## The Bible and the Environment
**Dr. Carey Walsh**

**THL 2460-001**  
TR 2:30 – 3:45 pm

*Environmental Studies*

This course explores the biblical perspectives on the environment through a variety of key characters and their relation to the land and other creatures, from Jacob’s genetic engineering of herds to Jesus’ cursing a fig tree. Through attention to the key themes of creation and chaos, human dominion, sustainable agriculture of a Promised Land, and animal theology, we will trace the historical treatment of the ecology in Christian and Jewish theology and then engage contemporary ecological issues such as climate change, biodiversity, and animal rights. This course can be used for an Environmental Studies concentration.

## The Apocalyptic Imagination
**Dr. Adam Hearlson**

**THL 2490-001**  
Wednesday 6:10 – 8:50 pm

The story of the apocalypse with its grand cosmic reversals and overturning, is a story as old as civilization. From the strange visions of Daniel, to the malevolent beasts of John’s Revelation, to the totalitarian gladiatorial competitions of the Hunger Games, the apocalypse provides storytellers with the opportunity to discuss the threats and hopes of communities. In this course, we will examine the apocalypse as a literary genre, a social hope, a political commentary and a form of rhetoric. The class will engage everything from Jewish and Christian apocalyptic stories to more modern iterations of the story in sources like *A Canticle of Leibowitz*, *The Hunger Games*, *Apocalypse Now!*, and *Night of the Living Dead*.

## Modern Christianity: From Vatican II to Pope Francis
**Dr. Massimo Faggioli**

**THL 2550-H01**  
MW 1:30 – 2:45 pm

This course examines the Second Vatican Council in its historical background, its unfolding, and its legacy in contemporary Roman Catholicism.

The first part of the course analyzes the history of Vatican II in its pre-history (theological movements in the early 20th century), announcement and preparation (1959-1962), and unfolding until its end December 1965.

The second part of the course analyzes the most important final documents approved by Vatican II on ecclesiology (*Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*), revelation (*Dei Verbum*), liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), religious liberty (*Dignitatis Humanae*), ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*), and inter-religious relations (*Nostra Aetate*). These documents will be read in the context of a more plural and global contemporary Catholicism in dialogue with non-Catholic Churches, non-Christian religions, and modern culture.

The third part of the course focuses on the first fifty years of application/reception of Vatican II in terms of theological debate on the major issues debated and left open by Vatican II. Special attention will be devoted to the relationship between Vatican II and the pontificate of pope Francis as the first pope who did not take part in any capacity in Vatican II.

The main goals of the course:
• Know what Vatican II is and its importance in the history of Christianity, of Catholicism, and in global history;
• Acquire an historical understanding of the development of theological and religious ideas and specifically of the development of the Catholic theological tradition;
• Comprehend contemporary Catholicism from the perspective of the theological trajectories between Vatican II and today in the sense of recognizing the deep mutual relations and tensions between Catholic theology and the other dimensions of the human experience (culture, science, politics).

The Problem of Evil
THL 3250-001
Dr. Shams Inati
TR 10:00 – 11:15 am
Arab and Islamic Studies

One of the most puzzling issues that the human mind encounters is why it is that a God with absolute knowledge, power, and goodness causes or allows so much evil or even an instance of evil. This issue known as “the problem of evil” is the central focus of this course and is addressed primarily from the point of view of Muslim and Christian philosophers and theologians. Various formulations of this problem will be presented, and various solutions will be drawn from different Islamic and Christian perspectives and periods of thought. Includes videos and possible guest speakers. Fulfills requirement for Philosophy and major and minor in Arab/Islamic Studies.

Pastoral Care of the Sick
THL 3450-001
Dr. Timothy Brunk
TR 4:00 – 5:15 pm

In its mission statement, Villanova University commits itself to “concern for the common good” and a “vigorous and respectful pursuit of truth and wisdom in every area of humanity.” The mission statement further emphasizes the importance of “service experiences” and “compassion for the suffering.” In a similar vein, the mission statement of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies notes “attention to contemporary issues” and “the need for redemption in a world marked by…suffering.” Additionally, the department encourages pursuit of “a wisdom that can serve as a basis for practical and prophetic action,” as well as “acting responsibly in a world where regard and respect for others have become urgent.”

“Pastoral Care of the Sick” is a course being offered in response to these goals. The course will begin with a treatment of the theological understanding of the sacrament of the anointing of the sick, including reading of primary texts on pastoral care from the Roman Catholic Church. The course will continue with a pastoral-theological exploration of the entire range of care provided to the ill and dying. The course will conclude with an examination of the spirituality of caregivers, specifically Christian nurses and other Christian medical professionals. The course thus seeks not only to ground students in the Catholic pastoral / theological tradition of care for those who are ill but also seeks in a special way to prepare pre-med and nursing students at Villanova for the gifts and challenges that await them in their chosen careers.

Materials for this course will include readings and at least one video. As the liturgical calendar of the archdiocese permits, participation in the White Mass and / or other liturgies bearing on the medical profession will also be featured. The course may also feature guest speakers such as chaplains at area hospitals.
### Liberation Theologies  
**Fr. Arthur Purcaro, OSA**  
**THL 3740-001**  
*Latin American Studies*  
*Peace and Justice*

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.

### Church Architecture and Worship  
**Dr. Bernard P. Prusak**  
**THL 3790-001**  
*MW 3:00 – 4:15 pm*

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.

### Ethics of Life and Death  
**Prof. John Groch**  
**THL 4200-100**  
*Wednesday 6:10 – 8:50 pm*

Students will examine contemporary medical-moral issues, especially as they impact both the student's life and society at large. Through critical reflection and informed discussion about these issues on both a theoretical and practical level, the student will develop a personal stance toward each issue. In addition to shaping informed and responsible personal conclusions, social policies will also be evaluated. Early in the course, students will acquire an understanding of key concepts necessary for analyzing issues clearly and comprehensively. Issues treated include abortion, treatment of handicapped infants, death and the dying process (including physician-assisted, or rational, suicide), care for the elderly, organ transplants, genetic engineering/reproductive technologies, human experimentation and patient rights. Special attention will be directed to holistic health care and the internal, natural capacity for self-healing.

In addition to attending class lectures, course work includes readings, class discussion (in class and online, written examinations (2), paper(s), and guest speakers.  
**Required Reading:**  

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<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
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<tr>
<td>THM: Wisdom of Sufism</td>
<td>Dr. Yasemin Akis</td>
<td>TR 11:30 – 12:45 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>THL 4990-001</td>
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“Come, come, whoever you are, wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving, it doesn't matter.”

*Rumi*

Sufism is a mystical belief and practice in which murids (committed one) seek to find the truth of divine love and knowledge through direct personal experience of God. This course offers an introduction to the Sufi thought and culture through the lives and teachings of Sufi thinkers such as Rumi, Yunus Emre, Haci Bektas-i Veli, and Ibn Arabi. Sufi literature’s most influential works will be considered through sample materials and the lives of their writers. During the course we will examine the central concepts of Sufism such as tasawwuf, murid, dervish, pir and sama. The class considers the Sufism’s conceptualization about the development of the self in it’s philosophical roots.

| Sports and Spirituality             | Dr. Edward Hastings | TR 2:30 – 3:45 pm      |
| THL 4990-003                        |                     |                        |

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.

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<tr>
<th>Theology and Poetry</th>
<th>Prof. Scott Grapin</th>
<th>MWF 11:30 – 12:20 pm</th>
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This class will engage poems of faith and the faith of poetry, considering processes of composition and reception, listening in on conversations about poetry’s work in relation to ultimate concerns, and perhaps even experimenting with practices modeled by poets and their craft.

Receptive to what others have thought about the correspondence of faith and poetry (or language more generally), we will conduct our own close readings of poetic projects in various forms and media from diverse contexts and traditions, always curious about how the practice of a poetic sensibility might relate to our own faiths and time.

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<tr>
<th>Islam: History, Thought and Culture</th>
<th>Dr. Shams Inati</th>
<th>TR 11:30 – 12:45 am</th>
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<td>THL 5150-001</td>
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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.

Religion in Russia
THL 5200–001

Fr. Joseph Loya, OSA
MW 3:00 – 4:15 pm

“A nation can be best understood in the light of three main factors … the geography of the land … the history it has experienced … the religion it has embraced.” (Nicolas Zernov)

Course Objectives:
• To provide students with a solid grounding in the History, beliefs, spirituality, and life of religious believers - especially those of the Russian Orthodox Church - as they seek to live and prosper in a modern, complex and pluralistic world.
• To be sensitized to the truth, “The History of the Russian Church cannot be separated from the History of Russia… Even the simplest delineation of the development of the Church inevitably includes a definite attitude toward Russia’s past.” (Alexander Schmemann)
• To obtain a firm grasp of relations between the state and traditional religious bodies in Russia throughout the major periods of Russia’s History.
• Be able to visit a Russian Orthodox church here or abroad without experiencing “culture shock,” i.e., students are to be made confident in knowing the religious worldview that a Russian Orthodox church represents.

Religion, Art and Science
THL 5450–001

Dr. Michael McElwee
MWF 12:30 – 1:20 pm

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.

Devotion in Hinduism and Christianity
THL 6000–001

Dr. Kerry San Chirico / Dr. Rachel Smith
TR 10:00 – 11:15 am

What is it to be devoted to a divine being? How does one cultivate and express such devotion? What are its difficulties, its dangers? How does devotion look in different times and places? Is it a fruitful exercise to compare religious devotion across different traditions, and what of those hybrid traditions that do not fit neatly into a particular religious category?

This class is an interdisciplinary exploration of devotion among marginal women in medieval Europe and contemporary India. Through poetry, song, treatises, film and interviews, we will study the devotional texts and practices of beguines (medieval women who took vows of poverty
and chastity yet remained uncloistered) and contemporary bhaktas (devotees to a God) from Banaras and elsewhere India in order to compare their understanding of devotion, its stirrings, and the object of their affection.

In order to undertake such a comparative enterprise, we will be employing the methods of different disciplines, namely history, anthropology and theology. In exploring the medieval beguines, we will be using historical and theological skills (using textual analysis and narrating findings based on an archive of people now dead). In our study of contemporary bhaktas, we will use material from anthropologists who are building an archive through fieldwork and interpreting devotional texts of Hindu and Christian communities as contemporary cultural products.

In the third portion of the course, you will integrate and apply your historical and anthropological skills by conducting field work in either a Catholic or Hindu community, composing a final narrative in which you not only describe what you find in the devotional lives of a community in Philadelphia, but compare and contrast your observations with what you have learned about devotion among medieval beguines and contemporary Banaras.

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<th>Interfaith Leadership: Engaging Difference and Finding Common Ground</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rev. Dr. Julia Sheetz</td>
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<td>THL 6000-002</td>
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<td>Peace and Justice</td>
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This course introduces students to the interfaith movement in the United States – its history and role in promoting interfaith engagement and cooperation, and shared work for the common good. Through reading, discussion, site visits, guest speakers and experiential opportunities, we will develop religious literacy, skills and appreciative knowledge that will help us address some of these critical questions: What is at stake when people who orient around religion differently interact? How can I dialogue respectfully with someone of a different religious (or non-religious) background? How do I counter prejudice based on (mis)perceptions of religious difference? What is pluralism and how is it different from diversity? What is interfaith leadership and what would it mean for me to embrace this role – as an expression of my own faith or ethical perspective – in my community and vocation? How might interfaith leaders help to overcome the religious divisiveness and polarization of our contemporary culture?

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<th>Attention and Leadership</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Christiane Lang Hearlson</td>
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<td>THL 6000-003</td>
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Paying attention to our lives, and to the people and world around us, helps us become people of spiritual depth, as well as effective leaders. But what exactly is attention? How can we cultivate an attentive spirit amid a busy life and a distracting world? How, as leaders, can we direct and sustain others’ attention? In this course, students will explore the role of human attention in spiritual life and in leadership by learning from scientific and theological perspectives on attention, and by trying out a variety of attentive experiments and practices. The course has six units: (I) Basics of attention and leadership; (II) Mindfulness, discernment, and attention to self; (III) Empathy, listening, and attention to people; (IV) Spirituality, prayer, and attention to God; (V) Delight, responsibility, and attention to the created world; and (VI) Practices of attentive leadership.
In Matthew 16:15 Jesus asks his disciples: “Who do you say that I am?” This course focuses on some of the dizzying array of answers to this question. This will include examining who Jesus was in the context of late Second Temple Judaism, the classical doctrinal answers given to this question by the Church, and various modern-day perspectives on Jesus arising out of the context of non-Western cultures, contexts of suffering and oppression, and contexts of religious pluralism.

“So Long Been Dreaming”:
Science Fiction(s), Theologies, and Social Revolution

“I had crossed the line of which I had so long been dreaming. I was free; but there was no one to welcome me to the land of freedom, I was a stranger in a strange land, and my home after all was down in the old cabin quarter, with the old folks, and my brothers and sisters. But to this solemn resolution I came; I was free, and they should be free also; I would make a home for them in the North, and the Lord helping me, I would bring them all there.” --- Harriet Tubman

This course explores theological constructions in speculative fiction – science fiction, fantasy, superhero fiction, and horror – in literature, film, television, music, short stories, and graphic novels. With particular focus on the concerns, histories, experiences, longings, and creative productions of Black people, we’ll engage alternate notions of time, war and peace, love and hate, health and disease, race, gender, class, and sexuality, and technological development. Ultimately, we will ask ourselves: how does science fiction help us to imagine, then create, another world, where all of creation flourishes?

Research Seminar

Open to Theology Majors and Minors only

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