

Fall 2024 Theology

Undergraduate Course

Descriptions

**Please check the Master Schedule for accurate course day/times*

THL 1000: Faith, Reason, and Culture (Hastings)

M/W/F 8:30-9:20am, 9:35-10:25am, and M/W 1:55-3:10pm

This course will examine the ways in which experience, faith and culture intersect. Utilizing the searching mode of St. Augustine and the questioning methodology of St. Anselm, we will approach the Catholic Christian faith tradition with an attitude of “faith seeking understanding.” From these viewpoints we will consider what is meant by the notion of God and consider if this notion and faith in general has any relevance for today.

THL 1000: Catholic Studies (Caponi)

M/W/F 8:30-9:20 & 9:35-10:25am

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 faith” proclaimed by the Roman Catholic Church. Through the exploration of primary texts, central ideas, and the historical development of Catholic 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 contours of sacramental worship and prayer, along with the moral life which arises from them; and the relationship between faith and science. Spirited class discussion, the development of a common theological vocabulary, and disciplined reflection upon the relationship of Catholic 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 Catholic answers to the big questions.

THL 1000: Global Religious Experience (Akis)

M/W/F 9:35-10:25am & 10:40-11:30am

The study of religion is the study of a rich and fascinating dimensions of human experience that includes but goes well beyond beliefs and ritual practices. In this dynamic course, students will engage with compelling case studies that illuminate the internal diversity within religious traditions, tracing their evolution across time and space. From ancient civilizations to contemporary societies, we investigate how religions intricately interweave with every facet of human life. With a focus on both Christian and

non-Christian traditions, participants will immerse themselves in the rich tapestry of religious practices, beliefs, and cultural phenomena.

THL 1000: Catholic Studies (Cacchione)

M/W/F 8:30-9:20am & 10:40-11:30am

What is theology? The word “theology” derives from two Greek words. The first, *theos*, means “god” or “God.” The other, *logos*, means “word,” “thought,” or “reason” in the sense of internal logic or order. At its root, then, theology refers to the reasoned, logical study of God. This study raises, probes, and treats as points of departure, some fundamental questions: Who or what is God? How can we human beings—mere mortals—come to know anything about God? What, if anything, can we actually know? Without presuming any prior background in theology, our course aims to sketch high-level answers to these questions and to lay a firm foundation for further study in the form of your upper-level Theology course requirements. For two reasons, we proceed unapologetically from a stance grounded in the Christian tradition generally and characterized by a Roman Catholic perspective specifically. First, the Christian tradition, along with the Christian Church which has preserved it, has been a primary formative influence on our Western civilization for two millennia, and one simply cannot understand our civilization without appreciating its roots and its constitutive elements. Secondly and more deeply, we seek to eschew artificial delimitation of intellectual activity in a manner detrimental to the kind of personal human development which education ought to foster, especially at the university level. The Roman Catholic perspective in particular has long embraced—and continues vigorously to promote—the necessity of an integrated view of the human person as a physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual being. Such a perspective regards education which would deny, dismiss, or denigrate any of these aspects of a person’s being as imbalanced and stunted.

THL 1000: Faith, Reason, and Culture (TBD)

M/W/F 10:40-11:30am & 11:45-12:35pm & 12:50-1:40pm

THL 1000: Catholic Studies (O’Donnell)

M/W/F 11:45-12:35pm

From the singular word “Catholicism” emerge countless definitions, approaches, and expectations. A system of faith, a community of believers, a hierarchical institution, a historical tradition, or a set of moral codes might come to mind. Pinning down just what we mean by the term Catholicism remains an unwieldy task. Our section of this course offers a path into this topic through considering the marks of the Roman Catholic Church: one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, as professed in its creed. Through an exploration of the meanings of, manifestations of, and challenges to these descriptors, we will examine some layers of this ancient, global tradition. Most of our sources for such consideration will emerge out the United States to unpack how Catholicism might be understood and experienced in the context in which we find ourselves studying it. Our readings and discussions will help us to explore Catholicism and its rich mix of beauty, challenge, and grace.

THL 1000: Faith, Reason, and Culture (Bowers)

M/W/F 12:50-1:40pm

This course introduces undergraduate students in the biblical and historic sources, traditions, practices, and major patristic thinkers that have conceptualize Christianity’s evolvement in history and shaped mankind’s civilization, and trying to give answers to the fundamental human questions that underlie religion and contour human search for existence. During this course important issues will be discussed

about the presence and function of religion in the modern society that has shaped our cultural heritage, the problems of religious epistemology, theodicy, the relationship of religious faith to the moral life, the relationships between religion and culture, and the validity of religious claims in the face of intractable religious diversity. Prof. Robert Louis Wilken in his book *The Spirit of the Christian Thought* says, "The Christian religion is inescapably ritualistic... uncompromisingly moral... and unapologetically intellectual. Like all the major religions of the world, Christianity is more than a set of devotional practices and a moral code: it is also a way of thinking about God, about human beings, about the world's history."

THL 1000: Catholic Studies (Williams)

M/W/F 12:50-1:40pm

Christianity is not solely constituted by doctrines and dogmas but by faith in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, who though absent, remains mysteriously present. At least, this is according to many Christians. Human cultures both ancient and contemporary contest the precise significance and identity of Jesus, with some holding him up as a great moral exemplar, a fraud, or, in Catholic theology, God incarnate. Christian doctrine exists as a way to authentically and consistently uphold the personal encounter disclosed in faith, ordering the entire life of the human person towards the mystery of God. Hugh of Saint-Victor (1096-1141), a medieval Christian theologian, wrote that "The Word of God [Jesus] clothed in human flesh appeared visibly but once. Now, each day, this same Word comes to us under the cover of a human voice. To be sure, he makes himself known in different ways, whether it is according to the flesh or the human voice. Yet in a certain way, the voice of the Word must be understood as present as the flesh was so understood then." This course in Catholic Studies will consider how this voice has been encountered through historical debates, prayer, written treatises, classical Christian texts, Scripture, the moral life, and the sacraments. We will examine these aspects of the Catholic tradition as both historical and as living forms of faith, meaning that we will consider how doctrine develops in history and comes to be interpreted by living, breathing human beings. In this sense, our inquiry into this "living voice" will prove fruitful for students regardless of religious belief or confessional perspective.

THL 1000: Faith, Reason, and Culture (Schwartz)

M/W 8:00-9:15am

The animating question of the Faith, Reason, and Culture foundation course is "What do I believe?" In this section of the course, we will critically investigate not only the objects of our belief (the "what") but also, and more fundamentally, the idea of "belief" itself. What is belief? What role does belief play in religion? How does belief relate to action (or, in customary Christian language, how does faith relate to works)? To ways and identities of belonging (e.g., race, ethnicity, culture)? To embodiment? How does our specific cultural context shape our understandings of these relationships? As it turns out, these questions are (at least) as old as Christianity itself, with surprisingly diverse answers found already in the New Testament. Grounded in the Catholic and Augustinian identities of Villanova, we will consider these questions in four stages. First, we will identify our assumptions about belief. What do we actually think about this in the first place? Second, we will contextualize our assumptions about belief. How do ideas that we perhaps think of as stable and timeless in fact reflect historical contingency? Third, we will challenge our assumptions about belief. What other possible views are presented by different religions, cultures, and philosophies? How do concrete problems raise or demand these alternatives? Fourth and finally, we will reassess our assumptions about belief. How, in light of our investigations, might we differently or more productively imagine belief within a Catholic and Augustinian framework?

THL 1000: Global Religious Experience (Buck)

M/W 8:00-9:15am

As an integral part of the Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum, this Foundation course involves students of every religion, culture, and worldview in examining the Augustinian vision of “understanding what we believe” (On Free Choice of the Will 1.4, Augustine). Students will investigate global religious practices, beliefs, spirituality, and traditions that have developed over time in diverse cultural and religious contexts as they explore faith, reason, and culture in their many, textured relationships.

The course will survey religiosity in general and global religions, including Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism, their commonalities, differences, and cultural expressions. The course introduces students to the sources and thought leaders that have shaped responses to the fundamental human questions that underlie all religions and shape the human search for meaning, as well as the influence of history, culture, economics and geopolitics on religion. Students engage religious truth claims, themes, values, and witness as resources for analyzing and critically evaluating contemporary cultural challenges.

THL 1000: Faith, Reason, and Culture (Bolarte)

M/W 8:00-9:15am and 1:55-3:10pm

This foundational course offers students opportunities to describe and interpret the living traditions, beliefs, and practices of the Catholic Church and how they interact in our lives. Students are guided through theological reflection on the diagnosis of current realities and their theological and philosophical underpinnings, as well as the call for personal action

THL 1000: Faith, Reason, and Culture (Yates)

M/W 1:55-3:10pm

“Christian” and “Christianity” are ancient and complex terms (cf. Acts 11:25-27). Questions such as “What does it mean to be a Christian?” will undoubtedly receive various responses depending upon to whom and in what context they are asked.

As an integral part of the Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum, this foundational Theology course asks you to consider several important aspects of what it means to be a Christian (in terms of faith, reason, and faith-based action, i.e., ethics), even as it also asks you to consider several important ways in which Christians have influenced and have been influenced by the cultures in which they have lived. Likewise, this course asks you to analyze several important beliefs and practices that Christians have accepted, both as they have developed through the past twenty centuries and as they continue to develop in our day. This course will do these things via a selection of primary texts, contemporary social commentary (via various media), required communal “faith and culture” events (which will take place during class time), and focused discussions, many of which will draw directly upon either select Christian thinkers or select critics of Christianity or both.

Specifically, this course will look closely at some of Christianity’s attempts to explain itself to itself as well as to both its cultural (i.e., its intellectual, social, and political) skeptics and its overt enemies. This course will also look at some attempts to construct ways of living which regard (traditional) Christianity as irrelevant, outdated, or (intellectually) exhausted. Along the way, this course will model some of the tools necessary for participating in cultural and intellectual debates that directly or indirectly intersect with Christianity’s primary claims and/or values.

THL 1000: Catholic Studies (Walsh)

M/W 1:55-3:10pm

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.

THL 1000: Global Religious Experience (Schrader Polzcer)

M/W 3:20-4:35pm

This course is an introduction to global religions (including Christianity), which will survey these religions' commonalities, differences, and cultural expressions. Students will gain familiarity with "lived religion" in Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, Native American, and indigenous African traditions. Students will also learn how to recognize the complexity and diversity of global religious practices and beliefs, as well as to understand people whose values and senses of the sacred differ from their own. By the end of the course, students will be able to critically read, analyze, and interpret diverse texts and material cultures from various religious traditions, present and past.

THL 1000: Faith, Reason, and Culture (Smith)

M/W 3:20-4:35pm

THL 1000: Faith, Reason, and Culture (Jordan)

M/W 4:45-6:00pm

Undergraduate students in this course will 1. be introduced to an overview of critical Judeo-Christian concepts and discourse, 2. evaluate major ethical frameworks and their influence on theology and culture, and 3. respond to the ethical frameworks explored through affirmation, challenging, or offer alternatives. Further, students will be asked to make logical arguments for their cultural and religious-based positions and identify their influence from the various theological and secular sources explored throughout the semester. The course readings and assignments will encourage creative exploration and experimentation through movies, podcasts, and art. Possible topics that may be explored when applying ethical frameworks are racism, war & genocide, gender & sexuality, and mass incarceration.

THL 1000: Catholic Studies (Faggioli)

M/W 4:45-6:00pm

As an integral part of the Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum, this foundational course introduces you to the rich living tradition of Christianity. This course is a theology course with a particular focus on Catholicism, through the exploration of classic texts (Bible, theology, and Church teaching) and modern scholarship. We will examine key ideas of the Jewish Scriptures, the practice of critical reflection on the person and work of Jesus Christ, the contours of Christian faith and morality, and the relationship between the Church and the world. In the course we engage Christianity as a living tradition of beliefs and practices that have developed over time in local and global cultural and religious contexts.

The focus on Catholicism is not understood in a confessional and identitarian way, but in relationship with other Christian traditions and other faith traditions and in a multicultural and multi-religious world. This course will ask students to engage truth-claims, themes, values, and witness as resources for analyzing and critically evaluating contemporary cultural challenges in light of knowledge and personal experience.

THL 1000: Faith, Reason, and Culture (Kennedy)

M/W 4:45-6:00pm

This course introduces students to methods and approaches in theology that facilitate what Pope Francis calls a “culture of encounter” with the lived experiences of people of faith. Exploring contemplative efforts of medieval monastic communities, the holy silence of contemporary Quaker communities, and connections between contemplative worship and justice work in the Black church, this course encourages students to develop nuanced understandings of silence and contemplation. Through sustained engagement with a diversity of lived religious experience and theological framings of contemplation, we will explore the relevance of theological concepts and religious practices to addressing contemporary global challenges.

THL 1000: Catholic Studies (Murdoch)

T/TH 8:30-9:45am and 10:00-11:15am

THL 1000: Global Religious Experience (Inati)

T/TH 10:00-11:15am

This course examines the nature, history, and development of Islam, including beliefs, rituals, sects, intellectual movements, and political powers, as well as economic conditions and social structures that distinguished, especially in early Islam, the poor and slaves who turned to the religion and away from the aristocrats who persecuted them and strongly opposed the new religion. The commonly misinterpreted Islamic concepts of war and peace will be clarified and the cultural roles, such as those of women will also be discussed.

The course will close with exploring Islam and globalization, a comparison between Islam and Christianity, the impact of Islam on world cultures and the impact of world cultures on Muslims individually and at large. Videos, visits to mosques, and discussions of current events related to the Arab/Islamic world and cultures are included. Fulfills requirement for Africana Studies, major and minor in Arab/Islamic Studies, and Core Theology.

THL 1000: Catholic Studies (Hanchin)

T/TH 10:00-11:15am

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 the Catholic tradition in light of its sources, intelligibility, and practice. This ongoing quest for meaning takes place in conversation with cultures past and present.

THL 1000: Catholic Studies (Loya)

T/TH 11:30-12:45pm

The word “catholic” derives from the Greek term commonly translated as “universal” in the geographical sense; but in original usage it also carries the closely related meanings of “all-embracing” and “integral fullness.” This course employs the Anselmian conceptualization of “Theology” as “faith seeking understanding” in a disciplined manner ordered towards the following:

Understanding the fullness and integrity central convictions Catholic conceptualization of God, human existence and the world, plus the discernment of the relevance of Catholic theology for one's own life, values and worldview.

Identifying and critically discussing key persons, themes, and events in the foundational Bible texts and Catholicism through history, the origins of Christianity within Judaism included.

Providing an informed account of the development and meaning of central Catholic beliefs and ritualized worship forms.

Understanding Catholicism's ecumenical relationships and engagements with the other two Christian Traditions - Eastern Orthodoxy and Reformation Protestantism.

THL 1000: Faith, Reason, and Culture (Lang Hearlson)

T/TH 11:30-12:45pm

This course introduces you to the questions and themes of theology and religious studies and helps you reflect on who you are, how you imagine the world and your place in it, how you encounter mystery, and how others before us have done these things. In it, we will explore the rich living tradition of Christianity. With a particular but not exclusive focus on Roman Catholicism, we will engage Christianity as a living tradition of beliefs and practices that have developed over time in many contexts.

THL 1000: Faith, Reason, and Culture (Joseph)

T/TH 1:00-2:15pm

Competition. Comparison. Jealousy. Rivalry. Envy. Why are we constantly tempted to fall into these forms of interpersonal and social divisions; divisions that disrupt the potential for fulfilling and just relationships with one another? How do we maintain a sense of interior freedom that prevents us from being pulled into these divisive us vs them binaries? In this course, we will explore how responses to these questions lie at the heart of the Christian tradition, especially in light of how “God hears the cries of the poor,” otherwise known as God's preferential option for the marginalized.

We will begin with the theological foundations of this option found in a renewed understanding of God's being and action in history. We will explore how this liberating message begins with the experiences of the Hebrew people and is manifested in the life of Jesus Christ. We will then focus on the impact of Jesus' teachings, particularly the Sermon the Mount, on some of the greatest social movements of the 20th century. How and why did His teachings inspire those of colonized, racialized, and impoverished contexts to fight for justice through nonviolent discipleship? Whether you embrace the tradition, question its relevance, approach in curiosity, or wrestle with faith, all voices are welcomed and find value in this community of learning.

THL 1000: Global Religious Studies (San Chirico)

T/TH 1:00-2:15pm

This course is an introduction to the scholarly study of religion and theology. It is offered as part of the Department's "Global Religious Experience" track, which endeavors to offer broad-based religious literacy to Villanova students, in addition to placing them in a prime position to understand and appreciate a variety of religious traditions as they interact in our globalized context.

In the study of religion, we are not concerned with discovering the "right" beliefs or "true" religion but with understanding how human beings have engaged religious traditions—practices and beliefs—to construct identity and make meaning in their lives. Through your close engagement with the course materials and thoughtful participation in weekly discussions, you will become acquainted with some of the foundational tools that scholars employ to understand the complex realities of "lived religion" in contemporary America. You will also be exposed to some of the rich diversity of modern forms of religious expression, including various forms of Christianity. Whether you are an atheist, an agnostic, or a believer (or somewhere in between you are most welcome).

We begin by addressing some "big picture" questions (What is religion? How do scholars study it?), followed by a multidimensional exploration of the religious dimensions of human experience, organized in seven themes: spirituality, embodiment, materiality, emotion, aesthetics, moral judgment, and narrative. Throughout the semester, Christianity will be put in conversation with other religious traditions. Though our approach will be scholarly and critical, I expect that over the course of semester we will encounter ideas and perspectives that may challenge or deepen aspects of your own inherited or adopted traditions and illumine your experience of religious and cultural life in the 21st century.

THL 1000: Global Religious Studies (Knauss)

T/TH 2:30-3:45pm

As an integral part of the Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum, this Foundation course involves students of every religion, culture, and worldview in examining the Augustinian vision of "understanding what we believe" (On Free Choice of the Will 1.4). Students investigate Christian and non-Christian religious practices, beliefs, and traditions that have developed over time in diverse cultural and religious contexts as they explore faith, reason, and culture in their many, textured relationships.

The course may examine Catholicism theologically, historically, and culturally (Catholic Studies track); explore Christian theological traditions in their cultural contexts (Faith, Reason, and Culture track); or survey religiosity in general and global religions, including Christianity, in particular as well as their commonalities, differences, and cultural expressions (Global Religious Experience track).

With these foci, the course introduces students to the sources and major thinkers that have shaped responses to the fundamental human questions that underlie all religions and shape the human search for meaning. Students engage religious truth claims, themes, values, and witness as resources for analyzing and critically evaluating contemporary cultural challenges.

This section is situated in the Global Religious Experience track. We will encounter and analyze the religious experiences of people and cultures across the globe as they are expressed in films, and use these films as starting points for a broader discussion of the respective religious traditions, their historical developments, contemporary forms, and interactions with other traditions. The course will be seminar-style, and careful preparation of films and readings before class is expected to ensure substantial discussions during the class sessions.

THL 1000: Global Religious Studies (Grainger)

T/TH 2:30-3:45pm

This course is an introduction to the scholarly study of religion and theology. It is offered as part of the Department's "Global Religious Experience" track, which provides a broad-based religious literacy to Villanova students, in addition to placing them in a prime position to understand and to appreciate various religious traditions as they exist and interact in our globalized context. Through your close engagement with the course materials and thoughtful participation in weekly discussions, you will become acquainted with some of the foundational tools of analysis that scholars employ to understand the everyday, "lived religion" of human beings. You will also be exposed to some of the rich diversity of the world's religious traditions, including various expressions of Christianity. We begin by discussing some "big picture" questions (What is religion? How do scholars study it?), followed by a multidimensional exploration of religious dimensions of human experience, organized in seven themes: spirituality, embodiment, materiality, emotion, aesthetics, moral judgment, and narrative. Throughout the semester, Christianity will be put in conversation with other religious traditions. Though our approach will be scholarly and critical, I expect that over the course of semester we will encounter ideas that challenge and help to illumine aspects of your own experience and of modern life more generally.

THL 1000: Catholic Studies (Graham)

T/TH 4:00-5:15pm

This core course introduces you to the sources, traditions, practices, and thinkers that have shaped Catholic responses to God, and we will use resources within the field of Catholic theology to explore the broader thrust of Catholicism as a living tradition of beliefs and practices that have developed over time in a range of cultural contexts.

THL 1000: Faith, Reason, and Culture (Spitaler)

Tuesday 6:15-8:55pm

As an integral part of the Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum, this Foundation course involves students of every religion, culture, and worldview in examining the Augustinian vision of "understanding what we believe" (On Free Choice of the Will 1.4). Students investigate Christian and non-Christian religious practices, beliefs, and traditions that have developed over time in diverse cultural and religious contexts as they explore faith, reason, and culture in their many, textured relationships.

The course may examine Catholicism theologically, historically, and culturally (Catholic Studies track); explore Christian theological traditions in their cultural contexts (Faith, Reason, and Culture track); or survey religiosity in general and global religions, including Christianity, in particular as well as their commonalities, differences, and cultural expressions (Global Religious Experience track). With these foci, the course introduces students to the sources and major thinkers that have shaped responses to the fundamental human questions that underlie all religions and shape the human search for meaning. Students engage religious truth claims, themes, values, and witness as resources for analyzing and critically evaluating contemporary cultural challenges. This particular version of the course explores Christian theological traditions in their cultural contexts (Faith, Reason, and Culture track). Students investigate Christian truth-claims, themes, values, and witness as resources for analyzing and critically evaluating contemporary cultural challenges. 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/religious traditions.

Upper-Level Undergraduate Course Offerings

THL 2490: THM: Exodus in Afro-American Religious Experience (Walsh)

M/W 3:20-4:35pm

The course examines the appropriation of the Exodus in Afro-American religion and culture. The Exodus text and background will be explored through attention to its reception history for primarily Afro-American religious traditions and political expression (e.g., slave religion, Black Theology, Rasta, and the Civil Rights Movement). Key theological motifs of the Promised Land, Redemption, enslavement, Empire, and freedom will be explored in the biblical text and in the subsequent religious expression they inspired.

In this course, students will analyze biblical perspectives on slavery in the Old and New Testaments, and the development of the institution of slavery in America and the Caribbean Islands. Then, students will explore the psychological and spiritual effects of oppression when reading a variety of responses to slavery, in the development of Black Theologies, and the thought of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and James Cone. Importantly, they will learn that the effects of systemic dehumanization do not end with emancipation. Black Theology, in general, privileges religious experience, art, literature, music, and lived narratives. To that end, during the course, students will critically analyze slave narratives, folk and rap lyrics, and films that deal with these motifs.

The course is designated as a diversity credit, specifically:

THL 2900: Themes in US Catholicism: Catholics as Political Insiders (Faggioli)

M/W 3:20-4:35pm

Course will examine the growth of the Catholic Church in the history of the United States. The social and political views and behavior of US Catholics will be the primary focus. After a brief introduction on the diversity of roots in American Catholicism, the course will focus on the history of this community from the minority, immigrant Church of the 19th century to the Catholic Church in the USA as the single, largest Church in the country today. In the semester during the final weeks of the 2024 presidential campaign and election and with close attention to current developments, the course will help students develop an understanding of the historical developments 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 period from the Civil War to today, including the election of the second Catholic president of the USA, Joe Biden, in 2020.

THL 3400: Sacraments (Brunk)

M/W/F 9:35-10:25am

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, Confirmation, and Eucharist in greater detail. Some of you may not be Catholic or even Christian. Some of you who may be Catholic may not be familiar with the aspects of Catholic worship this course will address. I will always try not to presume too much about what students already know. Everyone is welcome.

THL 3790: THM: What am I? God, Self, and World (Delio)

T/TH 6:00-7:15pm

What is the human person? How do we define human nature? How we understand these questions influences our understanding of God and world. Today, the term “posthuman” signifies the rise of a new understanding of subjectivity. Deep relationality marks the holism of nature, and since humans are a complex facet of nature, deep relationality distinguishes human identity. We have a transpersonal capacity for new life; yet we are grounded in the radical immanence of a sense of belonging to and being accountable for a community. Humans are part of a deep relational wholeness that is characteristic of nature itself. Humans belong to nature; we are part of nature’s becoming. This course situates the human person within the flow of evolution, that is, within the epic and drama of space-time. The human phenomenon recapitulates the cosmic process and is open to fulfillment up ahead. Seeing the human as part of a larger dynamic relational whole in evolution allows us to question the complexities of the human, including the material, spiritual, and conscious levels of personhood, and the significance of God in relation to the fulfillment of personhood. Hence, we will explore the theology of the human person from the perspectives of science, psychology, ecology, posthumanism and the new materialisms. Questions of body, soul, spirit and ecological life will be engaged, as we reorient the human person within the wider networks of nature. Opening up new ways of understanding the human person will open up new ways of understanding God in a world of change.

THL 3790: THM: Mary/Saints: A Course on Grace (Murdoch)

T/TH 1:00-2:15pm

THL 4490: THM: Stewardship of Creation: Sustainability and Environmental Justice (Purcaro)

T/TH 8:30-9:45am

This course presents Catholic Social Teaching on the environment, centering on Pope Francis’ Encyclical *Laudato Si*, “On Care for our Common Home” and enhanced by *Laudate Deum*, Praise God. The course follows the methodology employed in the Encyclical: See-Judge-Act; and encourages involvement in sustainability activity by students. We will treat the Sustainable Development Goals identified by the community of nations and how achieving them depends highly on an ethos of sustainable living. The SDG’s will be presented in relationship to the seven goals promoted by the *Laudato Si* Action Plan of the Dicastery for Integral Development of the Vatican. We will consider the particularly Augustinian contribution to this topic.

THL 4550: The Contemplative Tradition (Laird)

T/TH 11:30-12:45pm

How do we search for God who is already, as St. Augustine says, “closer to me than I am to myself”? This course is a sustained exploration of this very question. By examining ancient Christian texts on the cultivation of inner calm, inner vigilance, and recollection in the face of whatever life brings our way we will come to a deeper understanding of the roots of anxiety, self-doubt, self-loathing, depression, among other inner afflictions. But more than just this, we will learn that there is something practical to do about this suffering: the ancient art of the practice of contemplation. Like Buddhism and Hinduism, Christianity likewise has a sophisticated tradition of cultivating interior stillness and peace by drawing to stillness the inner noise that creates and sustains not only much of the suffering and anxiety within each of us but also maintains the sense that God is far away (or doesn’t exist at all). This interior stillness

facilitates the deepening of personal identity and ultimately the overcoming of the sense of separation from God and others. Union with God is not something we acquire but gradually come to realize has always been the case.

THL 4990: THM: Sports and Spirituality (Hastings)

T/TH 8:30-9:45am

This course will explore the many ways sports can help us become more whole persons and link us more closely with God. By reflecting, reading and discussing students will discover the connections between mind, body and spirit that are inherent in sports. The class will use movies, videos, guest speakers to help us explore these themes and topics.

THL 4990: THM: Contemplate, Create, Repeat (Mell)

Monday 6:15-8:55pm

Creativity and contemplative practices, both growing phenomena in theological and religious studies, have particular potential to infuse our daily lives with a palpable sense of the Spirit's presence. In this intensive seminar, we explore their profound impact on our awareness and every aspect of our daily lives. This seminar is designed to deepen your attention to your heart's ways of knowing and seamlessly integrate contemplative and creative practices into your academic pursuits and the world beyond, both during and after your studies here at Villanova. Throughout this seminar, we will study the roots of contemplative practices and how they inspire every facet of our existence, inviting us to breathe in the essence of the Divine. We will learn and practice reflective and lectio divina styles of reading, writing, gazing, and listening, allowing us to cultivate a more profound understanding of our world—and all its inhabitant's—underlying beauty. At the culmination of your journey, you will embark on a unique expressive arts project, sharing your creative insights with your fellow participants at the semester's end.

THL 5003: THM: Theology of Thomas Aquinas (Caponi)

M/W/F 10:40-11:30am

St. Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1225-1274) is one of the towering figures of world culture, and arguably the greatest Christian thinker (perhaps St. Augustine beats him by a nose). His works include prayers, homilies, and hymns; Biblical commentaries; expositions of Aristotle; treatises on disputed theological topics such as creation, evil, and the soul; and two systematic expositions of Christian belief – Summa contra Gentiles and Summa Theologiae – which serve as standards for all subsequent theology. To read his works, to enter his mind and see the world as he does, is a challenging and exhilarating intellectual experience.

THL 5003: THM: The Church and Transformation (Getek Soltis & Joseph)

M/W 1:15-3:10PM

In this course, students will uncover histories of change within the Roman Catholic Church. This course will take place during a remarkable moment in the Church's history - the Global Synod on Participation, Communion, and Mission - which has been unfolding around the world since October 2021 and culminates in October 2024 with a gathering of the world's Bishops in Rome. This course will explore the dynamics of constancy and adaptation in the Church's history and will recognize the contributions of lay people, particularly women, in advocating for change around a variety of issues: sexism, racism,

peacebuilding, environmental justice, gender justice, etc. We will first examine how the Second Vatican Council led to immense changes in the Catholic church during the 20th century. We will also learn from global thought leaders about the history, process, and viability of "synodality" as a way of being a global Church in the 21st century. Students will explore these ideas on the ground in Rome during Fall Break, along with pilgrims from around the world headed there to witness the culminating days of this three-year process. Whether you embrace the tradition, question its relevance, approach in curiosity, or wrestle with faith, all voices are welcomed and find value in this community of learning.

NOTE: Permission of Instructor required. This is an embedded course that includes a trip to Rome, Italy during Fall Break. There are additional travel fees of \$2,000 associated with this course which includes airfare and lodging. \$450 of this fee is non-refundable. Need-based scholarships are available. Students must also enroll in THL 6200-001 (Service Learning Practicum, 1-credit) as a co-requisite for this course.

THL 5003: THM: Hispanics in the US Catholic Church (Bolarte)

M/W 3:20-4:35pm

This course examines a theology that takes as its starting point the everyday, communal, and liberating experience of faith of the Hispanic people of God in the United States. Hispanic theology has prided itself on basing its reflection close to the pastoral reality of the church. Through theological reflection, the students explore the integration of culture and faith. The course incorporates the role of church documents that provide direction for effective ministry among culturally diverse communities.

THL 5003: THM: Pope Francis' Vision of Church (Lydon)

T/TH 8:30-9:45am

We live in a time of accelerated change and moral challenge. How does the Catholic Church respond to these signs and at the same time remain faithful to the gospel of Christ and stay relevant in our present world? It is often said that that Church does not have a mission, rather a mission has a Church. What is that mission of proclaiming the Good News to our present world? How do diversity and equality relate in a global perspective? Pope Francis has challenged the Church to look at our world and revision the Church's outreach in fidelity to its long tradition. There is much controversy in some sectors of Church and society about possible changes. But what does he actually say? What is the challenge of Christ's Church in its service to humanity. How does this challenge our own thinking? This course will explore seven main themes in the pope's writings and why this is considered by some as a paradigm shift for the Church in the 21st Century.

THL 5004: THM: Theology Capital and Injustice (Grimes)

T/TH 10:00-11:15am

In the present course, we will explore what theology has to offer by way of a critique of capitalism, as manifested historically and in the present, with a focus on recognizing, understanding, and undoing the structural injustices endemic to its logic and systems. Christianity's 'preferential option for the poor' and vision of the 'reign of God', based upon Jesus of Nazareth's life and ministry, as well as Catholicism's holistic worldview, offer a fundamental reproach to the flawed anthropological assumptions of capitalism, as a political and economic system; while offering alternative ordering principles, orientation, and living witness to a truly just vision of society, marked by love of God, neighbour, and all of Creation. We will engage thinkers who offer fundamental insights as to the violence, exploitation, and systemic abuse of power, essential to capitalism, particularly in its Neoliberal form; linking these insights to real-world examples of how this affects all people, but especially the oppressed and marginalized; while envisioning and experimenting with socially just models and understandings that can bring about

authentic societal transformation. These models are based upon a combination of virtue ethics, new economic approaches, the thought of Thomas Aquinas, Catholic Social Teaching, and an understanding of Jesus's vision of the reign of God.

THL 5004: THM: Race, Gender & Christian Bioethics (Kennedy)

Wednesday 6:15-8:55pm

This course engages the intersection of Christian bioethics and Christian social ethics with a focus on structural injustices related to racial and gender discrimination in healthcare. From disparities in access to the physical toll of racism and sexism, the course will delve into the array of ways that inequalities persist in healthcare domestically and globally. The course will reflect on historical horrors of racial and gender discrimination in medicine, including the eugenics movement, forced sterilizations, and the Tuskegee syphilis study. In exploring contemporary biotechnologies, including gene editing and algorithmic medicine, we will consider what Christian commitments related to justice, human dignity and embodiment can contribute to public discourse on medicine, healthcare, and the common good.

THL 5004: THM Popular Spirituality (Mell)

100% Online Asynchronous

This course provides an opportunity to explore the role spirituality plays in North American popular expressions such as music, television, film, art, sports, entertainment, or fashion. We will place spirituality into dialogue with popular culture to understand the complex relationship between the two. The course asks to what extent contemporary practices of Christian spirituality might better engage popular culture and to what extent these practices already reflect the values, patterns, and practices of popular culture. Thus, we will attempt to study spirituality and popular culture not as polar opposites but as complementary and/or competing sources from which people shape their senses of identity, belief, and meaning and through which they construe and configure their spiritual quest.

THL 5004: THM: Black Theology and Black Power (Lucky)

M/W 4:45-6:00pm

Even as a Christian Nation, The United States engages in a long-standing practice of the production and consumption of "Racist Ideas." In this course, we will explore the implications of "Racist Ideas" historically imbedded within the American legal system and government policies. We will juxtapose those ideas and practices against the backdrop of American/African-American History. We will examine how Christianity and the United States Justice System have been used as a means to justify slavery and the recurring discriminatory practices that are still seen today. As we study together, we will engage the Bible, historical literature, visual art and films to explore key topics from a Theological perspective (to include: racism, antiracism and humanity).

THL 5004: THM: Technology, Religion & Human Person (Delio)

T/TH 4:00-5:15pm

We are living in the midst of a significant evolutionary epoch. The artificial separation between humans and cosmos brought about by the alienation of religion from modern science lies at the heart of our moral confusion. We are not sure where we are going and if we are going together. Science, religion, and technology can work together for a new religious vision on a new level of consciousness, if we understand how these areas are related. The age of the individual is coming to an end; thanks to computer technology, we are on the cusp of human evolution. A new type of person is emerging and with this new personhood, there is a new religious consciousness that corresponds to trends in

transhumanism and posthumanism. Transhumanists envision in the future a seamless skin of electronic mind, a betterment of humanity toward the superhuman. In some ways, it mimics the spiritual quest for perfection or union with God. Is artificial intelligence evoking a new type of religion or is it replacing traditional religion? One of our challenges today is how technology and religion can relate to each other for the good of the earth. We live in an information age where technology and human life are now seamlessly interactive. What are we becoming with our technologies, and is our human becoming helpful or hurtful to the good of the planet? Where is God in the drive for technological perfection? This course will explore the impact of information technology on human personhood, in light of evolution. We will first look at the meaning of human personhood from the perspectives of spirituality, philosophy and culture and then examine personhood in light of social media, robotics and new trends in artificial intelligence. Our discussions will be oriented around the questions: What is the human person? What do we hope for as persons in relationship? Can technology help us create a better world and, if so, what will be the role of religion in the future?

THL 5005: THM: Global Religious Experience (TBD)

M/W/F 8:30-9:20am

THL 5005: THM: Religious Traditions of Middle East (Akis)

M/W/F 11:45-12:35pm

Understanding the modern Middle East is almost impossible without first developing an appreciation for the importance of its diverse religious traditions, and the role that religion has played in the development of the region since antiquity. This course offers a comprehensive examination of the multifaceted ways in which religion has functioned within Middle Eastern societies, spanning from ancient, pre-Islamic practices to contemporary dynamics. We begin our journey by unraveling the rich tapestry of religious heritage, including the Zoroastrianism of the Persian Empire, the evolution of Judaism among the ancient Israelites, and the spread of Christianity within the eastern Roman Empire. Throughout the semester, our exploration aims to cultivate a deeper awareness and understanding of the myriad factors contributing to the vast diversity of experiences among the peoples of the Middle East. Through the lens of religion, we dissect the intricate interplay of historical, cultural, and socio-political forces that have shaped the region. From religion's instrumental role in conquests, kingdom formations, and empire building to its enduring influence as a cultural force transcending religious boundaries, we analyze the pervasive impact of religion on the fabric of Middle Eastern societies. This course invites students to critically engage with the complexities of religious heritage and contemporary dynamics, gaining insights into the profound significance of religion as a powerful force shaping the identity and destiny of the Middle East.

THL 5005: THM: Orientalism and Religion (Akis)

M/W/F 12:50-1:40pm

The concept of Orientalism, as articulated by the influential literary scholar Edward Said in his seminal work "Orientalism" (1978), encapsulates a Western framework for exerting dominance, restructuring, and asserting authority over the Orient. Said defines it as "the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient." Grounded in a meticulous examination of Said's foundational text, this course critically engages with the manifold ways in which Orientalism has profoundly influenced perceptions of religion in the Middle East. From interrogating the nexus between Orientalism and

religion to scrutinizing critiques of Said's thesis, this course endeavors to illuminate overlooked dimensions of inquiry within his discourse. Moreover, we will explore the contemporary Western conceptions of Orientalism and how they continue to shape attitudes towards the Middle East and its religious traditions. To unravel misconceptions perpetuated by Orientalist frameworks, we will employ a diverse range of mediums, including Western movies, art, and music. By analyzing portrayals of the Middle East in popular culture, we aim to deconstruct stereotypes and challenge preconceived notions, fostering a more nuanced understanding of the region and its religious dynamics.

THL 5005: THM: Lived South Asian Religions (San Chirico)

T/TH 4:00-5:15pm

An examination of the way adherents live their religions in South Asia today through lectures, texts, discussions, films, visits to local South Asian religious communities, and music. In this course we will examine Hindu traditions, Islam, Sikhism, and Christianity, and their inter-relations, as well as broader issues involved in the study of religion. An underlying assumption of the course is that South Asia is religio-culturally plural and religious boundaries are porous; their interactions and exchanges have been on-going in the Indian subcontinent long before the category "religion" came into being. In order to facilitate knowledge of religions on the ground, we will chart our course through the Indian civil or Saka calendar, from August to December. Festivals, holidays, and seasons thus serve as touchstones for the course, grounding our study in time and space—just as they do for adherents.

The phrase "lived religions" reflects the dominant methodology of the course, which is a special focus on how ordinary people engage, express, experience, negotiate, construct, and generally do their religious lives. So while we do not want to naively pit belief against practice or "religious elites" against "ordinary folk," we are cognizant that beliefs do not necessarily translate into practices, that texts deemed religious are not the primary way to understand a religion and its adherents, or that what constitutes "real" religion is determined by religious authorities who safeguard institutionally endorsed teachings and practices.

THL 5005: THM: Bible as Literature (Anolik)

T/TH 2:30-3:45pm

The Bible represents many things to its many readers: moral guidance, history, science, spirituality, religion, ritual. The Bible is also a great work of literature, presenting powerful and complex figures, and unfolding narratives filled with love and hate, despair, and exaltation. In this course we will explore the Bible as a literary text, embarking upon the approach outlined in Robert Alter's *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, and applying the approach to selected biblical readings. Additionally, we will consider literary texts that situate themselves within the canon of biblical literature, texts that retell some of the most profound stories in the Bible. We will begin with the biblical stories of the first human family: Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel, and then read Mark Twain's whimsical *Diaries of Adam and Eve*, which develops the questions of gender roles raised by Gen 1-4. The theme of family tensions – and of social tensions – between the young and the old reappears in the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac, and in the retelling by the Israeli poet Yehudah Amichai in "The Real Hero." Turning to the book of Exodus, we will read responses to the story of the Hebrews' escape from Egypt: the Gospel song, "Go Down Moses" and Laura Range's poem, "Horse and Rider." Before leaving the Hebrew Bible, we will read the complicated story of David the king and Jonathan the prince, considering a queer-theory and political approach to this narrative. Turning to the Christian Bible we will read the story of Susannah (Apocrypha; Catholic Bible – Daniel 13), a surprising modern tale about gender and power. Next, we will consider Jesus's parables as a set of complex short stories, following the argument of Levine's *Short Stories by Jesus*. Finally, we will read sections of the Gospels and consider literary approaches to the story of Jesus; T.S.

Eliot's poem, "Journey of the Magi"; A.S. Byatt's short story "Christ in the House of Martha and Mary." As we read the diverse group of literary texts throughout the semester, we will consider how they rework, challenge, and illuminate the literature of the original biblical narratives. Most biblical readings will be accompanied by the writings of scholars, most notably Robert Alter, Richard Friedman, and Harold Bloom.

THL 5005: THM: Russian Religious Cultures (Loya)

T/TH 4:00-5:15pm

It is said that a nation is best understood in knowing the geography of the land it inhabits, the history it has experienced and the religion it has embraced (See Nicholas Zernov, *The Russians and Their Church*, Ed. III, pp. 3-4). During the past few decades, the Russian Orthodox Church has sought to heighten its profile and influence, domestically and abroad. ROC faithful and all Russian religionists have come to know themselves as subjected to the same issues and tensions that challenge believers everywhere: they, too, have been preoccupied by the central question of how to live a life of faith in the midst of ever-changing political and social conditions; of how to be at one and the same time loyal citizens and dedicated members of their religious communities; of where to draw the line between church and state. This course is intended to provide the student with an introduction to the history, mind, spirit and life of Russian Orthodoxy as it has equipped its adherents to thrive in this modern, complex and pluralistic world of ours. Not neglected are studies of other official "traditional" religions of Russia: Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism. Of importance is the current war in Ukraine: class material will treat historical and religious dimensions of this terrible war.

THL 5100: THM: Presence & Absence of God (O'Donnell)

M/W/F 12:50-1:40pm

In this course, we will explore meanings, perceptions and experiences of God through a close look at literary writing. Who is God? How do human beings seek and encounter God? Where might God be found and in what contexts might it feel impossible to locate God? Using a variety of genres, but with a focus on poetry, short stories, and essays, students will investigate these questions through a study of human relationships, death and grief, joy, mystical experience, nature, and other aspects of human life.

THL 5150: Islam: History, Thought, Culture (Inati)

T/TH 11:30-12:45pm

This course examines the nature, history, and development of Islam, including beliefs, rituals, sects, intellectual movements, and political powers, as well as economic conditions and social structures that distinguished, especially in early Islam the poor and slaves who turned to the religion from the aristocrats who strongly opposed it and persecuted the former groups. The commonly misinterpreted Islamic concepts of war and peace will be clarified and the cultural roles, such as those of women will also be touched upon where appropriate. Videos, virtual visits to mosques, and discussions of current events related to the Arab/Islamic world are included. Fulfills requirement for Africana Studies, major and minor in Arab/Islamic Studies, and Core Theology.

THL 5160: Sufism (Inati)

T/TH 2:30-3:45pm

THL 5410: THM: Theology and Film (Yates)

Thursday 6:15-8:55pm

Film has always been used as a means for both raising and answering questions that are central to the Western intellectual tradition: Who (or what) is God? Is God really at work in the world? Is there a point to our existence? Why do we suffer and how should we respond to it? What is belief and how should one's convictions be lived out? What does it mean to pursue justice and love in an obviously imperfect world?

This course will establish multiple connections between (mostly) Christian theology and film and will sample some of the ways that filmmakers "do" theology. Following an orientation to film analysis and critique via reading and discussing some relevant literature, this course will view, analyze, and evaluate (both verbally and in writing) films and filmmakers that have demonstrated theological sensitivity and/or interest in theological questions and themes. It will also analyze the diverse representations of theology in film and the ways in which film stimulates theological reflection—whether that stimulation was intentional or not.

This course's overarching goal is to enhance the student's ability to integrate the complexities that are consistently (if not constantly) generated by the interplay between faith and culture whenever film makers, again, whether intentionally or not, integrate religious and/or theological themes and questions into their art.

THL 6000: THM: Power Dynamics in the New Testament (Cacchione)

M/W/F 11:45-12:35pm

Composed within the century after the death of Jesus of Nazareth, the literature of the New Testament constitutes a collection of documents authored by, and addressed to, people typically outside the social, political, military, economic, and religious power structures of their day—members of an upstart offshoot of Judaism, itself a small religion marginalized in the Roman world due to its non-syncretistic monotheism and its adherents' apparent social aloofness and self-segregation. As such, New Testament-era Christians truly constituted a marginalized minority within a marginalized minority, rendering the widespread dissemination and the survival of their literature a historical marvel which affords a precious glimpse into how, and to what extent, this marginalized minority might reflect—or seek to subvert—reigning religious, cultural, and political power dynamics in their societies. Historically informed attention to the power dynamics within the societies of these New Testament-era Christians can foster in today's believers deeper appreciation for the radically novel nature of the Christian message and the commitment of early Christians to it. For precisely this purpose, the course, after exploring some orienting introductory material, will address two broad areas.

First, a survey of the historical experience of Palestinian Jews from the time of the Maccabean Revolt through the end of the New Testament era will illuminate applicable structures of political and religious power and influence which contextualized the activity of Jesus of Nazareth and conditioned the religious environment of Jesus' disciples after Jesus' execution. Secondly, an examination of the impact of overarching superstructures of Hellenistic culture and imperial Roman political governance on the thought and teaching of Jesus and Jesus' disciples will inform analysis of various Christian reactions to Roman governance in New Testament literature, which was generally written for and by Christians in Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor (present-day Turkey), and Greece. This analysis will also incorporate relevant insights from postcolonial theory yet eschew uncritical and anachronistic application of all aspects of postcolonial theory to first-century contexts. Assigned readings from secondary sources will introduce these various topics, and regular and frequent consideration in class of relevant biblical passages (primarily from the New Testament) will illustrate and animate them. Supplementing typical Christian awareness of profoundly holy and exemplary New Testament protagonists with a fuller

recognition of their unenviable worldly status in their own day will enrich contemporary believers' understanding of the theological messages of the New Testament and potentially prompt further assessment of how to apply those messages meaningfully in our own time with its own social and cultural challenges and struggles.

THL 6000: THM: Bible and Sustainability (Abubakar)

M/W/F 9:35-10:25am

In the opening chapters of *On Christian Teaching* (I.1-5), Augustine argues that everything that exists can be divided into two groups: things to be used and things to be enjoyed. "To enjoy a thing," he proposes, "is to rest with satisfaction in it for its own sake" (I.4). "With satisfaction" is a critical qualification. We desire and pursue many things that do not satisfy. To settle for what fails to satisfy is a form of despair. People struggling against despair desperately search for something to pacify their voracious appetites and end up fleeing from one idol to the next since none can save them. Hence our restless hearts. Augustine insists only one thing we can truly enjoy- one thing we are able to rest in with satisfaction. The true objects of enjoyment then are the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Everything and everyone else is to be desired according to its usefulness for enjoying of God. However, many important questions about the use and enjoyment of a thing or person remain open. How are we to use the resources of the earth? Are we meant to dominate the earth or be stewards?

This course will focus on what the Bible teaches us on sustainability in relation to the created world especially the place and role of humans. Another part of this course will examine practical environment issues around sustainability, such as the human root of the ecological crisis, actors in global environmental governance, and environmental governance ideas.