THEO 186/THEO 266: 
BUILDING BRIDGES: RELIGION AND THE QUEST FOR PEACE

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“For twenty years, the mission of “Rondine, Citadel of Peace” has been to promote conflict resolution through the experience of young people coming together to discover the person within their enemy. Such discovery takes place over a two-year period of living-together. Slowly, things begin to change for each of them: their stereotypes, their vision of history, and their concept of truth. As a result, human relationships change and a new awareness emerges that differs from their own personal and professional background. The way they perceive each other and their place in the world is turned upside down.”

S-Confinamenti
Franco Vaccari, President of Rondine

“For twenty years, young women and men who have gathered at Rondine Cittadella della Pace have succeeded in achieving this noble objective. A living-together (convivenza) that creates the safe space to befriend persons once considered enemies enables the youth of Rondine to overcome human differences and life-threatening divisions.”

Preface to S-Confinamenti
Miguel H. Díaz,
U.S. Ambassador to Holy See, ret.

Course Description

In her book, God and the Almighty, Secretary Madeleine Albright cautioned that American diplomats needed “to think more expansively about the role of religion in foreign policy and about their own need for expertise…recognizing where and how religious beliefs contribute to conflicts and when religious principles might be invoked to ease strife.” This course explores the role of religion in peace building processes, drawing from both theological and religious traditions, critical theories in international relations,
and the rich experience of international students in Rondine who see themselves as ambassadors of peace engaged in “popular diplomacy.” Rondine’s unique experientially based methodology that seeks to encounter the human person from the constructed “enemy” will provide the backdrop for Loyola students to undertake a critical exploration on the positive role that religion can play to bridge human differences and advance local, regional, and global peace.

**Course Objectives**

*Demonstrate an understanding of how theological and religious traditions can become resources for peace building initiatives.*

*Promote critical thinking and informed reflection on theology and religion with respect to social justice issues related to conflict resolution.*

*Develop familiarity with the basic content of, and modes of scholarly inquiry into, selected theological and religious systems, and develop productive intellectual attitudes to guide students through conflict resolution and peace building processes.*

*Encourage the study of religious traditions as a way to foster inter-religious efforts on behalf of peace.*

*Foster familiarity with and appreciation for the role the Church has exercised in peace-building processes (Vatican Diplomacy).*

**Grading**

**Scale:**
- A range: A = 100-94%; A- = 93-90%
- B range: B+ = 89-87%; B = 86-83%; B- = 82-80%
- C range: C+ = 79-77%; C = 76-73%; C- = 72-70%
- D range: D+ = 69-66%; D = 65-61%
- F range: F = 60% and below

**Incompletes**

Incomplete grades for the semester are only in the documented event of a major medical or family emergency. In addition, no incomplete grade will be granted unless the student has completed 80% of the coursework before the end of the semester. A request to receive an incomplete must be formally requested by the student in writing to me before final grades are reported to the Dean’s Office.

**Attendance Policy:** Due to the short duration of the course, students must make every effort to attend all classes and scheduled educational experiences outside of Rondine, Italy. Only illness and unforeseen emergencies will be considered in any effort to modify stated requirements. Absences will impact the grade earned on class participation, quizzes, and daily reflections.

**Course Evaluation**

*Daily short quizzes on readings- 50 pts. (5 pts. per class)*
*Daily 1-page Reflections on Readings-50 pts. (a total of ten, 5 pts. per class)*
*Interview with a Rondine student and an article highlighting the life of that student as it relates to the peace building method of Rondine, and the impact this community has had on empowering the student(s) to address conflict resolution- 25 pts.
*A 5-7 page Theological/Religious Reflection paper integrating critical theory and human experience based on material covered in class, Rondine’s worldhouse experience and its distinct methodology of encountering the human person in one’s “enemy.”-50 pts.
*Class participation-25pts.

Assignments must be turned in on time. No unexcused work will be accepted late.

**Class Procedure and Policies**

*In addition to policies in the student handbook and current undergraduate studies catalog, please note the following policies for this course. Continued enrollment in the course indicates acceptance of these policies.*

**Class Etiquette and electronic devices:** Behavior in class will affect the “participation” element of your grade. Laptops are allowed, but only for taking notes in class. No surfing the internet email, or anything unrelated to this course will be tolerated. All phones and electronic devices need to be silenced prior to the start of class. **Please note that material from the course cannot be shared outside the course without the instructor’s written permission.**

**Students with disabilities:** If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me and Loyola’s Services for Students with Disabilities within the first two weeks of the semester.  [www.luc.edu/sswd](http://www.luc.edu/sswd).

**Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism and Cheating:** Loyola’s policy for plagiarism or violation of testing procedures is in full effect. Plagiarism involves more than copy/paste of another’s work. It also includes submitting a partial or full literary idea that is not your own, and failing to cite your source. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: cheating, helping another student to cheat, plagiarism, turning in the same paper for two different courses (including those in two different semesters), purchasing papers written by others, manipulating attendance records, and falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines. For an extensive but not exhaustive list of activities that constitute academic dishonesty, see the University’s Academic Integrity Policy: [http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml) Academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for that assignment or test. In addition, all incidents will be reported to the Department Chairperson and other Loyola departments as required by the University.
SCHEDULE

JUNE 16th: ARRIVAL AND TOUR OF AREZZO IN TUSCANY, ITALY

Topics and Readings for morning (9:30-11:00 am) and afternoon (2:30-4:30 pm) classes. Students are responsible for all readings on the day for which they are assigned, and are expected to discuss those readings in class.

June 17th: The Quest for Peace in Light of Human Persons as Relational and Social Creatures

Morning Class
Human persons as relational creatures

Readings:


4. Emanuel Levinas, “Ethics and Infinity,” 85-122. ON SAKAI

Afternoon Class
The relational creature as a foundation for a theology of Peace

Reading:
June 18th: The Quest for Peace, Human Rights, and Social Justice

Morning Class
International human rights

Readings:
1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 


Afternoon Class
Catholic Social Teaching

Readings:

2. Selections from World Day of Peace Messages: 
   https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace.index.html

June 19th: The Vatican, Religion, Peacebuilding, and Diplomacy

Readings:
Selections from Thomas J. Reese, Inside the Vatican and from Peter Kent and John Pollard, Papal Diplomacy in the Modern Age (On SAKAI)

Day Visit and Conversation at U.S. Embassy to the Holy See
Visit Vatican and conversation with member of Secretary of Relations with State Visit to the Community of Sant’Egidio and their role in peace building processes.

June 20th: The Quest for Peace and the Love of God and our Neighbors

Morning Class
The Hebrew Scriptures and the love of neighbor

Reading:

**Afternoon class**

*The Koran, the Bible, and the love of neighbors*

**Reading:**

**June 21st: The Quest for Peace and the Love of God and our Neighbors**

**Morning Class**

*Muslims Perspectives, Conversations with Rondine Students*

**Reading:**
*A Common Word*, 79-121

**Afternoon Class**

*Christian Perspectives, Conversation with Rondine Students*

**Reading:**

**June 24th: The Quest for Peace and the Love of God and our Common Home**

**Morning and Afternoon Classes**

**Readings:**

1. Pope Benedict XVI: [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20091208_xliii-world-day-peace.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20091208_xliii-world-day-peace.html)


**June 25th: The Quest for Peace and Non-Violent Resistance**

**Morning and Afternoon Classes, Conversation with Rondine Students**

**Readings:**

2. Jesus, the Peace-builder and his non-Violence Resistance

3. Martin Luther King, Jr. “I have a Dream,”

4. Mohandas Gandhi:
https://www.iofc.org/fr/node/2946

June 26th: Francis of Assisi, God’s Preferential Option for the Poor, and Care of our Common Home

Day visit to Assisi, guided tour, and conversations with Franciscans

Reading:
Leonardo Boff, Selections from Cry of the earth, Cry of the Poor, ON SAKAI

June 27th: Migration and Peace-building

Morning class
Migrants as our Neighbors

Afternoon Class: Conversation with Rondine Students

Readings for Morning and Afternoon Classes


2. “Erga migrantes caritas Christi” (The love of Christ towards migrants):

June 28th: All Day Synthesis, Discussion, and Conversations with Rondine special guests and students

Reading:

**Required Texts**


Training offer for Loyola University

Rondine citadel of peace
Rondine, is an international organization that has been working for about twenty years in cooperation on improving the promotion of dialogue and transforming conflict at all levels, from interpersonal to political, armed and international. Work which is aimed at young people by proposing projects which encourage confrontation, dialogue and high-level training to prepare them to become future peace leaders and active actors capable of promoting social change and taking practical measures in the territories.

World house, a small hamlet with the world inside
The central project is the World House; a program aimed at young people coming from countries affected by current or recent conflicts (Middle East, Caucasus, Balkans, Africa, and America) who agree to live with their enemy learning to deal with conflict in a creative way. It is a two-year international civil commitment experience, which enables innovative experimentation processes through high-level training and experimental paths, to be consciously prepared for being agents of change in rapidly transforming, profoundly changing, highly confrontational and elevated complexity contexts.

Why choose Rondine programs:
Globalization is an integrating force to unite people, societies and cultures for a better world. This variation of cultures creates the beauty of living the experience of our association activities, where you can interact with young students that come from Balkans, Eastern Europe, North and South Caucasus, the Middle East and Sub Saharan Africa, etc. It is an experience of living personal growth, with strong intercultural components of learning to face a globalized world. In twenty years of history Rondine has hosted nearly 200 international students from in or post conflict countries, having an average of thirty students a year.

Starting from 2014, this kind of experience has been offered also to university students from U.S.A. American students benefit from Rondine’s training program, having the opportunity to join a unique group of international students, carefully selected from various areas of conflict throughout the world. They engage in different activities which allow them to experience personal change and cultural enrichment that arises from community life, shared with different cultures and religions. United States are part of the main players in the current international scenario, that is why the American students will enrich the group of international fellows with an original and essential perspective. Its leading role in the cultural and academic debate on conflict resolution, its direct involvement in different international crises, and the multicultural issues that its society raises are all reasons for an American presence at Rondine.

Rondine is situated in Arezzo, in the heart of Tuscany, a region that alone has more classified historical monuments than any other country in the world. Arezzo is a beautiful medieval town rich in history and culture. Many beautiful monuments, buildings, churches and pieces of art testify Arezzo’s past and history.
Rondine is located 12 kilometers far from the center of Arezzo, it is situated on a bend of the River Arno. The castle of the medieval village of Rondine (1000 A.C.) was in the Middle Ages one of the most powerful fortresses of Arezzo countryside. It is located a few kilometers far from Buriano Bridge, which is drawn in the famous painting of Leonardo "La Gioconda".

Training Program of the World House
The World House is an international experience of civil commitment for conflict transformation. It takes place through the experience of cohabitation with other students and through daily activities. This is central part of where the education process and training take place - learning in living. It is the core of the Citadel, where many innovative courses and projects are explored, and where the young participants are consciously prepared to become leaders, in a context of fast transformation, deep change, high stake conflicts and an increased complexity of relations. It is the place where the promotion and the diffusion of the mission of Rondine begin.

The learning experience
The current training program runs in June, lasting 2 weeks, and is divided into three main areas: daily life experience and inter-active activities with international students of Rondine, trainings and trips. All areas are strongly oriented toward the principles and values of Rondine’s mission:

1) Everyday life: Sharing and confrontation in daily life represent the most important elements of Rondine experience. Continuously being in contact with other participants living in different conflict situations, and having different cultures, experiences and emotional backgrounds, is a unique occasion to get to know different points of view. The interpersonal relationship established in daily life is the key to overcome a conflict. Other important factors are listening to the other, comprehension, dialogue and sharing. Cohabitation is a process that over time leads to the deconstruction of the idea of the enemy and to the uncovering of a real person behind that.

2) High level training: Participants receive high level training on topics related to conflict management, communication abilities in inter-action with the international students coming from conflict areas in Rondine. The trainings provide essential tools and knowledge of the countries of origin of the students of Rondine and the social impact they might have at their return after the Rondine experience. Rondine develops and works through its students on the macro topics of human rights, conflict mediation and transformation, intertwined with methodologies of information transmission, knowledge and skills like non-formal education, active learning, testimonies and storytelling.

3) Formal education: The third part of the program is a professional and academic specialization, which includes the participation in the courses offered by Loyola University through the module taught by the professor that accompanies the group.
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**The learning experience**

The current training program runs from July to June of the following year, lasting 12 months, and is divided into three main areas: daily life, trainings and academics.

All areas are strongly oriented toward the principles and values of Rondine’s mission:

4) **Everyday life:** Sharing and confrontation in daily life represent the most important elements of Rondine experience. Continuously being in contact with other participants living in different conflict situations, and having different cultures, experiences and emotional backgrounds, is a unique occasion to get to know different points of view. The interpersonal relationship established in daily life is the key to overcome a conflict. Other important factors are listening to the other, comprehension, dialogue and sharing. Cohabitation is a process that over time leads to the deconstruction of the idea of the enemy and to the uncovering of a real person behind that.

5) **High level training:** Participants receive high level training on topics related to conflict management, communication abilities and methodologies. The training is carried out by Rondine’s team and it provides essential tools and knowledge to increase self-awareness and to be able to develop concrete opportunities to make a social impact in their countries of origin. The participants work on their competences, in order to improve their strategic and leadership abilities. Rondine develops and works with students on the macro topics of human rights, conflict mediation and transformation, intertwined with methodologies of information transmission, knowledge and skills like non-formal education, active learning, testimonies and storytelling.

6) **Formal education:** The third part of the program is a professional and academic specialization, which includes the participation in a master course or other school of high professionalization, mainly chosen through the universities of the Tuscany region, in order to be prepared for the future career with more sensibility and orientation to social change.

After having completed the program in Rondine, participants of the World House return to their countries of origin ready to act in different socio-cultural contexts. They join Rondine International Peace Lab (RIPL), the network of Rondine’s alumni. RIPL supports former students in realizing cooperation and development projects, targeting peace building.
Tentative Itinerary

**June 16th**- Arrival in Rome, Transportation to Arezzo, Orientation

**June 17th** Classes Begin

Class Schedule: 9:30-11:30; 2:30-4:30. Interaction and community activities with Rondine’s students when classes are not in session. Evenings and weekend free for students to explore area.

**June 19th** Trip to Rome, Visit Vatican, US embassy to the Holy See, Community of Sant’Egidio

**June 26th** Trip to Assisi, tour of Assisi, conversation with Franciscans

**June 28th** All day symposium and discussion that will include Loyola Students, Rondine Students, speakers, and invited guests. Course ends.

**June 30th**- Return to US