Graduate Theology Courses
Spring 2018

Foundation BIB
THL 8001-001
Dr. Peter Spitaler
Monday 4:30 – 6:50pm

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.

Foundation ETH
THL 8004-001
Dr. Mark Graham
Thursday 4:30 – 6:50pm

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.

Wisdom Literature
THL 8140-001
Dr. Carey Walsh
Thursday 4:30 – 6:50pm
Prerequisite: Foundation Bible [THL 8001]

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.

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.
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.

The Future of Christology
THL 8200-001
Dr. Ilia Delio
Tuesday 7:00 – 9:20pm
Prerequisite: Foundation Theology [THL 8000]

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.

Sacrament in the Life of the Church
THL 8240-001
Dr. Timothy Brunk
Wednesday 4:30 – 6:50pm
Prerequisite: Foundation Theology [THL 8000]

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.

Moral Philosophy and Christian Ethics
THL 8390-001
Dr. Brett Wilmot
Thursday 4:30 – 6:50 pm
Prerequisite: Foundation Ethics [THL 8004]

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 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.

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