Look, there’s a lot going on. Stress is real and can come from many places – some of which may seem “logical” and others of which may not. It’s actually quite normal for college students to deal with insomnia, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and other serious mental health issues. None of these are – either to me or to professionals in the field – signs of failure or unsuitability. In all honesty, they are part of being human. Another part of being human is doing our best to not go through these things alone.

All to say: If mental health issues are interfering with your ability to do your class work, please talk to me. Both as a priest and as a professor I would be more than happy to help. Of course, that help can be academic (rearranging deadlines, etc.) but it might also be just listening or helping you get in touch with a professional.

Finally, the Counseling Center can be reached at: 773-508-8883.

*Department Values Statement:* As scholars and teachers, the faculty in the Department of Sociology at Loyola University Chicago share in the mission of the University, with its paramount focus on human dignity, as articulated in [Plan 2020](#).

We reaffirm our commitment to social justice, diversity, inclusion, scientific inquiry, and academic freedom. We reject bigotry and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexuality, disability, political orientation, and documentation status. We stand in solidarity with and will actively support students and colleagues who face such discrimination. We hold strongly to the principle that scientific examination of systematically collected empirical evidence, in conjunction with sociological concepts and theoretical frameworks, is irreplaceable for reasoned discussion of the problems and solutions facing society. This discussion must be open and mutually respectful of diverse perspectives. We also support and advocate for the analysis of the complex interplay between individuals and society that structures inequalities, constraints, and opportunities in life chances. Our purpose is to foster open and mutually respectful discussions that contribute to intellectual and moral leadership that advances a just society. Our determination in remaining wedded to these ideals through our scholarship, teaching, and service is unwavering.

*Statement of Intent:* By remaining in this course, students are agreeing to accept this syllabus as a contract and to abide by the guidelines outlined in the document. Students will be consulted should there be a necessary change to the syllabus.