CS/THEO 3357: CATHOLICISM AND LITERATURE

Section A  TuTh 2:10-3:25 pm  Malloy Hall 023

Instructor: Thomas P. Harmon
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Office Hours: MoWe: 10:00-noon am, 1:00-1:30 pm; TuTh 11:00-noon; or by appointment

Course Description

Course Catalog: “This course examines the ways in which the Christian faith is presented and illuminated through the literary arts. Potential topics include: the relation of Christian faith to literary theory: the literary forms of the Bible; theological reflection on literature; specific theological themes in literature (e.g., sin and grace; human persons and the image of God, etc.); the ways in which literature sheds light on the challenges and prospects of Christian faith in the modern world; the historical interplay between theology and literary art. Prerequisites: THEO 1301/3301 and 2301/3311.”

Student Learning Objectives

1. The student will defend a thesis relating to the ways in which Christian faith is presented and illuminated through the literary arts.
2. The student will articulate in an in-class essay particular challenges and prospects of mediating Christian truth through literary art.

Course Objectives

Upon course completions, student should

I. be familiar with some of the ways in which the Catholic faith has been presented in and illumined through literature (Corresponds to Core Curriculum Goal 2)

II. have considered the ways in which literary presentation of Christian mysteries contributes to theological study and prepares the imagination to contemplate theological truth (Corresponds to Core Curriculum Goal 1)

III. have thought through the particular challenges and prospects of mediating the Catholic faith in literary form (Corresponds to Core Curriculum Goal #5)

IV. have reflected on and be able to articulate and give an account of the ways in which the study of literature assists in the acquisition and development of theological science (Corresponds to Core Curriculum Goal 5);
V. have reflected on and be able to articulate and give an account of the ways in which the science of theology illumines the nature and limits of literature (Corresponds to Core Curriculum Goals 5, 7)

These student learning outcomes will be assessed through:

(a) Evaluation of class participation and discussion (I)
(b) In class essays on examinations (II, III, IV, V))
(c) A term paper, research project, or argumentative essay (III)

Grading and Coursework

Final grades will be based on Class Participation (15%), A mid-term examination (20%), a final examination (25%), one five-page paper (15%), and one ten-page paper (25%).

Attendance

Attendance in class is expected. Students who are frequently absent will have difficulty passing. If the student is going to be absent, he or she should notify the professor by e-mail before the beginning of the class the student expects to miss. Students are always responsible for lecture and other class materials missed due to absence, excused or otherwise. If the student is going to be absent, the student is responsible to make arrangements to be sure the student does not miss the material covered or information given during class. Also, absent students are responsible for swapping presentation assignments with their classmates.

Examinations

Examinations will consist of in-class essay writing. During exam periods, students are forbidden to bring books, notes, backpacks and/or any other kind of bags, any electronic devices, including laptops, netbooks, tablets, cell phones, e-readers, etc., to class. Any student caught with any of the above mentioned items during the exam period will fail the examination automatically. Examination blue books will be provided for the final examination.

Papers

Papers ought to be typed in Times New Roman, 12-point font with 1-inch margins all around. Use footnotes; do not use endnotes or in-text citations. Do not use cover pages or works cited pages. Do not use report covers. Papers must be stapled when handed in. Students are required to adhere to the standards for academic writing found in the Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition, which can be found in the library. Students are responsible for learning this style on their own time.

Late papers are subject to a grade reduction of one full letter grade per class period late. After five class periods late, the paper is no longer eligible to earn any points. The period between the
last day of class and the final examination will count as one class period and the period between
the final examination and the day before grades are due will count as another class period late.
Papers not turned in on or before the day before grades are due receive zero credit.

Required Texts for this course:

Flannery O’Connor, *Mystery and Manners* 978-0374508043
Flannery O’Connor, *The Complete Stories* 978-0374515362
Walker Percy, *Love in the Ruins* 978-0312243111
J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Tolkien Reader* 978-0345345066
Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West, *4 Texts on Socrates* 978-0801485749
Ignatius Bible, RSV, 2nd CE, 978-1586177706
Augustine, *Teaching Christianity*, trans. Edmund Hill 978-1565480490

Also, see the link to the online *Summa Theologica* on Blackboard.

Academic Honesty

Needless to say, the University of St. Thomas takes academic dishonesty very seriously. Please consult the student handbook section on academic dishonesty. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing in any way will automatically fail the relevant assignment, and possibly receive a failing grade for the semester.

Grading Standards and Scale

A+: 97-100
A: 94-96
A-: 90-93
B+: 87-89
B: 84-86
B-: 80-83
C+: 77-79
C: 74-76
C-: 70-73
D+: 67-69
D: 60-66
A: Excellent. A work demonstrates truly extraordinary work, which goes well above and beyond the expectations of the assignment. A student who earns an “A” will demonstrate both extraordinary insight and have an extraordinary work and study ethic.
B: Very good work, which demonstrates that the student has a thorough mastery of the subject matter. A student who earns a “B” will have either an extraordinary work ethic or an extraordinary depth of insight; alternately, a “B” student will have very good work and study habits as well as very good insight.
C: Adequate work. The student has demonstrated a sound grasp of subject matter without making serious errors.
D: Deficient work. The student demonstrates a grasp of the subject matter, but has made serious errors as well.
F: Inadequate work. The student has failed to demonstrate any grasp or mastery of the work and/or has failed to complete the assignment within the parameters given.
0: Work has not been turned in.

Note Bene:

Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodations is requested to speak with me as early as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities will also need to contact Counseling and Disability Services in Crooker Center. This office can be reached at (713) 525-2169 or x6953.

A further note on this course

This course is a reading intensive course, which requires the student to devote two hours of study time outside of class to prepare for each class period, not including exam prep or paper writing time. Attentiveness in the classroom and great care in reading to prepare for the course are absolutely essential to succeed to in this class. A successful student will need to have a memory for detail, a depth of understanding about the course texts and their subject matter, and an ability to bring the different elements of the course into synthesis in an overarching grasp.

Course Readings and Assignment Schedule

1. August 25 Course Introduction
2. August 27 Literature, Law, and Religion
   b. Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 81-90. (BB)
3. September 1 Poetic Criticism of Philosophy
   a. Aristophanes, *Clouds*
4. September 3 Some grounds for a philosophic rejoinder
   a. Plato, *Ion*
   b. Plato, *Euthyphro*
5. September 8 Poetry, Law, and the trial of Socrates
   a. Plato, *Apology of Socrates*
6. September 10 Truth and Religion
   a. Augustine, *Of True Religion*
7. September 15 True Religion and Augustine’s Conversion
   a. Genesis 1-3
   b. Augustine, *Confessions*, Books 1 & 2
8. September 17 Continued
   a. Augustine, *Confessions*, Books 3 & 4
9. September 22 Continued
   a. Augustine, *Confessions*, Books 5, 6, 7
10. September 24 Continued
    a. Augustine, *Confessions*, Books 8, 9
11. September 29 Reading Scripture
12. October 1 Continued
13. October 6 Continued
14. October 8 Continued
15. October 13 Fall Break
16. October 15 Midterm Exam
17. October 20 Old Testament Literature
    a. Isaiah
    b. Amos
18. October 22 New Testament Literature
    a. Gospel of John
    b. Book of Revelation

**c. Five Page Paper Due**
19. October 27 On reading prophetic literature
20. October 29 Continued
    a. Walker Percy, *Love in the Ruins*, Beginning through July 1, Chapter 5
22. November 5 ‘The Prophetic’ Catholic Writer, part 1: Walker Percy
23. November 10 The ‘Prophetic’ Catholic Writer, part 1: Walker Percy
   a. “Parker’s Back”
   b. “The Enduring Chill”
25. November 17 The ‘Prophetic’ Catholic Writer, part 2: Flannery O’Connor
   a. “The Displaced Person”
   b. “A Good Man is Hard to Find”
26. November 19 Literature as Sub-creation
   b. J.R.R. Tolkien, “Ainulindale” (BB)
27. November 24 Fiction writer as prophet: Walker Percy
   a. Walker Percy, “Notes for a Novel About the End of the World”
28. November 26 Thanksgiving Break
29. December 1 Fiction writer as Prophet: Flannery O’Connor
   b. Flannery O’Connor, “The Church and the Fiction Writer”
   c. Flannery O’Connor, “The Catholic Novelist in the Protestant South
30. December 3 Fiction writer as sub-creator: J.R.R. Tolkien
   a. “On Fairy Stories”
   b. **Ten Page Paper Due**