COURSE PROFILE

Course No: FC 5303-N (2432) CG 7326 (2930)
Course Title: VIRTUE: PERSONAL AND CIVIC
Semester: Fall 2014 (Aug. 28 – Dec. 4, 2014: Thurs., 5:30 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.)
UST Main Campus – Malloy Hall – Room 023
(Thurs., October 2, 2014 – No class; reading assignment)
Instructor: DONALD S. NESTI, CSSp
713-942-5069 (nesti@stthom.edu)

Course Description:

Christian discipleship implies not only an initial conversion and acceptance of God in faith, but a total transformation of the Christian, created in the image of God, into the likeness of Christ. This process of transformation can be spoken of as a life of growth in virtue; the process of integration of all of one’s faculties, attitudes and behavior through a total loving response to God by living out Christ’s one commandment to love one another as he loves us in the community of the human family.

American political life, in attempting to separate religion from politics, has at times separated politics from ethics and the development of virtue. This course will argue that such separation, however well-intentioned, cannot sustain effective civic life and in fact runs the risk of falling into authoritarianism. Contemporary American individualism also creates the myth that private and public life are unrelated. In classical and mediaeval times and in the founding of the United States of America, certain personal virtues were thought to be the foundation for a healthy civic and political life. The course will seek to deepen the student’s understanding of the pursuit of happiness, the “good life” and the “good society.” It will seek to show how the virtues presumed in the founding of the republic are still necessary for the American way of life. We will show how political theories are rooted in assumptions about what constitutes the human person and how the human person is related to society. The presumption is that good people make a good society.

The course seeks to provide students with an understanding and appreciation of how the virtue of citizens is necessary for the building of a just and humane society. By looking at how several important thinkers have approached this issue it will seek to provide the analytical tools needed to form a critical judgment about practical possibilities for our society.
Topics to be discussed:

After Virtue: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5: Present moral condition today:
- Emotivism (expressive individualism)
- Enlightenment and consequences of the failure of enlightenment project.
- Is there something beyond this? Where do we go?

Politics: (Aristotle) Polis, telos, physis, politike, politeia, living well in society

The Virtues: (Guardini) Chapters 1, 2, 3

The Four Cardinal Virtues and Faith, Hope and Love:
- Essence of four cardinal virtues
- Three theological virtues
- After Virtue: Chapters 6-13: Changes and growth in cultural understandings of
  - Virtue
  - Virtue in heroic societies
  - Virtue in Athens
  - Reflections on Aristotle
  - Summarize and contrast how virtue develops

Faith, Hope, Love: Theological Virtues

Virtuous Leadership and The Virtues: Formation of Character through the virtuous life.

Required Texts:

- The Virtues. Guardini. (Will be handed out.)

Supplemental Texts:

Get Goodness: Virtue is the Power to Do Good. Michael Hickey. 13-9780761854579.
Ten Universal Principles: A brief Philosophy of the Life Issues. R. Spitzer, 978-1-58617-475-0
# Class Overview and Assigned Readings
(Handouts will be posted on blackboard.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Overview</th>
<th>Assigned readings will be discussed during the class listed with the readings.</th>
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| 1     | Aug. 28  | • Introduction and overview  
      |                    | • What is Virtue and how is it related to the good life?  
      |                    | • CCC 1720-1728  
      |                    | • Declaration of Independence  
      |                    | • George Washington – Virtues  
      |                    | • Benjamin Franklin – Virtues  
      |                    | • Review Culture: Attitudes and Practices                                  | Consensus in the Declaration of Independence  
      |                    |                                                                                         | *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*  
      |                    |                                                                                         | 1720-1729  
      |                    |                                                                                         | George Washington – Virtues  
      |                    |                                                                                         | Benjamin Franklin - Virtues                 |
| 2     | Sep. 4   | *Revelation* – Discuss Present Day Moral Condition                        | *Revelation* (Flannery O’Connor)  
      |                      |                                                                                 | *After Virtue*, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |
| 3     | Sep. 11  | • Pursuit of Happiness: Individual and Societal                            | *Politics*, Books 1, 2 (1260b – 1262b; 1266a; 1267a; 1268b; 1273a) and Book 3 |
      |                      | • Define: Epicureans, Stoics, American Individualism.                      |                                                                                 |
      |                      | • Orientation, overview and introduction to *Politics*                   |                                                                                 |
| 4     | Sep. 18  | Conflate *Politics*                                                       | *Politics*, Books 4, 5, 6, 7 (skip 1330a-1331b), and 8                      |
| 5     | Sep. 25  | *After Virtue* – passion                                                  | *After Virtue*, Chapters 6 – 13                                               |
| 6     | Oct. 2   | NO CLASS; READING ASSIGNMENT                                              | *The Four Cardinal Virtues* – Read text and develop summary points for each chapter to discuss in class on October 9. Prepare one copy of the summary points to turn in at the beginning of class on October 9. |
| 7     | Oct. 9   | Lecture and Discussion of prepared summary points on *The Four Cardinal Virtues* | *The Four Cardinal Virtues* – turn in copy of summary points at beginning of class. |
| 8     | Oct. 16  | Lecture and Discussion continues on *The Four Cardinal Virtues*           | *The Four Cardinal Virtues*                                                    |
Class Format:
The class will meet once weekly. The first part of each meeting will consist of discussion of assigned readings from the required texts. The second part of each meeting will consist of lecture and discussion of topics under the headings given in the outline above.

Course Requirements:
- Attendance at all classes (on time)
- 30% of grade: reading, preparation of materials assigned (including written summary points for October 9th class) and participation in class discussion
- 30% of grade: Paper – must be turned in by due date.
- 40% of grade: Final Examination.
Specifications for Paper:
The paper will consist of a reflection of one of the texts: *Virtuous Leadership*, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, or *The Virtues*. The student will use materials from the course to offer insights within the reflection. Papers should be:

- 10 pages in length
- Typed, double spaced in New Times Roman, font number 12 with one inch margins
- It will follow MLA writing guidelines (include your name and page number in the header on each page)
- A hard copy of the paper is to be turned in at the beginning of class on November 20.

Papers will be graded on the student’s ability to read and understand the assignment, on clarity of expression, correct grammar, accuracy and depth of understanding of the issues under consideration.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY (*University of St. Thomas Policies & Procedures, Student Handbook, Section 3.*)

1. Definition
Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

- Cheating on an examination or test, for example by copying from another’s paper or by using unauthorized materials before or during the test;
- Plagiarism, which one represents as one’s own the work of another, whether published or not, without acknowledging the precise source;
- Knowing participation in the academic dishonesty of another student even though one’s own work is not directly affected;
- Any conduct which reasonable persons in similar circumstances would recognize as dishonest in an academic setting.

2. Penalty
The penalty for an incident of academic dishonesty is, at the discretion of the professor, either a mark of zero for the work in question or the grade of an “F” for the course.