FC 6393-N (3024)
Special Topics - Documents of Vatican II

Course Syllabus

Semester: Spring, 2017
Professor: Donald S. Nesti, CSSp, nesti@stthom.edu, 713-942-5069
Course Number: FC 6393-N (3024)
Class Time: Thursdays, 5:30-8:30 pm, Malloy Hall 025 (1/19/2017 – 05/05/2017)
(No class on March 16-Spring Break; or April 13-Holy Week)

Required Texts:

1. Course Description:

The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council was the twenty-first ecumenical council of the Catholic Church and the second to be held at St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican. The council formally opened under the pontificate of Saint Pope John XXIII on 11 October 1962 and closed under Blessed Pope Paul VI on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on 8 December 1965. As John XXIII stated when he announced that the Council was to be convened, its goal was to seek a deepening of holiness and unity of all. In his opening statement to the world’s bishops he stated: “We have every confidence that the Church, the light of this Council, will gain in spiritual riches. New sources of energy will be opened to her, enabling her to face the future without fear. By introducing timely changes and a prudent system of mutual cooperation, we intend that the Church shall really succeed in bringing men, families and nations to the appreciation of supernatural values.”

It is in light of this goal that we will study the historical context in which the pope convoked the Council, its original agenda, the development of that agenda and promulgation of its sixteen documents: four dogmatic constitutions, three declarations and nine decrees. In doing so we will give particular attention to the Council’s teaching on the nature of the Church itself and the Church in relation to the contemporary world. We will seek to understand how certain essential themes in the conciliar teaching integrate all of the documents which are variations of the central vision of the Church in living its mandate to carry the mission of God to the ends of the earth.
2. **Topical Outline**

2.1. What is an Ecumenical Council? [http://vatican2voice.org/4basics/councils.htm](http://vatican2voice.org/4basics/councils.htm)

2.2. Between Vatican I and Vatican II: preparatory movements toward the birth of a Council.

2.3. Pope John XXIII: Life, Personality, and Writings

2.4. Announcement of the Council: January 25, 1959 (Close of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at Benedictine Monastery, St. Paul Outside the Walls; called for all the people of the world)

2.5. John XXIII’s Opening Speech to the Council: Goals of Council

2.6. John XXIII Prayer to Open Council

2.7. The Sessions of the Council and the Chronological Promulgation of the Documents

2.8. Overview of the documents (difference between constitutions/decrees/declarations)

2.9. Understanding and interpreting the Council

2.10. The Integrated Relationship of all the Documents (Chart of Vatican II documents)

2.11. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy) December 4, 1963

2.12. *Inter Mirifica* (Decree on the Media of Social Communications) December 4, 1963

2.13. *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) November 21, 1964


2.15. *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* (Decree on the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite) November 21, 1964

2.16. *Christus Dominus* (Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops) October 28, 1965


2.18. *Gravissimum Educationis* (Declaration on Christian Education) October 28, 1965

2.19. *Nostra Aetate* (Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions) October 28, 1965
2.20. *Perfectae Caritatis* (Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life)  
October 28, 1965

2.21. *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity) November 18, 1965

2.22. *Dei Verbum* (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation) November 18, 1965


2.24. *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)  
December 7, 1965

2.25. *Dignitatis Humanae* (Declaration on Religious Freedom) December 7, 1965


2.27. Closing Messages of the Council

3. Pedagogical Method:
   3.1. Lecture by professor; presentations by students on assigned matter, followed by discussion. In each segment of the lectures, students will be asked to share their reflections on the material in light of contemporary issues facing the Church.

4. Requirements:
   4.1. Attendance: Regular, punctual attendance and preparation for class. Role will be taken at the beginning of each class session. With the exception of emergencies, students must inform the professor of any absence prior to the class.

   4.2. Class Assignments: Presentation in class by each student on matter assigned by mutual agreement between professor and student.

   4.3. Midterm Exam (March 2, 2017)

   4.4. Final Exam (May 11, 2017)

5. Grading:
   - Class Participation and Contribution of Discussion 20 %
   - Midterm exam 25 %
   - Class Presentation and Leadership of discussion 25 %
   - Final Exam 30 %
6. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY  *(University of St. Thomas Policies & Procedures, Student Handbook, Section 3.)*

6.1. 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.

6.2 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.

7. Supplementary Readings:
- *Vatican Council II, the Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents*, Pauline Books and Media, October 1, 1996. (This translation is used in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.)

Documents of Vatican II:
  - Also available online from the Vatican website, in several translations: [http://vatican.va](http://vatican.va)
Studies about Vatican II:


Audio and Video Recordings:


Website: