



There is no better way to pursue the truth than by questioning and answering.
— St. Augustine, *Soliloquies*



Theology and Religious Studies 1000
Faith, Culture and Reason
Foundation Question
What do I believe?

Theology and Religious Studies 1000 is one of a group of five courses that we call the foundation courses. The courses make a Villanova education distinctive and work together to answer a series of related questions:

WHO AM I?

Augustine and Culture Seminar 1000 (Ancients) and 1001 (Moderns)

WHAT CAN I KNOW?

Philosophy 1000:
Knowledge, Reality, Self

WHAT DO I BELIEVE?

Theology and Religious Studies 1000:
Faith, Reason, and Culture

HOW SHOULD I LIVE?

Ethics 2050:
The GoodLife—
Ethics and Contemporary Moral Problems

By seeking answers to these questions, you will conduct an interdisciplinary inquiry that is informed by Augustinian and Catholic intellectual traditions, develop your skills in critical thinking and communication, deepen your understanding of yourself and the world, and engage with issues of personal responsibility and social justice.

Course Details

Days: Tuesday and Thursday
Times: 4:00pm-5:15pm (H03)
Room: Garey Hall 101A

Instructor Information

Dr. Timothy Hanchin
Office: Saint Augustine Center 237
Office Hours: Thursday, 2-4pm – and readily available by appointment
Email: timothy.hanchin@villanova.edu
Phone: (614) 949-7839

Course Overview

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.

Course Description

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.

Student Learning Outcomes

After taking THL 1000, students will be able to:

1. Articulate how faith shapes culture and how culture shapes religious/theological worldviews and the expressions of faith.
2. Explain religious/theological and cultural responses to select fundamental human questions:
 - a. The question of *faith*: In whom do I place my trust? What do I believe?
 - b. The question of *identity*: Who am I? Is faith relevant to my sense of self?
 - c. The question of *community*: How are we related to one another and the environments we inhabit? Does faith make a difference?
 - d. The question of *meaning*: How do I find purpose in the midst of the irreducible diversity of economic, religious, political and cultural systems in an interconnected global community? Does faith make a difference?
3. Read and interpret religious/theological texts, beliefs and practices using scholarly methods:
 - a. Scriptural texts and commentaries;
 - b. Texts of the Catholic/Christian intellectual tradition;
 - c. Diverse voices of contemporary religious/theological thinkers (e.g., women, minorities, non-western);
 - d. Diverse genres or media (e.g., prayer, mystical writings, autobiographies, film, music).
4. Critically evaluate the significance of Christian beliefs, worship, and practices for personal, communal, societal and global living.

Required Texts

In addition to the following, the required readings for this course will be posted on Blackboard.

1. Gregory Boyle, *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Endless Compassion* (NY: Free Press, 2010)
2. *Gaudium et Spes (Joy and Hope)*. This document, also known as *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, is a seminal achievement of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). It is the common text among *all* THL 1000 sections at Villanova. It can be found online at www.vatican.va.
3. Bible, preferably the Revised Standard Version (RSV), 2nd Catholic edition (Ignatius, 2010) An electronic version is available online at biblegateway.com.

Reading Journal

In order to prepare for lively class participation, students will arrive to each class session with a journal entry divided into three columns. The first column, *Substantive Point*, summarizes the central thesis and/or main points of the assigned reading. The second column, *Questions*, includes questions that have emerged based upon the student's engagement with the text. These questions may be for further clarification or discussion. The third column, *Reflection*, contains the student's reflection upon the reading. Reflection may entail a critical assessment of the reading's salient points and/or consideration of life application. I will collect the journals midway through the semester (Tuesday, March 13) and then again at your final exam (Friday, May 11).

Participation

Regular attendance and active participation is crucial in a conversational class. I will take attendance at the onset of each class. An excess of four absences will result in a failing grade. Participation includes active engagement in class discussions based upon the assigned reading. At about the mid-semester point, you will be invited to reflect upon your participation and I will offer feedback. The following rubric is used to determine the participation grade:

A = consistent attendance; demonstrates excellent knowledge of the readings and makes significant and creative contributions to class discussions

B = consistent attendance; demonstrates good knowledge of the readings and makes helpful contributions to class discussions

C = consistent attendance; makes minimal contribution to class discussion; demonstrates little knowledge of the readings

D = attendance; little to no participation in class discussions; demonstrates no knowledge of readings.

F = more than four absences

Electronic Devices

Laptops, tablets, and other information and communication technologies (ICTs) may not be used in class except for the purpose of the class presentation. Following an initial warning, students will be marked absent if using electronic devices during class. Cell phones must be silenced and stowed once students enter the classroom.

Attendance

The quality and success of this course depends upon the participation by all students. A student is allowed 2 unexcused absences per semester. Absences beyond the 2 unexcused will result in the reduction of the final grade by 5%. More than 4 unexcused absences yields a failure (XF) for the course.

The following constitute excused absences: participation in approved athletic events; participation in approved academic events; official university business; approved field trips; certified serious illness; death in the immediate family; or approved placement activities. All other absences are considered unexcused. For an absence to be considered excused, I must be notified via email within 2 days following your absence.

Formal Assessments

Student performance will be assessed in a variety of ways, though written assessment will predominate. Papers will be submitted electronically via Blackboard.

1. Theological reflection essays (20% each/40% total): I will provide the prompt for each essay. Each paper should be 5 pages long, 12-point font, and double-spaced. A detailed grading rubric will be posted on Blackboard.
2. Class presentation (10%): This small group presentation based on Gregory Boyle's *Tattoos on the Heart* will occur during the concluding third part of the course.
3. Final exam (25%): The cumulative final exam will include term identifications and short essays.
4. Participation (10%)
5. Journal (15%)

Grading Policies

Final grades are assigned in accordance with the Undergraduate Grading System. University standards dictate that letter grades are equivalent to the following: A=4.00; A-=3.67; B+=3.33; B=3.00; B-=2.67; C+=2.33; C=2.00; C-=1.67; D+=1.33; D=1.00; D-=.67. Thus, an “A” is “[t]he highest academic grade possible; an honor grade which is not automatically given to a student who ranks highest in the course, but is reserved for accomplishment that is truly distinctive and demonstrably outstanding. It represents a superior mastery of course material and is a grade that demands a very high degree of understanding as well as originality or creativity as appropriate to the nature of the course. The grade indicates that the student works independently with unusual effectiveness and often takes the initiative in seeking new knowledge outside the formal confines of the course.” (Villanova University catalog, pg. 60)

Grades will be updated periodically on Blackboard and assigned according to the following percentage scale: A=94 and above; A-=90-93; B+=87-89; B=84-86; B-=80-83; C+=77-79; C=74-76; C-=70-73; D=61-70; F=60 and below

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to uphold Villanova’s Academic Integrity Policy and Code. Any incident of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences for disciplinary action. For the College’s statement on Academic Integrity, you should consult the Student Handbook. You may view the university’s Academic Integrity Policy and Code, as well as other useful information related to writing papers at the Academic Integrity Gateway website: <http://library.villanova.edu/Help/AcademicIntegrity>

University Resources

Writing tutors are available by appointment or walk-in at the *Villanova Writing Center* located on the second floor of Falvey Library (9-4604).

Office of Disabilities and Learning Support Services

Students with disabilities who require reasonable academic accommodations should schedule an appointment to discuss specifics with me. It is the policy of Villanova to make reasonable academic accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. You must present verification and register with the Learning Support Office by contacting 610-519-5176 or at learning.support.services@villanova.edu or for physical access or temporary disabling conditions, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 610-519-4095 or email Stephen.mcwilliams@villanova.edu. Registration is needed in order to receive accommodations.

Blackboard Assignment

The following instructions will be added to the called “Best Assignments (TRS)” Blackboard elements.

Please submit what you think is the best work you have completed for this course for the entire semester that demonstrates your learning with respect to one or more learning outcomes common to the five Foundational Courses in the LAS Core Curriculum. We will collect some assignments as a way to assess Villanova students' learning over time. Please delete your name and the professor's name and any information about the course from the assignment. Posting the assignment is a requirement for this course.

University Mission and Catholic Social Teaching

The Villanova University Mission Statement concludes: "The University community welcomes and respects members of all faiths who seek to nurture a concern for the common good and who share an enthusiasm for the challenge of responsible and productive citizenship in order to build a just and peaceful world." The notion of the common good emerges from the venerable tradition Catholic Social Teaching (CST) dating back to Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891). The common good, the dignity of the human person, subsidiarity, and solidarity comprise 4 guiding principles of CST. Pope John XXIII described the common good as "the sum total of conditions of social living, whereby persons are enabled more fully and readily to achieve their own perfection" *Mater et Magistra* (1961). In other words, the common good ensures the life conditions for all people to achieve authentic development as human flourishing.

In Part II of the course, we will discuss Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* (2015) as a contribution to the documentary heritage of CST. In addition to course readings, CST animates the pedagogy of THL 1000. In this way, we hope to better approximate the university mission as a community of scholars oriented towards a just and peaceful world. As it regards the principle of the common good, this course practices a dialogic pedagogy so that all voices receive invitation to contribute to the common search for understanding. Conversation may occur in pairs, small groups, or as a class collectively. While the course instructor is the guide, all class participants exercise roles as teachers and learners. As CST insists, the common good privileges voices who have been socially, historically, and politically minoritized. A dialogic pedagogy seeking the common good draws from the dignity of the human person - that all people are created and participate in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-31). Therefore, all class participants and course material should be approached as a source of wisdom and light. A native disposition open to honest and humble conversation is crucial to fruitfully engaging the content of this course.

Class Schedule

(Schedule subject to change as the semester unfolds.)

I. Sources of Faith

Jan 16: Course overview; David Foster Wallace, "This is Water"

Jan 18: John Cavidini, "Why Study God?" in *Commonweal*, 12-18; Herbert McCabe, "Is Belief Wishful Thinking?" in *Faith Within Reason*, 1-16

Jan 23: Terrence Tilley, "Defining Faith" in *Faith: What It Is and What It Isn't*, 26-56

Jan 25: Elizabeth Johnson, "Atheism and Faith in a Secular World" in *Abounding in Kindness*, 20-34

Jan 30: Elizabeth Johnson, "Ancient Story, New Chapter" in *Quest for the Living God*, 7-24

Feb 1: Daniel Harrington, "Reading the Bible Critically and Religiously: Catholic Perspectives" in *The Bible and the Believer*, 80-112

Feb 6: Bible, Genesis 1-2:9; Abraham Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 3-24
Feb 8: Daniel Harrington, *Meeting St. Mark*, 2-26
Feb 13: Bible, Gospel of Mark, 1-8
Feb 15: Class does not meet. Professor is away at AGPM Conference.
Feb 20: Bible, Gospel of Mark, 9-16

II. Faith Seeking Understanding

Feb 22: Essay #1 Workshop
Feb 27: C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, 25-46
March 1: Pope Francis, “The Gospel of Creation” in *Laudato Si*, 45-74 *Essay #1 Due*
March 6: Semester break
March 8: Semester break
March 13: Augustine, *Confessions*, Book II; Charles Hefling, “Why We Mess Things Up” in *Christian Century*, 22-29 *Journals Due*
March 15: Gustavo Gutiérrez, “The Wager,” in *On Job*, 1-18
March 20: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II, Q23, A1; Paul Wadell, “The Christian Life as Friendship with God” in *Friendship and the Moral Life*, 120-141
March 22: Guest Lecturer: Dr. Shams Inati on Islamic philosophy and theology
March 27: Aquinas, *ST* III, Q3, A2; Charles Hefling, “Why the Cross?” in *Christian Century*, 24-27
March 29: Easter break
April 3: Augustine, *De Trinitate* (On the Trinity), X.4; Robert Barron, “Love: God’s Deepest Name” in *And Now I See*, 180-190
April 5: Paul Wadell, “Worshiping Dangerously” in *Becoming Friends*, 15-37
April 10: Essay #2 Workshop

III. Practicing Faith in Our Time

April 12: *Gaudium et Spes*, 23-45,
April 17: Class Presentation Workshop, *Essay #2 Due*
April 19: Gregory Boyle, *Tattoos on the Heart*, Chapt. 1 April
24: *Tattoos on the Heart* *Class Presentations*
April 26: *Tattoos on the Heart* *Class Presentations*
May 1: Review for Final Exam

