# Graduate Theology Courses  
## Spring 2018

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Days and Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundation BIB</td>
<td>Dr. Peter Spitaler</td>
<td>Monday 4:30–6:50pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>THL 8001-001</td>
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<td><strong>This course will be an examination of basic questions and research methods in biblical studies with special attention to the relationships between faith and culture.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundation ETH</td>
<td>Dr. Mark Graham</td>
<td>Thursday 4:30–6:50pm</td>
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<td>THL 8004-001</td>
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<td><strong>This course introduces students to important themes, thinkers, and issues within the discipline of Christian ethics. Part of our energy will be devoted to studying canonical sources, which have been mainstays in Christian ethical deliberation. Yet the discipline of Christian ethics is also remarkably broad and diverse, so another focus will be to show students the different kinds of moral deliberation along with the different kinds of communities out of which they have emerged. Finally, as ethics is concerned about evaluating behavior, another part of this course engages seminal contemporary issues that will also prove to be challenging to the Christian community in the future.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wisdom Literature</td>
<td>Dr. Carey Walsh</td>
<td>Thursday 4:30–6:50pm</td>
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<td>THL 8140-001</td>
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<td><strong>Prerequisite: Foundation Bible [THL 8001]</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The concerns of biblical wisdom are practical and universal. They have to do with human experiences in life: suffering; sexuality, ecology, and contentment. Wisdom is a unique portion of the Old Testament because it is explicitly focused on the formation of character and conscience in the person and for the benefit of the community. Wisdom stresses the development of the healthy and virtuous person, without the specifics of religion, God, and Israel’s history so characteristic of the rest of the Old Testament. Ancient Israel offers its philosophy on these themes in its most pragmatic writing, the Wisdom tradition. Wisdom mines human life and its capacity for virtue for its core meaning. It reflects the timeless pursuit of happiness for individual and community alike.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Wisdom is for people who want to thrive and not merely exist in life. It offers a playful, robust, and earnest discovery life’s struggle and joys. The history and development of Wisdom in ancient Israel, the perspectives on God and human life, and the theological connections with other biblical traditions are suited with a view to reclaiming Wisdom’s importance for modern theological reflection. Job, Ecclesiastes, and Son of Sons are the primary biblical texts examined in this course. In addition, we will trace wisdom’s influence in other portions of the Old and New Testaments, particularly in Jesus’ use of parables, and the paschal mystery of the gospels. Lastly, class discussion and research will assess contemporary contributions on the prominent wisdom themes of sexuality, in the writings of Elizabeth Johnson; evil in the post-Holocaust writings of Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Gustavo Gutierrez, and the ecology, animal rights, and popular spiritualities in current events. It is hoped that the student will gain an appreciation for wisdom tradition and spiritual quest it bespeaks. The course draws on Catholic Tradition to further elucidate biblical themes in living a holy life.</strong></td>
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Lastly, it aims to show how Jesus used these materials as his Bible. This examination of the biblical wisdom tradition ought to help students think theological about faith and values in the modern world and deepen their awareness of the human enterprise to understand the purpose of life in all its struggles.

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<tr>
<th>The Future of Christology</th>
<th>Dr. Ilia Delio</th>
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<tr>
<td>THL 8200-001</td>
<td>Tuesday 7:00 – 9:20pm</td>
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<td>Prerequisite: Foundation Theology [THL 8000]</td>
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This course builds on a basic foundation in Christology and thus focuses on the significance of Jesus Christ in the 21st century. Teilhard de Chardin felt that the Chalcedon formula was too narrow in that it neglected to include the cosmic nature of the Christ; hence he challenged it by speaking of the three natures of Christ, that is, human, divine and cosmic. What significance does the incarnation hold for us today in an expanding, unfinished universe? How is artificial intelligence impacting the meaning of the incarnation, as technology seeks a post human future? These and other questions on religious pluralism, second axial consciousness, secularization and planetization will be engaged in this seminar. Students will be asked to read and critically engage texts, to think “outside the box,” and to provide new reasons for the hope within.

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<tr>
<th>Sacrament in the Life of the Church</th>
<th>Dr. Timothy Brunk</th>
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<tr>
<td>THL 8240-001</td>
<td>Wednesday 4:30 – 6:50pm</td>
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<td>Prerequisite: Foundation Theology [THL 8000]</td>
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Drawing upon relevant documents from the Second Vatican Council and upon works by Joseph Martos, Kenan Osborne, Edward Schillebeeckx, and Louis-Marie Chauvet, this course will examine the history of sacramental theology and practice as well as the interplay of ecclesiology, Christology, sacramentology, and day to day Christian life. This course will emphasize the nature of Christian existence as essentially sacramental. Vatican II denounced the “split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives,” characterizing it as “among the more serious errors of our age” (*Gaudium et spes*, no. 43); this course will investigate how three representative theologians have addressed this concern with particular reference to worship.

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<th>Moral Philosophy and Christian Ethics</th>
<th>Dr. Brett Wilmot</th>
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<td>THL 8390-001</td>
<td>Thursday 4:30 – 6:50 pm</td>
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<td>Prerequisite: Foundation Ethics [THL 8004]</td>
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This course will explore major sources in the Western tradition of philosophical ethics in conversation with Christian ethics, both ancient and modern. Students will develop a foundation in philosophical and Christian ethics, with particular attention to how Christian ethics is informed by, and departs from, philosophical approaches. We’ll be looking at both classical and contemporary sources. Students will finish the course with a more sophisticated understanding of forms of moral reasoning in the Western tradition, both philosophical and theological, and the ways in which philosophy has shaped Christian ethics and how the latter continues to distinguish itself as form of reflection on the moral life.
Thought of Augustine

Dr. Melanie Webb
THL 8400-001
Tuesday 4:30 – 6:50 pm

Prerequisite: Foundation History [THL 8004]

Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE) remains one of the most inventive and influential theologians to have ever lived. This course seeks answers to the following questions: Who was Augustine of Hippo? How did his life shape his thought? How can we respond, both critically and generatively, to his thought in our own day?

In pursuit of these questions, students will engage the thought of Augustine in three ways. First, students will study Confessions 1-9 alongside key texts that shaped Augustine's sense of himself and his theological project. Through familiarity with Augustine the person and his influences, students will develop an understanding of his contemporary culture and, thereby, of the transformation he seeks for himself and his society. Particular attention will be paid to Augustine's bi-culturalism as a Roman North African. Second, students will explore key theological developments across different genres of his writing (treatises, letters, sermons). We will attend to Augustine's roles as bishop-educator, bishop-judge, and bishop-polemicist. Third, students will imagine possibilities for (re)new(ing) Augustinianisms in conversation with Villanova students at SCI Graterford.

NOTE: On three occasions, class will be held with Villanova students at SCI Graterford. Dates and times for these sessions will be determined after enrollment is complete.

THM: Sufism and Rumi

Dr. Yasemin Akis
THL 8510-001
Wednesday 4:30 – 6:50 pm

Prerequisite: Foundation Spirituality [THL 8003]

The focus of this course is the 13th-century mystic and poet, Jalal al-Din Rumi who is the best known of all Sufi masters. The aim of the class is to explore this highly influential religious figure in his own intellectual, literary, and institutional context. The course will present the most fundamental points of Sufi doctrine as expounded in Rumi’s writings and at the same time to situate Sufism within Islam. Students will become familiarized with the Sufi symbols and metaphors in Rumi’s mystical poetry (in various English translations), delving into Rumi’s masterpiece Mathnawi.

THM: Interreligious Literacy and Cooperation and Theologies of Religions

Dr. Kerry San Chirico
THL 8600-001
Thursday 11:30 – 1:50 pm

Prerequisite: Foundation Theology [THL 8000]

The United States is the most religiously diverse country in the world, yet basic knowledge of religious traditions beyond Christianity is woefully lacking. Hate crimes continue in our post 9-11 world, threatening not just minority religious communities but the common national fabric. Meanwhile, religious strife overseas captures headlines. The aim of this graduate course is thus three fold: first, to impart knowledge of particular religious traditions—in the form of particular beliefs, practices, and struggles primarily, though not exclusively, in the United States; second, to examine theologies of religions in various traditions as well as historical examples of inter-religious cooperation and exchange; third, to explore the practical application of inter-religious literacy and cooperation projects on campus and outside Villanova. The goal, then, is to develop a framework for understanding religious pluralism both phenomenologically and theologically—
that is, to understand the facts of religious difference, but to draw on our religious traditions to make meaningful sense of religious pluralism for the common good.

**Theory and Practice of Ministry 4**
**THL 8808-001**
*Rev. Julia Sheetz-Willard, PhD*
*Tuesday 10:00 – 11:10 am*

This course seeks to equip students to carry out ministry with sensitivity and effectiveness in the current cultural context of the Church. Utilizing a theological approach rooted in mutual respect and collaborative learning, the course focuses on developing cultural competencies for pastoral care and community development in diverse settings. Students will deepen their personal awareness of the intersectionality of identities, together with their understanding of systemic injustice and interlocking social oppressions, in order to more fully embody ministries of compassion and justice.

**THM: Biblical Theology**
**THL 9100-001**
*Dr. Peter Spitaler*
*Monday 2:00 – 4:20 pm*

Non-PhD students with permission of PhD Program Director

Treatement of a particular issue in the field of biblical studies.

**Humanity at the Threshold**
**THL 9220-001**
*Dr. Stefanie Knauss*
*4:00 – 8:50 pm*
*Friday, January 19*  
*February 2 and 16*  
*March 2 and 16*  
*April 6 and 20*

Non-PhD students with permission of PhD Program Director

Technological developments, medical and bio-medical progress, the possibility to live in cyberworlds, new forms of relationship, advances in neurosciences require a new reflection of the fundamental elements of human existence. Boundaries between human/animal, man/woman, nature/technology, body/mind can no longer be drawn with certainty; instead, the specifically human seems to be to be situated right at these boundaries. Such a reflection about the human being under conditions of his/her concrete socio-historical, cultural context is not only reasonable in theology, but a necessary contribution for the understanding of God-human relationship. In this seminar, we will explore themes in the theological reflection about the human being (creation, freedom, identity, failure, etc.) in relation to the contemporary cultural context, asking both about the challenges posed by new socio-cultural developments to theological anthropological reflection, and theology’s contributions to the understanding of the human being.

**Catholic and Orthodox Ecclesiology in Dialogue**
**THL 9270-001**
*Dr. Bernard P. Prusak*
*Tuesday 2:00 – 4:20 pm*

Non-PhD students with permission of PhD Program Director

Analyzing essays by Orthodox and Catholic theologians, and relevant documents, the seminar will consider the important and sensitive issues of primacy (and the authority of the primate) and the role of councils and synods in the historical development of the Church. It will study the theological traditions that developed around those issues over the centuries and explore their implications for contemporary ecclesiology and inter-Christian dialogue. In that regard, it
will consider John Zizioulas’s *Being as Communion*, and his theological argument that the reality of the Church is inseparable from the communion revealed in the Eucharist. Zizioulas contends that the foundational ground of the Church is not the papacy or synodality. Communion (*koinonia*) is the ontological foundation of the Church “con-stituted” by the Spirit, acting simultaneously in the one and the many, the local and the universal. He sees the need for a Third Vatican Council “to make communion condition the very being of the Church.”

**THM: Racial Justice and Christian Ethics**

Dr. Vincent Lloyd  
**THL 9310-001**  
*Non-PhD students with permission of PhD Program Director*

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Dr. Vincent Lloyd  
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In this course we will explore problems of racial injustice, with a particular focus on the US context, and we will explore resources within the Christian tradition to advance racial justice. After a survey of key theories of race, including accounts of whiteness, black feminist theory, and decolonial theories, we will turn to historical accounts of the role racial thinking has in the Christian tradition – in late antiquity, in the medieval world, and in the United States. Then, we will turn to a variety of constructive projects attempting to advance racial justice in dialogue with the Christian tradition, including the work of Delores Williams, Emmanuel Katongole, and Gil Anidjar. The course aims to equip students to think about racial justice in their future scholarship, whether that scholarship is historical, ethnographic, systematic, or ethical.

**THM: Models of Medieval Theology**

Dr. Kevin Hughes  
**THL 9420-001**  
*Non-PhD students with permission of PhD Program Director*

This course will take as its starting point the now-classic typology of modes of medieval theology – Monastic, Scholastic, Vernacular. But we take this up with the conviction that theological plurality is not only inevitable in a tradition, but essential to it. We will explore texts that both fit and test the limits of the typology, discerning how each mode or style might illumine the mystery of God in a particular way, but also the ways in which it might obscure that mystery. This will be of historical value insofar as it allows us to see precisely what kind of contribution various medieval theologians and/or modes of theology have made to the history of Christian thought and practice. Beyond this, however, an understanding of a certain kind of theological plurality contributes richly to our own present theological *ethos* and serves as an important witness to the diversity of gifts in the church. Texts will include: Anselm, Bernard of Clairvaux, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Mechtild of Magdeburg, and Angela of Foligno.

**THM: Sober Inebriation: The Apophatic Tradition**

Fr. Martin Laird, OSA  
**THL 9430-001**  
*Non-PhD students with permission of PhD Program Director*

The apophatic tradition remains all the rage as books and articles continue proliferate and inspire. Rooted in the prayed theology of the Early Church, East and West, the pole star guiding this ship is the transcendent mystery we call God, who is too intimate to human identity for concepts, words, and images to pin God down by having the final word. Adapting Rowan Williams only slightly, the apophatic tradition is “the great speaking absence between the cherubim.”

Famous for its paradoxes such as sober inebriation, ever moving repose, learned ignorance, luminous dark, this course will trace its historical development of the apophatic tradition.
(including its philosophical and Scriptural moorings) over the course of centuries. We shall consider those key theologians most representative of this tradition such as Gregory of Nyssa, Denys the Areopagite, Æriugena, Meister Eckhart, among others. We shall also consider its expression in the *Philokalia*, where we see its practical role in the training of the theologian’s mind through the cultivation of stillness. Finally, we shall consider how this tradition lives on in our own culture, by considering, for example, select poetry of T.S. Eliot, R.S. Thomas, Czeslaw Milosz, among others.

**Early Modern Spirituality**

Dr. Brett Grainger  
THL 9530-001  
*Non-PhD students with permission of PhD Program Director*

Tuesday 4:30 – 6:50 pm

This graduate seminar offers a survey of the devotional worlds of early modern Christian spirituality, Roman Catholic and Protestant, as those systems developed in response to the dramatic transformations ushered in the Age of Reformations. After familiarizing ourselves with the distinctive methods (historical, theological, and social scientific) used by scholars in the field, we will attend to some of the central movements, figures, themes, and tensions that characterized early modern Christianity as a “lived religion,” which a special focus on traditions of “heart religion,” affective modes of piety rooted in patterns of late medieval devotion.

**Postmodern Spirituality**

Dr. Christopher Barnett  
THL 9540-001  
*Non-PhD students with permission of PhD Program Director*

Thursday 2:00 – 4:20 pm

This doctoral seminar has three overarching goals: (i) to survey the intellectual context of (post)modern spirituality, (ii) to explore several key issues in the field, such as the relationship between spirituality and the sciences and spirituality and nature, and (iii) to investigate the writings of a few major figures in (post)modern spirituality, including persons such as Søren Kierkegaard and Dorothy Day. At the end of the course, students should have a greater familiarity with spirituality’s evolving place in the modern world, along with a greater facility in analyzing and discussing it.