

Theology 200 Level Course Description Spring 2023

THEO 203-001: Social Justice and Injustice

Dr. Tisha Rajendra

Tuesday and Thursday 11:30-12:45 PM

Mundelein, Room 415

This course will look at various ways of understanding *social justice* and its failure, social injustice. The course will present several frameworks for thinking about justice and injustice – feminist philosopher Iris Marion Young’s understanding of responsibility for structural injustice, Black Protestant liberationist ethics, Catholic notions of the common good and solidarity, and Protestant Karen Lebacqz’s study of justice in an unjust world. .

Our shared course materials will address structural aspects of social injustice: systemic racism, economic injustice, reproductive justice, and social consequences of climate change. In addition, students will choose a social justice issue to work on throughout the semester. Each student will develop expertise on their subject, write an issue brief, and present their issue their peers.

THEO 204-001: Religion Ethics and Ecological Crisis

Dr. Michael Schuck

Monday 4:15-6:45 PM

Mundelein, Room 507

This course explores what a *fully human, integral* response to the current ecological crisis looks like--a response that is objective and pragmatic but also moral and meaningful. Each of these responses--the objective (science), the pragmatic (action), the moral (ethics), and the meaningful (spirituality)--are constitutive aspects of human life. The more we are aware of these dimensions of our lives (and the entire natural world), the better we can respond to the current ecological crisis with effectiveness and hope.

Many religions support and enrich the scientific, ethical, spiritual, and action-oriented guidance people need to become *integral ecologists*. Examples of such support are works by Indigenous botanist Robin Kimmerer and Roman Catholic Pope Francis. Significant, too, are insights by 'non-religious' environmentalists who nevertheless identify a spirituality in their lives and the natural world that is essential to their work. Examples of their writings include Aldo Leopold, Evelyn Tucker, and Brian Swimme.

The works of the above five authors are centerpieces for the course. Class procedure varies between instructor lectures, student discussions, video screenings, and guest presentations. In all, the purpose is to educate and encourage each of us to pursue a *fully human, integral* response to today's ecological crisis.

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THEO 231-001: Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

Dr. Teresa Calpino

Tuesday and Thursday 2:30-3:45 PM

Mundelein, Room 404

This course provides a historical and literary overview of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament/Tanakh using modern, critical methods of interpretation. We will explore the world behind the biblical text through archaeology and historical records to put the text within its historical, political and cultural context. By doing this, we can read the text not as “old,” “obsolete,” but also as having contemporary significance. Judaism and Christianity embrace Hebrew Bible as foundational to their faith traditions and it continues to have a profound influence on the world today. We will also examine how the Hebrew Bible has been read over time, and how these interpretations influence how we read these texts in the modern world.

THEO 232-001: Introduction to New Testament

Dr. Olegs Andrejevs

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 11:30-12:20 PM

Mundelein, Room 404

This course is designed to acquaint students with the basic facts about the New Testament and introduce them to the fundamentals of contemporary New Testament research. We will analyze the books of the New Testament in historically grounded fashion, following the mainstream conclusions reached over the last two centuries and currently held by the majority of New Testament specialists on any given subject (while also engaging with the dissenting views). The students can expect to gain a good understanding of the basic points of discussion in contemporary New Testament studies; a working knowledge of 1st-century CE Roman Palestine in all of its complexity; a proficiency in navigating the canonical New Testament; and an awareness of its key themes and passages.

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THEO 232-002/003: Introduction to New Testament
Dr. Olivia Stewart Lester
Tuesday and Thursday 8:30-9:45 AM and 10:00-11:15 AM
Mundelein, Room 403

This course introduces students to the New Testament, including the gospels, the letters of Paul, the letters of other early Christian leaders, and the book of Revelation. We will situate these texts in their own historical moment, considering them within both Hellenistic Judaism and the larger Greco-Roman world. Diverse portrayals of the life and teaching of Jesus will emerge, and we will mark the ways that rich variety extends into the teachings of his followers. This course will also introduce students to modern methods of interpreting the Bible, including reading the New Testament in terms of postcolonialism, race, gender, sexuality, disability, and ecology, in addition to historical and literary approaches. This course considers the different questions each scholarly method asks of a New Testament text, and the tools it uses to answer them. This course will familiarize students with the history and contents of New Testament texts, as well as different approaches to interpreting them, in the interest of equipping students for knowledgeable and respectful dialogue about the Bible in their individual communities and our shared public life.

THEO 232-004: Introduction to New Testament: Marginalized Voices
Dr. Lauren O'Connell
Thursday 4:15-6:45 PM
Mundelein, Room 403

In this course, students will be introduced to the early Christian texts that came to be known as the New Testament. During the semester, students will study these texts from an *academic* perspective, paying special attention to the socio-historical contexts out of which they emerged and to their interpretation and use in the modern day. Students will be expected to engage in questions of meaning-making as it pertains to the New Testament. In the first half of each class session, we will focus on historical-critical and literary methods for interpreting the text, along with major themes of the texts being discussed. The second half of each class will engage a reading from a historically marginalized perspective. Examples include post-colonial, feminist, womanist, mujerista, African American, disability, and queer readings. In some instances, we will also discuss the application of New Testament texts to current events. The main goals of this course are for students to attain a fuller understanding of the content of the New Testament and the *variety* of potential interpretations of the texts by examining literary genres, historical contexts, and theological backgrounds in order to better appreciate the diverse landscape of contemporary Biblical interpretation and application. Methods of active learning will be employed (small group work, in-class engagement with text, worksheets, etc.) Assessments will include two exams and a multi-step research project that will culminate in a research proposal. In-class engagement will also make up a significant portion of the final grade.

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THEO 276-001: Black World Religion

Dr. John Steenken

Monday 4:14-6:45 PM

Mundelein, Room 303

"In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). In 1890 Afro-Caribbean scholar Edward Blyden adds, "If we live and move and have our being in Him, God also lives and moves and has His being in us," suggesting that each culture, race, and ethnic group reflects an image of the divine that no one else can duplicate. This course explores the revelatory manner in which the divine comes to unique presence and expression among African peoples throughout human history. It will examine:

- the religious experiences and faith traditions of Africa's ancient Nile valley civilizations, long recognized as cradling the world's spiritual and philosophical wisdom and as influencing the formative development of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam;
- the religious experiences and faith traditions of indigenous Africans before and after European colonialism;
- the religious experiences and faith traditions of African descended peoples in the Americas, especially in the United States, during their centuries long liberation struggle to resist, counter, and overcome slavery, legalized segregation, and all other past and current forms of white supremacist ideology and abuse.

The primary sources include the literary works of indigenous African and African descended religious writers, leaders, and theologians and various texts from the writings of the ancient Egyptians and early African Christians. The course also employs a combination of secondary sources and audio-visual materials. A packet of the assigned literary works will be made available on Sakai under Lessons.

THEO 279-001/002: Roman Catholicism

Dr. Mara Brecht

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 11:30-12:20 PM

Mundelein, Room 503

James Joyce famously called Roman Catholicism the "Here comes everybody" tradition, offering an apt description for a faith community made up of both sinners and saints, martyrs and missionaries, defenders and detractors all. This course on Roman Catholicism begins from the assumption that it is fundamentally a tradition of paradox, which establishes constancy through change and firmness through fluidity. Students will explore Roman Catholicism less as a set of definite beliefs and moral precepts, and more as a world-shaping perspective that forms Catholics to see and to be in distinctive ways. Finally, the course will address head-on a range of serious challenges confronting Roman Catholicism today, including widespread disaffiliation, clergy abuse, Magisterial teaching on gender and sexuality, women's ordination, and racism and anti-Judaism in the tradition.

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THEO 280-01E: Theo & Interdisciplinary Study: God, Evolution, Human Origins
Engaged Learning: Service Learning
Dr. Hans Svebakken
Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10:25-11:15 AM
Information Commons, Room 105

Does the evolutionary account of human origins make belief in God obsolete? If not, how do people of faith, and Christians in particular, combine God and evolution in an intellectually satisfying way without undermining the foundations of their theological heritage? We'll consider these questions and a range of others involving science, the Bible, and the meaning of human existence in THEO 280: God, Evolution, and Human Origins. *Part one* of the course introduces some of the essential ideas in science and theology needed to conduct *part two* of the course: a detailed survey of issues and perspectives within the contemporary discussion of God and evolution. *Part three* of the course examines the unique challenges posed by evolutionary theory to two Christian doctrines: (1) human creation "in the image of God" (*Imago Dei*) and (2) "original sin." All three parts of this designated Service-Learning course will include some thematic consideration of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, allowing students to incorporate their service experience into comparing (and contrasting) *evolutionary*, *theological*, and *personal* accounts of disability.

THEO 281-002: Christianity Through Time: Catholic Missionary Print Culture
Dr. Josefrayn Sanchez-Perry
Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10:25-11:15 AM
Mundelein, Room 404

Welcome to Christianity Through Time: Catholic Missionary Print Culture in the Colonial Americas! This course will introduce you to primary sources from the Catholic intellectual tradition, printed between the 1500s and 1800s in the Americas. Students will handle originals and copies of these rare manuscripts by visiting the Rare Book Collection at Loyola University Chicago. To understand the presence of Catholicism in the Americas, the course will use print culture (encyclopedias, treatises, religious manuals for teaching and administering sacraments, bilingual dictionaries, and almanacs) as a medium to understand missionary tactics and the expressions of Catholicism in the American continent. The story this course seeks to reveal is how the Christian religion defined mission, the self, and others.

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THEO 281-003/004: Christianity Through Time: The (Dis)AbleD Body in Catholic Thought

Dr. Emily Cain

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10:25-11:15 AM and 2:45-3:35 PM

Mundelein, Room 303

Disability inhabits a complex space in the history of the Catholic tradition, with conflicting and sometimes problematic attempts to apply meaning to the disabled body. One side fetishizes pain, holding up the disabled body as one that is uniquely open to the experience of God, while the other side is deeply resentful and suspicious of sick persons, drawing a connection between disability and sin. In both cases, the person with disability is dehumanized, reduced to a constructed identity of disability. Yet, these are not the only two options available, either today or in the history of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, and my goal in this course is to highlight those models of disability that embrace the full humanity of all persons.

In this course, we will trace the variety of perspectives on the (dis)abled body in the history of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, examining both historical and modern theological models for understanding disability. We will explore the assumptions and motivations behind each depiction, examining not just how disability is portrayed and constructed, but also why, and to what end. We will seek to determine how a culture's understanding of the make-up of body and mind (and the nature of the relationship between those two) influences the ways in which impairments of the mind and body are described, categorized, labeled, legislated, suppressed, celebrated, feared, or revered. We will ask, how is disability defined, what is the relationship between disability and the Image of God, between disability and sin, and between disability and one's relationship to the world and to God?

At the end of the course, students will be able to describe and evaluate a variety of perspectives of (dis)ability in Catholic Thought with the goal of developing a theology of disability that embraces the full humanity of all persons.

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THEO 293-001: Christian Marriage

Dr. Michael Murphy

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9:20-10:10 AM

Mundelein, Room 403

Marriage as a human institution has existed for a long time—so long that it belongs to the interesting category of “pre-history.” Its precise origins are lost to us; but, as the originating relationship that produces the family, marriage has always been understood as both a primary political unit and social cornerstone of human culture. The purpose of this course is to examine marriage as it exists today in light of both history and contemporary knowledge. Students will come to an understanding of contemporary Christian marriage and how it has evolved from antiquity through the late modern age. We will sort through a variety of interpretations of the meaning of marriage and, using critical reasoning, discern why and how these interpretations might contribute to current understandings of marriage and family—theologically, sociologically, and otherwise. Jesus’ first miracle was at a wedding; St. Paul interpreted marriage as a living symbol which displays and enacts the relationship between Christ and the Church. We are therefore called to examine marriage as a sacramental reality, an inroad to theological understanding, and a unique expression of human rationality. In addition, we will explore the anthropological role of marital vows (and the obligations of love that are expressed in these vows), delve into the mysteries of gender, and workshop healthy approaches to communication. Finally, we will analyze the religious, cultural, and legal debates about love and marriage as they are developing in contemporary culture.

THEO 295-001: Islam

Professor Omer Mozaffar

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8:15-9:05 AM

Mundelein, Room 404

In this Tier 2 introductory course on Islam, we will begin with foundational concepts. From there, we will invest time into the primary sources. Next, we will explore varieties of Muslim thought and practice. Students will develop a strong foundation into what Muslims regard as “Islam” as well as skills in analyzing contemporary voices related to Islam.

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THEO 297-001/002: Buddhism

Dr. Yarina Liston

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 1:40-2:30 PM and 2:45-3:35 PM

Mundelein, Room 404

This course is designed to give the student a solid introduction to the Buddhist religious tradition. The base of our study will be an examination of Indian Buddhism with the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama. This will lead us into a further exploration of Buddhism as it develops beyond India into Southeast Asia, the Far East and Tibet. We will focus on the historical perspective while delving into the beliefs, practices and texts associated with Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhism. The primary methods of instruction will be lecture and discussion, but the ideas will be further developed through weekly writing assignments, small group work in class, as well as meditation exercises. The primary Religious Studies methods to be used in this course are *historical, philosophical, and psychological*.

THEO 299-003/004: Religions of Asia

Engaged Learning: Service Learning

Dr. Yarina Liston

Tuesday 4:15-6:45 PM Wednesday 4:15-6:45 PM

Mundelein, Room 304/303

This course constitutes an introduction to the religious traditions of Asia through religious studies methodologies such as history, theology, sociology, philosophy, and anthropology that culminate in an engaged learning project. This course is designed to give the student an introduction to nine different religions of Asia. Our examination is divided between the regions of South Asia and East Asia. This will lead us into a further exploration of various topics such as the social system, ethics, the relationship between gods and people, artistic expression and rituals. We will focus on the historical development while delving into the beliefs, practices and texts associated with each religion. The focus will be to put the religions of each region in conversation with each other and see how the larger religious dialogue evolved. The primary methods of instruction will be lecture and discussion, but the ideas will be further developed through weekly writing assignments, small group work in class, as well as an exploration of culturally related physical activities such as yoga, tai chi and meditation.