The world *culture* is derived from *cult*, and so in the broadest sense we could say that cultures are formed and shaped by faiths or worldviews. For this class we will look at Christianity’s relation to culture – and suppose that the connector between faith and culture is reason or philosophy. A class about faith, reason and culture has to examine those three things in respect of what they are in themselves, and how they relate to each other, either favorably or critically, and this we will do from a Christian perspective. John Paul II wrote about faith and reason that they, “…are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth.” The critical term there is *truth*. In Christianity the standard of truth is the person and reality of Christ, but truth is also a term that implies reason and good philosophy and the reasoned effort to achieve it.

*Faith* refers to what is believed, why it is believed, and how that belief has been lived. Therefore, we will look at that faith in its origins and how it has appeared in history and developed in history. That exercise will show us, among other things, how Christianity has impacted culture, and by analogy how it may do so today.

Paul said that our faith (worship) should be “reasoned” (Rom 12:1). Peter said we should “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have”. The Church has a long tradition of using the best reason or philosophy available to explain its faith to persons and cultures from ancient Greece to modern China. This is always the challenge of Christianity.

We will seek in this class that reasoned faith, in dialogue with culture where those connections can be made. That means examining everything from the central Christian doctrines like the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Bible, the history and development of the Church and theology, and the mutual influences between Christianity and culture from the beginning. The goal is that at the end students will have a knowledge of the faith and an understanding of the rich connections between faith and culture, and that students could explain and apply these in their futures.
explore the Christian tradition’s potential to foster an integrated, embodied, and practical personal faith in relation to our common world.

For 2,000 years, Christians have thought long and hard about all the truly big questions: Does God exist? Does He speak to us? How does He want us to live? What does it take to be happy? How should we interpret the Bible? Are science and religion in agreement or opposition? Why do bad things happen to good people? What happens after death? Who can be saved? This course examines the fundamentals of Christian belief and practice, with particular emphasis on the “fullness of the faith” proclaimed by the Roman Catholic Church. Through the exploration of primary texts, central ideas, and the historical development of Christian theology, students will be challenged to think deeply about the person and mission, the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ; the revelation of the Triune God; the nature and interpretation of the Bible; the role of Mary and the saints in the lives of believers; and the contours of sacramental worship and prayer, along with the moral life which arises from them. Spirited class discussion, the development of a common theological vocabulary, and disciplined reflection upon the relationship of Christian belief and behavior with the arts and sciences, the issues of the day, and the students’ personal experience, will be key elements in our exploration of the distinctively Christian answers to the big questions.

Required Texts
- C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*
- Brant Pitre, *The Case for Jesus: The Biblical and Historical Evidence for Christ*
- Ben Quash and Michael Ward, eds., *Heresies and How to Avoid Them: Why It Matters What Christians Believe*

Why must I study theology? Does God even exist? Isn’t the term “faith and reason” an oxymoron? Why does religion seem devoid of spirituality? What’s the difference between religion and spirituality anyway? In the tradition of the Augustinian apostolate, this course will “courageously respond to uncertainty.” We will journey with a spirit of “humble curiosity” from timeless existential questions to postmodern complexities including personal values, connection, loneliness, consumerism, and social media.

Contemporary religious and secular spiritualities will be explored, and then we shift the course of our itinerary to Christian Spirituality. If you think you know where this adventure ends, think again. This academic expedition encourages exploration and critical thinking from start to finish. Besides, faith is a journey that never ends.

The focus of this course is on the relevance of the Christian message and the Catholic tradition for confronting and dealing with the most pressing concerns of contemporary culture. In short, how does this message and tradition equip people today for living a more meaningful existence, oriented toward God, and for working toward a more peaceful and just society, as envisioned in the reign of God? We begin with a diagnosis of the contemporary situation: how history impacts our preconceived
understandings; how market and cultural forces as well as technology impact our sense of self, how we think and how we engage the world; how economic trends and practices, political and social violence, ecological concerns, scientific naturalism and the resurgence of atheism, challenge claims for meaning, truth and respectability of worldviews informed by rich traditions, namely Christianity. With a properly historical examination of Biblical sources, we will attempt a lively rendering of what Jesus meant by the reign of God, how he sought to reorient people toward this vision of God’s intentions for humanity, and how this message was demonstrated in his own life. Students will learn interpretive skills that help to open a conversation between Jesus’s message and contemporary cultural concerns and questions.

These same skills and fundamental understanding of Jesus’s message will be applied in examining the role of the church in today’s world, as well as the issue of the relationship between faith, reason and culture. Here we will examine the role of Christianity in culture and civil society, as well as discuss key issues that challenge the church’s role in the world, as well as how these challenges can be faced. Thus a more vivid and lively understanding of the Gospels and early Christianity is sought with a view toward gaining insights as to how a more relevant understanding of Christianity can be achieved in today’s world. And further, how this understanding can lead to a better existence for particular persons and the world as a whole.

Faith, Reason and Culture
THL 1000-010
THL 1000-011

Prof. Joanna Scholz
MWF 10:30 – 11:20 am
MWF 11:30 – 12:20 pm

Life is a mystery. It is a challenge to understand ourselves, our beliefs, our relationships, and our world. This course invites and challenges students to do theology, that is, to think critically and to reflect on the ultimate mystery, the mystery of God, who is revealed through the Word in Scripture, and through the Word Made Flesh, in the person of Jesus Christ. Throughout our study of the Hebrew Scriptures and Christian Testament we will explore key themes such as God as Creator, and the human person made in the image of the one God who loves us. We will reflect on the topic of faith, and the realities of grace and sin. We will focus on the theme of redemption through the saving power of Jesus, his cross and resurrection. We will explore the concept of the Paschal Mystery which gives us meaning and hope for the future. We will discuss the theme of discipleship in each of the four gospel and reflect on the call of each person to follow Jesus in his/her own unique way. We will explore the themes of faith and culture and discuss the influences of culture on religion and the influences of religion on culture. We will read and discuss current events that relate to religion, theology, culture and the world. Course requirements: Active participation in class discussions, which will include evidence of having completed the assigned readings; three tests and a final examination; one major writing project which includes the opportunity for revision; smaller writing assignments. The final grade will be an average of five grades: four test grades (including the exam), and the major writing assignment. Grades for other written assignments will be factored into the test grades. Class participation will also be taken into consideration when computing your final grade.

Faith, Reason and Culture
THL 1000-012

Dr. Kerry San Chirico
MW 1:30 – 2:45 pm

No religion hovers above culture. Rather, it is embodied by living, breathing human beings in time and space, constituted by persons and societies of varying beliefs and practices. Christianity is no different. This religious tradition (or traditions) developed in response to a first century Galilean Jewish teacher named Yeshua ben Yusef. He is also known as Isa, Yesu Masih, Jesucristo, Tian chu, Jidu, Xristos, and Christ. From its inception, Christianity has been a cross-cultural phenomenon, born
from the encounter of Judaism and Hellenism in a time before the inception of a genus called “religion.” Since that time, Christianity has both encountered culture, been a bearer of culture, and has itself been shaped by culture—leading to tremendous global diversity. And yet all the while it has been animated by two root questions: “Who do you say that I am?” and “What must I do to be saved?” The answers to both questions necessitate the birth of theology, or “faith seeking understanding.” While in this class we will certainly be “doing theology,” we will employ other fields of learning in this course: anthropology, social theory, comparative religion, philosophy, and history, ever conscious that with a subject so vast and with questions so vital, no one methodology and no one interpretive lens is itself adequate to the task. Finally, the method of instruction will vary. You can expect lectures, textual exegesis, film, case studies, and discussion—lots of discussion.

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"Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther ... are not dead but living. They still speak and demand a hearing as living voices"

Karl Barth

THL 1000 is not a “series of lessons” as much as it is a substantial, disciplined and spirited exploration of landmarks in the historical development of thoughts about God, Jesus, and the nature of shared life in a gathered community of committed believers. Secondly, this course is structured to condition scholarly encounter with specific issues such as the following: How can one speak of the existence of “one Church” when there are so many different (and at times, competing) denominations? How can community members claim membership in a “Holy Church” when so many members fall short of that holiness? What is the relation between the Sacred Scriptures (plus subsequent authoritative writings) and the Apostolic Tradition within which they were produced? What are the prospects for mutual enrichment and edification in the dialogue between Christians and those who do not identify with the Christian Tradition? Finally, what are Christian perspectives on the ultimate destiny of us all?

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As an integral part of the Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum, this foundational course introduces students to the rich living tradition of Christianity: the sources, traditions, practices, and major thinkers that have shaped Christianity’s response to the fundamental human questions that underlie all religions and shape the human search for meaning and justice.

With a particular focus on Roman Catholicism, students engage Christianity as a living tradition of beliefs and practices that have developed over time in local and global cultural and religious contexts and that, loyal to the living God to which they point, are ready to be transformed again. Students also engage Christian truth-claims, themes, values, and witness as resources for analyzing and critically evaluating contemporary cultural challenges. In this course, students are equipped to appreciate the ongoing quest of Christian faith seeking understanding as it enters into conversation with all human knowledge and experience, including other faith traditions.

In this particular section of the course, you will use historical, biblical, theological, and social science approaches to studying the relationship between theology and popular culture. You will also examine contemporary North American culture with the goal of developing ways to discern images of God, human nature, good and evil, salvation, and life beyond death that often operate below the surface of the common cultural life in the US.
This course introduces the student to the study of the basic elements of the Christian faith tradition and to the method of critical theological reflection within a contemporary context.

How should we approach this introductory course? It’s hard to know because of three important factors: the participants all have varying backgrounds and attitudes with regard to religion; a course on religion or Christian theology taught within the university is probably different from any other study of religion that the participants have ever done; and our contemporary Western culture, which is the context for our study and which is made up of so many diverse factors and interests, argues many times against the meaningfulness of those same religious realities that we want to examine in this course.

Any theology course which doesn’t take these points into account is doomed even before it starts. To have a productive course, then, it may look as though we have to handle just about everything. But we only have a semester, and we can handle only a limited number of topics. I would suggest these as a way to gain insight into the basic issues:

1. A brief diagnosis of contemporary Western culture, looking especially at its relationship to religious experience and to Christianity in particular;
2. An examination of the character and tasks of Christian theology;
3. A study of the biblical Jesus, and the ethical effect that Jesus has on the lived experience of those who commit themselves to discipleship (following Jesus and the God of Jesus);
4. A study of some of the basic faith claims of Christianity (the nature of faith and revelation, the Christian doctrine of God, salvation/redemption/liberation, the Christian view of the human person), along with some application, showing how these claims relate to contemporary lived experience, including its social, political, and economic concerns.

The course requirements are personal and active presence at all class sessions, two research assignments (between 2 and 4 printed, double-spaced pages in length), two interim tests (first quarter and third quarter of the course), a mid-term exam, and a final exam.

In whom do I place my trust? Who am I? How do we relate to one another? How do I find purpose in the midst of so many “options” for meaning? These are questions that every individual asks and that every culture attempts to answer. How does faith make a difference in responding to these questions?

Drawing on sources from the Bible, theological tradition and contemporary culture, this course will provide a basis from which to be able to discuss the continued relevance of Christian approaches to these questions. With a particular focus on Roman Catholicism, students will engage Christianity as a living tradition of beliefs and practices that have developed over time in local and global cultural and religious contexts and that continue to engage with the culture of today. They will be introduced to theology as the critical, reasonable and methodical reflection on God and on what Christians believe. The desired goal is that students become more capable of engaging in dialogue regarding some of the larger questions of meaning in contemporary culture, and of “giving reason for the hope” (1 Pt 3:15) that is the basis of the Christian existence.
This course will examine what it is we believe as contemporary Christians. In the character of St. Augustine and in the words of St. Anselm, we will approach our beliefs with an attitude of “faith seeking understanding.” We will begin with our notion of God and consider how this notion developed throughout history. The course will then consider the sources and traditions of Christianity and reflect upon how our experiences and actions have been influenced by these foundations.

This course is designed to ground students with the basics of the history of theology and to introduce the idea of the development of theological ideas and doctrines in history, from the Scriptures until today, with a particular focus on Roman Catholicism. It will be divided in a biblical section focused on revelation from the Jewish Scriptures to the New Testament. It will emphasize the importance of understanding the Jewishness of Jesus and of biblical interpretation for contemporary issues with a special attention to exodus and liberation. The medieval period will focus on the most important authors, included women, in the social and political context of their time. The early modern period will address the issue of the Reformation and Counter-reformation and the rise of American Christianity in its peculiar features. For the period between the 19th and the early 20th century the course will focus on the Churches and the new social-political issue. The last part of the course will pivot around the dialogical encounter of Catholicism with modernity at the Second Vatican Council and its aftermath: faith and postmodernity, biopolitics and religious ethics, religion and terrorism, and the environment. The course is designed to familiarize students with Christianity and the Church as historically shaped and at the same time as meaningful for the issue of the relationship between faith and knowledge in the human experience as essentially spiritual, social, and political.

Our lived culture today remarkably helps us to apply our faith making it relevant in our lives. The varied cultural happenings gives us a multiplicity of opportunity to not only apply faith but utilize sound reason.

This course has a particular focus on Roman Catholicism, it is influenced by Augustine’s concern to relate Christian faith, reason and human culture, using various disciplinary approaches within the fields of theology and religious studies with relevancy and much discussion/collaborative work.

As an integral part of the Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum, this foundational course introduces students to the rich living tradition of Christianity: the sources, traditions, practices, and major thinkers that have shaped Christianity’s response to the fundamental human questions that underlie all religions and shape the human search for meaning. With a particular focus on Roman Catholicism, students engage Christianity as a living tradition of beliefs and practices that have developed over time in local and global cultural and religious contexts and that, loyal to the living God to which they point, are ready to be transformed again. Students also engage Christian truth-claims, themes, values, and witness as resources for analyzing and critically evaluating contemporary cultural challenges. In this
course, students are equipped to appreciate the ongoing quest of Christian faith seeking understanding as it enters into conversation with all human knowledge and experience, including other faith traditions.

**Faith, Reason and Culture**  
**THL 1000-023**  
**Dr. Jonathan Yates**  
**TR  4:00 – 5:15 pm**

“Christian” and “Christianity” are ancient (cf. Acts 11:25-27) and complex terms. Indeed, the questions “What does it mean to be a Christian?” or “What is Christianity?” will undoubtedly receive variable responses depending upon whom you ask them to and in what context(s) they are broached. As an integral part of the Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum, this foundational Theology course introduces you to the rich and varied living tradition of what it means to be a Christian (in terms of faith, reason, and faith-based action, i.e., ethics) as well as to a few of the more important historical visions of what the essence of Christianity is, even as it also introduces you to several important ways in which Christians have influenced (and been influenced by) the cultures in which they have found themselves. This course will make this introduction via a careful selection of primary texts, literature, film, social commentary, and focused discussions of Christianity’s traditions and practices as explained both by Christian thinkers and by Christianity’s critics.

Portions of this course will be based on texts and issues drawn from Christianity’s earliest centuries; thus, this course will focus upon thoughts and articulations regarding the Christian revelation that almost all Christian traditions—including Roman Catholicism—regard as foundational. However, this course will also study Christianity as a living tradition that continues to influence (and be influenced by) the thinking and culture of many contexts throughout the world including, of course, our own. In other words, this course will analyze and discuss the beliefs and the practices of Christianity both as they were developed in the movement’s infancy and as they have continued to develop in the centuries since Christianity became a major intellectual and cultural player on the global stage.

Specifically, this course will look closely at some of Christianity’s attempts to explain itself to itself as well as to its (intellectual and political) enemies. And this course will look just as closely at some (often implicit) attempts to discredit Christianity or to construct a way of life for which Christianity is assumed to be irrelevant, outdated, or (intellectually) exhausted. This course will also provide you with some of the necessary tools for participating in contemporary cultural debates that either directly or indirectly intersect with Christianity’s claims, values, and/or modes of living in this present world.

**Faith, Reason and Culture**  
**THL 1000-024**  
**Dr. Adam Hearlson**  
**MW  4:30 – 5:45 pm**

To be a part of a culture, a faith, or a people is the process of gathering deep understanding while also losing track of where the gathered knowledge came from. As such, we know more than we can articulate. This is true for our theologies too. Everyone has a theology, whether they know it or not. This course is designed to help make conspicuous those things we know but have yet to articulate. Specifically, we will reflect on the cultures in which we live, the Gods we worship, and the reasons we give for our action. This class will attempt to unearth our ignorance in order that we might begin the lifelong examination of ourselves, God and each other. To this end, we will examine how theologians, artists, scholars and thinkers have sought to make sense of human beings, the mysteries of God, the limits of our knowledge, and the care of neighbor. This class will operate under the assumption that theology is a posture of humility that seeks to meet the mysteries of this world with courage and wisdom. The class will gather diverse course materials from across history, culture and continents.
Moreover, the classwork will be inspired by theological thinking in a variety of mediums—from scripture to fairy tale, from ancient hymns to rap music, from roman graffiti to abstract art.

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<th>Faith, Reason and Culture</th>
<th>Dr. Christiane Lang Hearlson</th>
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<td>THL 1000-100</td>
<td>Tuesday 6:10 – 8:50 pm</td>
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We live in a diverse, interconnected global society, in which those who seek the common good are called to address enormous challenges. The problems we face today include violence and war, an increasing divide between the wealthy and the poor, disease, racism, sexism, environmental degradation, polarized politics, interpersonal conflict, and ethical dilemmas raised by new technologies. Some have called these “wicked problems,” because they are so urgent, so complex, and have such high stakes. When dealing with “wicked problems,” we need more than information, intelligence, or good will. We need practical wisdom.

Practical wisdom is “embodied, situated, knowing-in-action” (Dorothy C. Bass et al, 2016: 2). Such wisdom draws together our best ideas, our deepest convictions, and our bodily intuitions for the sake of responsible action in the world. Because belief and action are deeply intertwined, those who wish to act wisely must reflect again and again on what we believe, individually and collectively. We must consider how our beliefs relate to one another, how our beliefs cohere or conflict with our actions, how our practices inform our thinking, and how our beliefs and practices might address “wicked problems.”

This course, THL 1000, is one of the five foundational courses of the Liberal Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum. It is meant to help us answer the question, “What do I believe?” in order that we might grow in practical wisdom. In order to ponder that question, and to consider how others have answered that question before us, we will explore the rich living tradition of Christianity, whose central way of knowing is practical wisdom. With a particular focus on Roman Catholicism, we will engage Christianity as a living tradition of beliefs and practices that have developed over time in local and global cultural and religious contexts and that, loyal to the living God to which they point, are ready to be transformed again. Seeking wisdom together, we will engage Christian truth-claims, themes, values, and witness as resources for interpreting and responding to contemporary challenges. In conversation with the common text, *Gaudium et spes*, we will focus on the themes of God, creation, human frailty and responsibility, incarnation, community, and hope.

In this section of the course, we will use the disciplinary lens of practical theology, which is intended to cultivate practical wisdom. Practical theological reflection asks four central questions in relation to concrete situations: 1) What is happening? 2) Why is it happening? 3) What should be happening? 4) What might we do? (Osmer, 2008). These questions are designed to help people pay attention to their lived world and culture, to interpret events, patterns, and problems through multiple disciplinary lenses, to draw upon theological and ethical norms, and to respond responsibly to real situations. Throughout, the practical theologian asks where God is at work in the situation, using “theological vision” in each moment of practical theological reflection.

As an ongoing case study in practical theological reflection, and as a focal issue, this course will examine the challenge of consumerism, considering the ways in which Christian faith and practice buy into or challenge consumer culture. Engaging a real-life issue today can help us understand the process of practical theological reflection and equip us to act wisely. Consumerism is a helpful focal issue because it often functions as a religious system, presenting a competing set of core values, beliefs, and practices that can help us understand the distinctives of Christian faith and practice. Consumerism also relates to many pressing issues today, including human meaning-making and identity formation, environmental degradation, poverty, and human rights, so engaging it will help us consider other major challenges that call for practical wisdom.
Faith, Reason and Culture  
THL 1000-101  
Wednesday  6:10 – 8:50 pm

Through extended discussions of two case studies - one of Italian American Catholics, the other of African American Muslim women - we will explore the way that religious commitment is shaped by and shapes cultural contexts as well as the way that reason is deployed not only by elite theologians but by ordinary religious practitioners. We will probe how immigration and the global circulation of religious ideas and practices shape religion in the United States, and we will see how these dynamics play out in two quite different cultural contexts. As we read these case studies, we will also situate them against the broader Catholic and Islamic intellectual traditions, sampling sacred texts and authoritative pronouncements from these traditions and reflecting on the significance of these sources in the lived experience of religious communities.

Faith, Reason and Culture  
THL 1000-102  
THL 1000 is one of five foundation courses in the Liberal Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum. It introduces you to the rich living tradition of Christianity: sources, traditions, practices, and major thinkers that have shaped Christianity’s response to the fundamental human questions that underlie all religions and shape the human search for meaning.

With a particular focus on Roman Catholicism, you will engage Christianity as a living tradition of beliefs and practices that have developed over time — in diverse local and global, cultural and religious contexts. These beliefs and practices, developed within specific places and times, point toward the living God and are ready to be transformed again and again in further times and places.

You also will engage Christian truth-claims, themes, values, and witness as resources for analyzing and critically evaluating contemporary cultural challenges. In this course, you are equipped to appreciate engage the ongoing quest of the Christian faith community as it seeks to understand and enter into conversation with all human knowledge and experience, including other faith traditions.

In this particular section of the course, you will use historical, biblical, theological, and social science approaches to studying the relationship between theology and popular culture, which will include an examination of contemporary North American culture. The goal of this section of the course is to develop ways of discerning images of God, human nature, good and evil, salvation, and life beyond death that often operate below the surface of the common cultural life in North America.

Faith, Reason and Culture  
THL 1000-103  
Thursday  6:10 – 8:50 pm

As one of the five foundational courses of the Liberal Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum, this course will introduce you to the rich living tradition of Christianity, as captured by theologians and church doctrines and practices and reflected in such cultural expressions as novels, poetry, art and cinema. Topics will include the fundamental human questions that underlie all religions and animate the human search for meaning, such as God, creation and man’s relationship with it, the human condition, salvation, morality and spirituality. While focusing on the Roman Catholic tradition, you will reflect on Christian themes as they can be identified in various historical, cultural and religious contexts. You will become equipped with language and concepts that will enable you to engage in the ongoing quest of “faith seeking understanding” through critical reading, thinking and writing and animated conversation with your fellow students. Regardless of your personal faith position, you should find satisfaction in pondering the issues presented in this course. You will be encouraged to
develop a mature personal position on course themes which can impact your own search for meaning, faith and purpose in life.

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<th>Faith, Reason and Culture</th>
<th>Dr. Brett Grainger</th>
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This course is an exploration of the religious impulse in human culture, as that impulse has been expressed in traditions of Christianity. After familiarizing ourselves with some of the distinctive methods (historical, theological, and social scientific) used by scholars in the study of theology and religion, we will attend to some of the central themes, movements, practices, and tensions that characterize Christianity as a “lived religion,” which is to say, religion as it is lived out in everyday life. Among other topics, we will explore the Christian conceptions of the sacred, ritual practice, religious authority, nature, and the human condition.

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<th>Faith, Reason and Culture</th>
<th>Dr. Anna Moreland</th>
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Throughout this course students will gain competence in Christian theological language in order to examine critically the theological claims of the Christian tradition. The course is organized along themes that, woven together, make up the vision of Christian living. This course will also provide a basis for subsequent theological study.

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<th>Faith, Reason and Culture</th>
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Theology may be understood as “faith seeking understanding” (Anselm of Canterbury). St. Augustine’s Confessions stands as an enduring contribution to the history of Christian theology (and Western thought) because of the way that his story of passionate self-discovery resonates with the universal journey of humanity. “My heart is the place where I am whoever I am” (10.3.4). Like Augustine, we are all people of restless pilgrim hearts. This course examines the foundations of Christian faith in light of its sources, intelligibility and practice. This ongoing quest for meaning takes place in conversation with cultures past and present.

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<th>Spirituality and Healing Arts</th>
<th>Dr. Margaret Mell</th>
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<td>THL 1500-101</td>
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Nursing students only

Discovery of practical spirituality through engaging select contemplative practices; deepening of individual spirituality and the discovery of the presence of God in practicing healing arts; exploration of connections with self, and patient, care; particular attention given to Christian contemplative traditions.

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<th>Augustine: Then and Now</th>
<th>Fr. Allan Fitzgerald, OSA</th>
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<td>THL 2750-001</td>
<td>TR 2:30 – 3:45 pm</td>
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This course will develop a conversation with Augustine on selected issues of the 21st century, seeking to have present and past understandings of a Christian’s place in the world challenge and hopefully cast new light on one another. Augustine was a change-agent in his own time; over the centuries people who have lived in times of significant change have often turned to him, asking what
they can learn from his experience. Many of the movements of church renewal have taken their
inspiration from Augustine.

That means that this course is not just about increasing the quantity of information about our time or
about Augustine’s time. It seeks rather to use available information to learn to look beyond-the-
obvious and to identify the perspectives that allow for and stimulate new questions and/or creative
responses. An interactive environment will be an important dimension of this course.

Specific areas of conversation that will be discussed will include [1] faith and culture: opposition or
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fVX7ZwiaLC for one example of how Augustine and Stephen
Hawking might have talked to one another]; [4] morality, sin and forgiveness: aren’t all to be saved?;
additional question/issue will be drawn from student consensus.

There will be one writing assignment; it will begin with some present-day experience and will ask
for Augustine’s input, thus making connections between “now” and “then.” Readings will be drawn
from an array of articles about present-day experience and from Augustine’s sermons and letters – all
of which will be made available electronically. Student responses to or reflections on course materials
are to be posted to Blackboard so that I can have regular interaction with each student.

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**THM: Catholics as Cultural and Political Insiders**

Dr. Massimo Faggioli

THL 2900-001  
TR 1:00 – 2:15 pm

This course will examine the growth of the Catholic Church in the history of the United States. After a brief introduction on the diversity of French- and Spanish-speaking roots in American Catholicism, the course will focus on the history of this community from the minority, immigrant Church of the 18th and 19th century to the Catholic Church in the USA as the single, largest Church in the country today. The theological, social, and political views of Catholics will be the primary focus. The students will develop an understanding of the different ethnic experiences and the development of the role of Catholicism in the changing social landscape of United States, with a particular emphasis on the social and political engagement of Catholics in the USA in the period between the Civil War, the 20th century, and today.

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**Sacraments**

Dr. Timothy Brunk

THL 3400-001  
MWF 9:30 – 10:20 am

This course is a treatment of the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church. We will draw attention to the history of their understanding and practice, as well as to contemporary issues and questions about sacraments. Though this course will address all seven sacraments (baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, reconciliation, anointing of the sick, matrimony, holy orders), we will investigate baptism, Eucharist, and confirmation in greater detail.

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**HON: Presence and Absence of God**

Dr. Anthony Godzieba

THL 3550-001  
TR 1:00 – 2:15 pm

This course examines the Christian belief in God and its connection with everyday human experience and our contemporary context. Topics include the history of belief in God within Western culture, the relationship between faith and rationality, major issues in atheism and theism, important critiques of belief in God and the responses to those critiques, and the doctrine of God as Trinity.

At first glance the content of this course seems simple: we examine the Christian claims about God
and about the presence of God to human persons and to the world. At a deeper level, though, the
issues are more complex. The usual meanings of the three important elements of the previous sentence—God, human persons, and the world—have been radically questioned over the last half-century or so. How should one describe or define God, really? Can God be described or defined at all? Is there one true definition of “being human”, and should there be only one definition? What constitutes “our world” and whose experience counts when we describe it? Is faith in the presence of God a liberating human response or rather an old-fashioned relic with no place in contemporary Western culture? Even the most steadfast believer needs to realize that these questions are being asked today by believers and non-believers alike, and that the answers do indeed influence one’s image of God.

During the course we’ll thread our way through the complexity by exploring some of the major aspects of the Christian tradition of thinking and speaking about God. We will also look at more recent radical approaches to the God-question. What we want to show is that a critical/questioning approach to belief in God is not only possible but necessary for human beings. And we want to see that, even in the commodified, technologized, and media-saturated context of today, it is still possible to be religious, to have and understand “religious” experience, and to make a case for the redeeming, liberating, and humanizing presence of God.

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**Liberation Theology**  
THL 3740-001  
*Fr. Arthur Purcaro, OSA*  
TR 10:00 – 11:15 am  
*Peace & Justice; Sophomore Service Learning Community only; Diversity 3*

This course is designed for students in the Service Learning Community. Fr. Art is an Augustinian who served with the poorest of the poor in Peru for 30 years. He brings a wealth of experience and love for the poor to this course. Liberation Theology calls us to see how the poor are marginalized by society, describes how to work among them in order to advocate on their behalf, and most importantly to use what we have in order for the poor to find their power so they can advocate for themselves. Liberation Theology proposes that Christ desires to free our fellow human beings from the social structures that keep them impoverished. St Augustine stated: You give bread to a hungry person; but it would be better were no one hungry, and you could give it to no one. (Tractate 1 John 8,8) This course will examine the role of Charity and the pursuit of Justice, as well as how we think about and work with and for the poor.

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**THM: Angels and Demons**  
THL 3790-001  
*Fr. Francis Caponi, OSA*  
MWF 10:30 – 11:20 am  

“Until the onset of the modern era, the real existence of angels and demons was naively taken for granted. Angels were regarded neither as a symbolic expression of the human psyche nor as a literary device but simply and unabashedly as personal subjects, autonomous centers of existence capable of acting and routinely intervening in human history. A whole set of social practices (rituals, popular legends) conferred a sort of cultural self-evidence on this belief” (Bonino). In our own era, things are not so straightforward. True, angels are invoked in the liturgy and explored in theology. In the pages of Scripture they rise up, fierce and fearsome, the sound of their wings beating “like the voice of God Almighty speaking” (Ezekiel 10:5). Demons, too, are found in revelation, where they are rebuked, silenced, and exorcized by Jesus Christ and his disciples. Yet, angels and demons are also perennial subjects of magnificent art, stirring literature, and popular entertainment, in all of which they are often unrecognizable as scions of Biblical stock. Angels have been sentimentalized and domesticated into forms suitable for nursery wallpaper. Demons have been transfigured into brooding Byronic heroes and humorous, likeable rogues. Thus, from a Catholic perspective there is much excavation to be done.
This course will follow the historical development of Christian thought on angels and demons: their places in creation, their roles in salvation history, and their unique natures as purely spiritual intellects. How has Christian belief been shaped by non-Christian traditions?

What are we to make of the customary honoring of some angels as saints (e.g., St. Michael), and of the speculation by some theologians that even demons might taste the Lord’s mercy and be saved? And can Catholic theology give an adequate response to the famous challenge of Rudolf Bultmann: “We cannot use electric lights and radios and, in the event of illness, avail ourselves of modern medical and clinical means and at the same time believe in the spirit and wonder world of the New Testament. And if we suppose that we can do so ourselves, we must be clear that we can represent this as the attitude of Christian faith only by making the Christian proclamation unintelligible and impossible for our contemporaries”?

Required Text: Serge-Thomas Bonino, O.P., Angels and Demons: A Catholic Introduction

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**THM: Technology and the Human Person**

**THL 3790-100**

We live in an information age where technology and human life have become seamlessly interactive. How did we arrive at a level of technological dependence? Where are we going with our technologies? This course aims to explore the impact of information technology on human personhood and community. We will first look at the meaning of human personhood from the perspectives of Scripture, spirituality, philosophy and culture and then examine personhood and community in light of social media, robotics and new trends in artificial intelligence. Our discussions will be oriented to the questions: What is the human person? What do we hope for as persons and as community? Can technology help us create a more unified world?

**Dr. Ilia Delio, OSF**

Wednesday 6:10 – 8:50 pm

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**Christian Environmental Ethics**

**THL 4330-001**

This is a course in Christian environmental ethics. Part of the course is spent addressing foundational philosophical and theological issues in environmental ethics. Substantial segments are devoted to agriculture, environmental toxins, and the moral standing of animals. Weekly discussions focus on practical, contemporary environmental issues such as hunting, nuclear power, global warming, fast food, genetic engineering of animals, pollution, automobile use, and the preservation of coral reefs, to mention but a few.

Course requirements: regular attendance; regular class participation; mid-term and final exams; unannounced in-class quizzes; and one in-class presentation.

**Dr. Mark Graham**

TR 2:30 – 3:45 pm

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**THM: Introduction to Bioethics**

**THL 4490-100**

This course is designed to give an introduction to biomedical ethics. From the process of birth to death we are faced with new technologies and a stunning array of possible choices. How do we respond as Catholic members of the body of Christ, physicians, nurses and health care providers? By examining major frameworks of ethical analysis the student will gain confidence in critically analyzing current issues of bioethics which include informed consent, reproductive technologies, stem cell research, abortion, organ donation, definition of death, physician assisted suicide and end of life decisions. Students will become familiar with theories, terminology, and resources which are used in examining bioethical questions. Critical analysis of emerging biomedical ethical challenges will be encouraged. Many clinical examples found in the daily practice of medicine will be discussed in class.

**Dr. Claudia Petruncio**

Thursday 6:10 – 8:50 pm
Augustinian Spirituality
THL 4500-001
Theology Majors and Minors only

What is spirituality? What does it mean to have a spirituality in our day? This course will examine these questions using Augustinian of Hippo as our guide. Augustine’s “restless heart” will be the image we will use to unpack a rich spiritual tradition that bears his name and which offers a timeless relevance and great meaning in the face of today’s challenges.

The Contemplative Tradition
THL 4550-001

Feelings of loneliness, isolation, depression, anxiety, fear, among other afflictive thoughts that prevent our discovery of what already lies within each of us: inner peace and the indwelling presence of God. The Christian contemplative tradition is concerned with developing those interior skills (contemplation or meditation) that bring to silence the inner noise and confusion in our heads and lead us to the discovery of interior calm, clarity, and Love.

Christianity has a sophisticated tradition of cultivating interior stillness and peace that leads to the silent depths of the heart. This interior stillness facilitates the deepening of personal identity and ultimately the overcoming of the sense of alienation from God and others. The course is both (1) theoretical and (2) practical.

(1) On the theoretical level there will be an interdisciplinary sampling of texts. We will read ancient Christian authors (4th-14th centuries) who talk about the search for God by first dealing with the sources of anxiety within--what we will come to call the world of “mind-tripping.” But in order to highlight the contemporary relevance of this ancient wisdom, we shall also look at contemporary authors on such topics as depression, eating disorders, relationship junkies, the process of addiction. The purpose of the reading, writing, lecture and discussion is to cultivate and value an integrated sense of what is involved in that deep spiritual flourishing of what St. Paul might term our life “hidden with Christ is God (Col 3: 3).”

(2) There is also a practical component. The first 13-15 minutes of each class meeting will be devoted to contemplative practice itself, so that the student not only gains a theoretical understanding of the ancient Christian practice of contemplation / meditation, but also knows how to practice it in daily life. Moreover, each student is expected to devote at least 10 minutes each day outside of class to the practice of contemplation.

Sports and Spirituality
THL 4990-001

Fr. Thomas Keating states, “Everything in the universe is meant to be a reminder of God’s presence.” This course would like to take Fr. Keating at his word and attempt to look to the world of sports as a locus for discovering the presence of God in our midst. Sports are a significant aspect of the American culture, extremely popular and always revelatory. This course will explore and evaluate the various aspects of the sports experience (participants, coaches, fans, officials) as vehicles to help us connect more deeply with God.
Has God sanctioned #BlackLivesMatter? Would Jesus protest the killings of Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Rekia Boyd, or Aiyana Stanley-Jones? How should people of Christian faith respond to Black protest? In this course, we will attempt to construct a Divine argument for resistance to racialized violence and oppression. To do this, we will engage the biblical text and the texts of historical narrative, literature, poetry, music, visual art, and film to explore key theological topics, including sin, suffering, and salvation. As we center the perspectives of Black, womanist, mujerista, queer, and Native theologians, scholars, organizers, artists, and activists, we will seek to discover a theological framework for the contemporary Movement for Black Lives. Ultimately, we will seek to be empowered by this framework, integrating it with our own faith and practice in order to live into the prophetic call to do justice.

This course starts with the historical background leading up to the Holocaust and the ideology of its perpetrators. We will then examine the basic events of the Holocaust and contemporaneous Jewish reactions. We will also look at post-War theological reactions to the Holocaust in Judaism and Christianity and the contemporary impact of the Holocaust in the United States and the world. Students will read memoirs and primary source materials as well as view documentaries.

History and development, beliefs and rituals, sects and intellectual movements: Pre-Islamic Arabia, emergence of Islam, Muhammad as prophet and statesman, territorial expansion, religio-political factions, intellectual development, rituals and beliefs, sharia and its sources, legal schools, religious sects, philosophical trends, mystical orders, art, reasons for the decline, Islam today. Films and visits to mosques. This course fulfills requirement for diversity, Africana Studies, and concentration or minor in Arab/Islamic Studies.

Since its inception, cinema has been used as a means of both raising and answering questions long central to the Western intellectual tradition: Who or what is God? What are the origins and ends of life? Does life possess inherent worth, or is it just a chaotic play of forces? Why do we suffer and how should we respond to it? What is belief? What does it mean to pursue justice and love in an obviously imperfect world? How does or might faith impact this pursuit? In raising these sorts of issues, film has emerged as a distinctive interlocutor with religion in general and with Christian theology in particular.

In recent decades, few filmmakers have addressed theological questions as much as Martin Scorsese, Terrence Malick, and Joel and Ethan Coen (typically referred to as the Coen Brothers). The overarching aim of this course will be to investigate their films, paying particular attention to the role
that theology plays in them. This task will be carried out in three main ways. First, there will be a
general orientation to the nature of cinema and to its historical development, which, perhaps
surprisingly, first emerged from Christian catechesis. Second, a number of films themselves will be
viewed and a range of critical methods employed to tease out their philosophical and theological
significance. And, finally, direct scholarly attention will be paid to the issues raised, with related
readings in theological subjects such as natural theology, theodicy (“the problem of evil”), and
spirituality. Throughout, students will be encouraged to engage film in both oral and written form.

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<tr>
<th>Religion, Art and Science</th>
<th>Dr. Michael McElwee</th>
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<td>THL 5450-001</td>
<td>MWF 12:30 – 1:20 pm</td>
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This course will examine religion, art, and science as aspects of persons and cultures. The
philosopher John Macmurray has argued that there are different dimensions of the personal life, which
would therefore also apply to society and culture. These dimensions are science – as the mechanical or
mathematical aspect of the personal; art – as the emotional or organic aspect, and religion - as the truly
rational or relational aspect of the personal.

Therefore, in this course we will look at those three dimensions of life and culture from the
perspective of various thinkers – Macmurray from the philosophical side, Rene Girard and Gil Bailie
from the anthropology side, Hans urs Von Balthasar from the theological side, or Stanley Jaki from the
scientific side to name a few examples.

In short, we will study religion, art, and science as aspects of persons and cultures. We will explore
theology and ritual as they relate to societies, cultures or persons; and we will examine the artistic,
scientific and personal aspects of religion in the contemporary situation.

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<tr>
<th>THM: Native American Religions</th>
<th>Prof. Dana Lloyd</th>
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<td>THL 5820-001</td>
<td>TR 8:30 – 9:45 am</td>
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This course aims to transcend romantic and New Age notions of Native American spirituality and
move toward an understanding of American Indian religiosity as tied together with a strong sense of
place and a long history of oppression. To do so, we will employ an interdisciplinary approach, reading
historical, ethnographic, legal, and literary texts about Native American experiences of contact,
conquest, genocide, and struggles for religious freedom and land rights. We will think about different
kinds of relationships between Christians and Native Americans in the US and ask how Native
American experiences and accounts can help us to better understand (and also to criticize) western
religiosity, history, ecology, and politics.

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<tr>
<th>Church Architecture and Worship</th>
<th>Dr. Bernard P. Prusak</th>
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<td>THL 5999-001</td>
<td>MW 1:30 – 2:45 pm</td>
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Fine Arts requirement

The earliest Christians celebrated the Lord’s Supper or breaking of bread in homes. During the
fourth century, in the West, they began to build churches in the Roman style called basilica. In Rome,
some basilicas were erected over the site of the house in which the community had earlier assembled.
Later centuries saw the rise of Romanesque and then Gothic architecture. After the Reformation,
Baroque architecture emerged. The nineteenth century gave rise to the Gothic revival, exemplified by
the Villanova University church. In exploring church architecture, art, and music, this course will
reflect on the theology and the historical and cultural contexts that shaped the liturgical celebration of
each age. The ever changing contexts will lead to asking how contemporary Christian worship should
be embodied in architecture, art, and music.
Homosexuality, bisexuality, trans* and queer identities and practices which represent a particular challenge to many religious traditions. Heterosexuality provides the normative basis not just for ethics of sexuality and family, but represents the matrix in which beliefs are formulated, taught and practiced. And yet, LGBTQ persons are a part of religious communities, and contribute through their presence to the development of traditions that become more inclusive of diversity. Thus, LGBTQ issues provoke a range of responses in religious traditions, from conservative and prohibitive to welcoming and innovative.

In this class, we will focus on attitudes towards LGBTQ identities and practices in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. We will analyze traditional teachings in response to LGBTQ issues, as well as innovative theological developments. We will also investigate the ways in which LGBTQ persons negotiate what is often considered as a contradiction: their sexual and religious identities. In doing so, we will explore sacred texts, theological discussions, sociological studies and cultural products relating to these three religious traditions in their global diversity. Our goal is to better understand and evaluate the variety of attitudes towards LGBTQ issues and the relevance of religious traditions for personal and communal living.

Focusing on the cultural setting of the individual who is considering or has already chosen military service, this course will explore, primarily from a theological perspective, questions of evil and suffering in addition to the challenges of diversity. Each academic journey will begin with a survey of sacred texts, followed by both traditional and contemporary theological reflection. In particular, the inquiry will examine the topic of military service in both Hebrew Scripture and the New Testament. From this theological foundation, the course will examine the particular ethical implications of just war, focusing primarily on its traditional theological expression (Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas). Recognizing the evolving mission of today’s military forces, our academic journey culminates in an examination of peacebuilding within the context of military service and Christian ethics.

This course will explore the spiritual and religious lives of children and young people, with a focus on Christian/Catholic contexts. In the history of the Christian traditions, children and youth have been stereotyped as angels to be idealized, vulnerable victims to be protected, uncontrollable monsters who need discipline, or not-yet-human beings who require formation. Only recently have theologians begun to examine the complexity and depth of children’s spiritual lives and to consider what children and youth might contribute to how we think about God and religious life. This course draws on several sources: 1) scriptural depictions of Jesus’ interactions with children and young people, 2) theological explorations of Jesus’ childhood for our understanding of God, 3) contemporary theories of children’s and adolescents’ development and spirituality, and 4) contemporary research and writing on children’s and youth ministry. This course is designed to help students reflect on their own spiritual formation while preparing them to understand, walk alongside, learn from, celebrate, and minister to children and young people.
As our country becomes more religiously diverse and remains among the most religiously devout, the need for a more robust understanding of our religious neighbors has become imperative. Independent of our line of work, understanding our religious neighbors is becoming a prerequisite for work and civil life in this country. This class will engage in semester long appreciative inquiry into the faith lives of others. To this end, we will visit places of worship, speak with religious leaders from a variety of religious traditions, read widely across traditions, and seek postures of empathy as we seek to understand and appreciate religious difference in our midst.

Special topic in theology that includes a research paper that critically integrates the student’s study of the discipline of theology.