

Spring 2027 Course Descriptions

THEO 300 Course Descriptions

THEO 314-001/THEO 418-001

Topics in Biblical Studies: Prophetic Literature

Dr. Tom Wetzel

Tuesday 4:15-6:45 pm

In contrast to the Christian organization of the Bible, the Jewish tradition acknowledges a much larger part of the Hebrew Bible as prophetic texts. This tradition rests on a broader understanding of the nature of prophetic writing, one that also acknowledges that the biblical texts argue among themselves about the terminology and identification of authentic prophets and prophetic work. We will begin this semester by working back through the layers of the biblical tradition to uncover a definition of prophecy that transcends and frequently contradicts contemporary views of prophecy and centers the prophetic word in the call for divine mercy. Working from this foundation, we will read a variety of biblical examples of prophecy to understand what it might mean today to view the prophetic tradition as first and foremost one of forgiveness and reconciliation.

THEO 318-001/THEO 460-001

History of Christian Thought: Reformation-Modern

Dr. Colby Dickinson

Thursday 4:15-6:45 pm

This course is a historical-theological survey of major Christian thinkers and theologies throughout Reformation, modern and contemporary periods. The aim of the course is to enable students to become conversant with particular trajectories of Christian thought during these eras. This course will be focused on a diversity of spiritual authors who engaged with tensions between faith and reason, predestination and free will, the existence of God and how faith challenges ecclesial structures. We will pay attention to major theological issues and themes as they have presented themselves within particular historical contexts and as they appear in the primary texts we will be studying. The course will be taught in a seminar format, allowing students to contribute insights each class on the readings.

Course texts

John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*

Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*

Søren Kierkegaard, *Provocations: Spiritual Writings of Kierkegaard*

John Henry Newman, *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford*

Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*

Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*

THEO 348-01E

ENGAGED LEARNING

Supervised Internship

Dr. Mara Brecht

MWF 9:20-10:10 am (I believe this course will only meet on Fridays, though)

This is the same supervised internship course that Dr. Brecht offered last spring.

THEO 350-001/PLSC 331-001

Interdisciplinary Credit: Global Studies; Middle East and Islamic World Studies

Islam and Politics

Dr. Emin Gulecyuz

MWF 11:30-12:20

This course examines the relationship between Islam and politics from the classical period to the present (with a higher concentration on modern and contemporary developments), organized around a question it poses: is Islam inherently political? We address this question through key concepts that have for centuries defined Islam's relationship to politics (the caliphate and the sharia), and in light of modern conditions (or the modern "rupture") that reshaped those concepts and others. We then turn to some major positions taken by Muslims toward politics—Islamism and quietism, and also discuss perhaps one of the most controversial issues: jihad. Lastly, we close our investigation with the hard cases where the tradition meets the modern state: secularism, democracy, citizenship, gender, and religious authority. We read primary texts alongside secondary sources, with occasional detours to comparative material from other traditions.

Though the course has no prerequisites, previous familiarity with Islam, any part of the Islamic world, and/or Muslim societies would be helpful for participants.

THEO 353-01E

ENGAGED LEARNING

Cross-listed with ANTH 361-01E and HIST 300E-01E

Indigenous Science and Religion in Mexico

Dr. Josefrayn Sanchez-Perry

MWF 12:35-1:25

Welcome to Indigenous Science and Religion in Mexico! This course will introduce you to the Indigenous history of science, religion, and *materia medica* (medicinal properties of plants, animals, and materials) in Mexico. The course schedule is chronological, beginning at 300 BCE and ending in the present day, with emphasis on three main themes: ancestral ceremonies, scientific knowledge, and medical developments. From important food staples like maize, tomatoes, and chilli to the manipulation of rubber, special dyes, and hydraulic engineering, as well as the medicinal documentation of animals, plants, and materials, Indigenous communities of Mexico have advanced their societies to impressive standards. In addition to instructional materials, you will also engage with original historical texts and material culture from Mexico,

including visits to the Rare Books Collection, and the Art Institute of Chicago and Newberry Library in the downtown Chicago area. This course fulfills your Engaged Learning requirement.

THEO 373-01E

ENGAGED LEARNING

Reading Augustine: Love, Loss, and the Search for God

Dr. Emily Cain

TTh 11:30-12:45

What do love and loss teach us about the search for God? In this capstone, we will turn to Augustine to ask how grief and desire shape his account of humans in relationship to God, to one another, and to themselves. Through close readings of texts such as the *Confessions*, *On Christian Teaching*, *On the Trinity*, and selections from *The City of God*, we will examine his account of the human person: made for God, wounded by competing loves, and drawn toward healing and community through grace. As we read, we will consider which of Augustine's questions we share, which of his answers we find convincing, and where our own answers might differ from his.

The shared course readings and topics will serve as the foundation for students' own independent research projects on a related question of their choosing. By the end of the course, students will present their research, showing how these ancient theological questions continue to shape how we think about God, the self, and the world today.

This course is the Capstone course for Theology majors, but you don't have to be a Theology major or minor to take it! However, you will need to get permission to enroll from our Undergraduate Program Director, Dr. Lauren O'Connell: loconnell1@luc.edu.

THEO 393-01W

WRITING INTENSIVE

Evil, Sin, and Suffering

Dr. Tisha Rajendra

TTh 1:00-2:15 pm

Why does a good God allow sin, evil and suffering in the world? The course will examine different accounts of sin, evil, and suffering: theological, philosophical, historical and sociological. Theological sources include the book of Job, Augustine, Johann Baptist Metz, Gustavo Gutierrez, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Emilie Townes. We will place these theological sources in dialogue with narratives and memoirs that concern evil and suffering, including accounts of the Holocaust, Mary Doria Russell's science fiction novel, *The Sparrow*, and sociological literature on the American "gospel of prosperity."

THEO 393-002/HIST 300C-002

Interdisciplinary Credit: Catholic Studies minor

Can Catholicism Change?

Dr. Brian Flanagan

TTh 2:30-3:45 pm

Can the Catholic Church change? How has it changed in the recent past? Should it change in the future? This course examines the development of doctrine and practice in the Catholic Church over history, and explores how the Church can - and cannot - change. It will look at how Catholicism responded to the modern world at the Second Vatican Council and at how the Catholic Church today is addressing the role and status of women in the Church, LGBTQ+ issues, artificial intelligence, climate change, and war and peace.

THEO 309

Biblical Hebrew 2

Dr. Devorah Schoenfeld

This will likely be offered either MWF 10:25-11:15 or MWF 11:30-12:20