

THL 1000 Faith, Reason, and Culture

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 (Capon)

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?

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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 test 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 time 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 emotions? 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?

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 traditions, 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 Experiences (Shrader 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 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 cultural 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

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 religious world. This course will ask students to engage traditions, 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 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

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 “universal” 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

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 ~~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

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 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)

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 spacetime. The human phenomenon recapitulates the cosmic process and is open to fulfillment up ahead. Seeing the human as part of a larger dynamical 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 nature 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 (P.2.3 Gial3aO Jah)

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 hell, 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

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

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

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 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/TH4:00-5:15pm

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). 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, 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

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 shou

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 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*, 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" (1.4). "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