SEMESTER: Fall 2023

COURSE TITLE: The Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: Theology, History, and Interpretation

COURSE NUMBER: THST 1000.03 / JWST 1000.03

SECTION TIMES/DAYS: M/W 6:00 – 7:40 PM

INSTRUCTOR: Gil Klein

CORE AREA: FND: Theological Inquiry

FLAGGED: n/a

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

Courses in Theological Inquiry raise fundamental questions of existence as these questions are embedded in religious traditions. Such questions include: Is there a divine and what does that mean? What does it mean to be human? What is the purpose of life? In this course, students will grapple with questions of ultimate concern with reference to the ancient texts of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. Students will also examine the ways in which religious communities have taken up these questions, and come to appreciate the intrinsic value of theological inquiry and its relation to meaningful action. They will become familiar with the legacy of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, with a focus on the history and development of the ancient Israelite religious traditions as well as the interpretation and analysis of primary Biblical writings. Although attention will be given to a broad survey of the variety of Hebrew texts that make up the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, the course engages, in particular, with the legacy of the Mosaic Law, the Prophetic Movement and Wisdom and Apocalyptic, as they relate to issues of ethics and social justice. Other themes of theological significance, which the course explores through the various texts of the Hebrew Bible, include theodicy, divine revelation, and the role of ritual and sacred space in religious worship. Finally, this course will examine Jewish and Christian interpretive traditions associated with the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, as they evolved in thought and practice.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will: 1.) Identify and analyze foundational theological questions. 2.) Interpret religious sources critically and creatively. 3.) Connect ultimate questions to Christian and Jewish faith and practice. 4.) Assess diverse religious approaches and contexts. 5.) Appreciate the intrinsic value of theological inquiry and its relation to meaningful action. 6.) As part of this course, students will learn to evaluate non-textual materials such as works of art and architecture, which were produced in the ancient Near East. These materials and works profoundly illuminate the theology and history of ancient Israelite religion and their analysis will greatly contribute to the students' understanding of the relations between different modes of religious expression. 7.) Students will also examine the fundamental question of the Hebrew Bible/Old testament's status as Scripture and analyze the complex relationships between the critical historical analysis of the Bible and its traditional understanding as divine word in both Christianity and Judaism. 8.) Students will appreciate the place of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in relation to other works of Scripture, as well as later exegetical works and extra-canonical text.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND: None.

REQUIRED TEXTS

3.) Additional readings on MYLMU Connect

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

Grades will be based on: attendance & participation; midterm exam; group presentation; final exam.
SEMESTER: Fall 2023

COURSE TITLE: NT Contexts

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1010.01 / THST 1010.01

TIMES/DAYS: T/R 9:55-11:35am AND T/R 11:50-1:30pm

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Roy Fisher

CORE AREA: Theological Inquiry

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS: The New Testament centers on the story of Jesus, a Jewish teacher, healer, and prophet, who came to be acknowledged by his followers as the Messiah and worshiped as God among those who came to be called Christians. This course is designed to introduce students to: (1) the historical-critical analysis of the New Testament as an entrée to a more textured understanding of the political, historical, social, cultural, and theological dimensions of the texts; (2) the role social-location plays in both the historical and contemporary interpretation of texts (history of interpretation). As a result, students will consider their individual (private) and community’s (public) engagement of the New Testament (texts reading texts) in the processing and actualization of biblical interpretations. Throughout the course we will engage questions such as: What kind of literature are we reading? For what communities were these texts written? When and why were they written? What are the texts doing and how are they functioning? How might the use of a particular theory or methodology impact/shape/influence what we see in the text? And, finally, what does any of this have to do with today?

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: Through their exposure and immersion into both text and textures of New Testament and biblical interpretation, students:

- Will gain a more complex understanding of the basic contours of the New Testament, including a general understanding of its literary diversity and textual complexities.
- Will be able to identify significant contextual events leading up to, and contemporaneous with, the New Testament (aka the Second Temple period) and why these events are significant for properly understanding the New Testament.
- Will consider how New Testament texts might have been significant to their various first-century communities.
- Will begin to assess how culture, race, gender, sexual-orientation, class, and ethnicity impact theological reflection; and the social implications and/or ramifications for constructed interpretive practices.
- Will demonstrate, by working collaboratively in small cohort clusters, their ability to interpret the texts, rituals, and material culture associated with the New Testament within a pluralistic manner.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND: NONE

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS: This is an in-person course that meets twice each week for 1.5 hours. In addition to our scheduled in-person class meetings, participants will be watching films and utilizing online learning platforms such as the discussion board on BrightSpace. Methods of instruction will be multidisciplinary, combining various media, lecture, sacred texts in translation, academic analysis, and class discussion of the assigned course materials. Given that this is a seminar style course, lectures by the professor will be minimal. Collaborative discussion, guided by the assigned materials (lectures, readings, films, web-resources, etc.) will constitute our primary experiential in-class activity. Students will engage in analysis of the multidisciplinary course content through class discussion, independent research, and reflective practices. This means that you MUST consistently attend and actively participate in ALL scheduled class sessions as well as Brightspace assignments in order to successfully pass the course.
SEMESTER: Fall 2023

COURSE TITLE: Exploring the Catholic Theological Tradition

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1030-04 and THST 1030-05

SECTION TIMES/DAYS: TR 1:45-3:25 pm and 3:40-5:20 pm

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. William J. Shaules

CORE AREA: Theological Inquiry

FLAGGED: N/A

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

This course is an introduction to the Roman Catholic theological tradition with a focus on biblical interpretation. The survey begins with the Patristic era emphasizing the development of Jerome’s Vulgate (405), and continues into the Catholic response to the Reformation, the promulgation of the Vatican II document Dei Verbum (1964), and ending with present Catholic concerns for social justice. Students will study selected parts of biblical literature along with elements of its interpretive literature, art, music, and spirituality, all as expressions of faith within the Roman Catholic experience.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Throughout the course students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the following through outside research and critical engagement of the materials presented:
1. The question of ultimate meaning within human existence as linked to human expressions of the Divine
2. Symbols used to express the Divine governed by particular ideologies which reveal culturally and historically embedded factors within the development of Catholic religious expressions
3. Various interpretive methodologies governed by disciplines both within and outside of Catholic Theology
4. Different expressions of the Divine seen through different religious perspectives within the biblical text brought into conversation with the Roman Catholic Tradition
5. Major themes embedded in the Hebrew and Christians scriptures that serve to articulate Roman Catholic Faith.
6. The meaning of "interpretive traditioning" for the Roman Catholic experience.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

None

REQUIRED TEXTS


NRSV or NAB Bible and readings posted to Brightspace.

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

1. Attendance of all class sessions
2. Participation in class discussions
3. Completion of shorter assignments on assigned dates
4. Research project
5. Completion of a final exam
COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS
The goal of this course is to explore the beliefs (creed), ethical life (code), and practices (cult) of Catholicism. To do this, we begin by investigating the fundamental disposition of hospitality and attentiveness to the inbreaking of the divine into human life. Having considered these fundamental dispositions in theological inquiry, we will then investigate how the mystery of the Triune God sheds meaning upon human existence and how human existence illuminates our understanding of the Triune God. In doing so, various aspects of theological studies will be explored through themes such as revelation, faith, salvation, church, sacraments, creation, ethics, and prayer. As such, this course considers the Catholic theological tradition from a thematic rather than a historical point of view. Greater emphasis is placed on questions which have contemporary relevance. To stimulate these conversations, we will draw primarily on contemporary theological work and compliment this with a close reading of Scriptures and church documents. Various other expressions of faith in the arts and film will also be drawn on. In addition to this informative study of Catholicism, we will also investigate the role of prayer in theological work. This formative aspect of the course will include gaining some familiarity with different practices of Christian prayer, including the meditative and contemplative practices of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
Students will:
(1) demonstrate through their research paper and discussion posts how a critical study of Catholic theology sheds light on the contemporary human condition
(2) demonstrate through their reflections and oral presentations knowledge of the central themes in contemporary theology
(3) show that they have the ability to interpret texts and other cultural phenomena (such as rituals, myths, architecture, songs, films) that have religious presuppositions or implications; and
(4) through class participation, oral presentations, and written assignments have improved their verbal and written skills

REQUIRED TEXTS

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS
20% 10 reading quizzes
20% 4 critical/reflection papers of 2 pages each
15% 1 research paper of 5 pages
10% Final presentation of research paper
25% Final exam
10% Class participation
THST 1031 01
Tuesday/Thursday 3:40-5:20 PM  Classroom: TBA
4 Semester Hours
Instructor: Fr. Michael K. Courey, D.Min.
Phone: 310-749-2810 Email: michael.courey@lmu.edu
Office Location: UH 3731 (Enter at 3700: Huffington Ecumenical Institute)
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 1:00-3:00 PM and by appointment

University Core fulfilled: Foundations: Theological Inquiry

Course Description: This course introduces students to the primary theological teachings of the Eastern Orthodox Church. The course explores theology through written sources and the lived tradition of Orthodox communities and treats topics such as life and death, sin, religious identity, the meaning of community, saints, Mary, iconography and music, postmodernity, and the Eastern Orthodox response to the ecological crisis and problem of global warming.

Student Learning Outcomes: Over the course of the semester, students will have the following opportunities for intellectual growth: 1) to gain and express their knowledge of the history, theology, and challenges of Eastern Orthodox Christianity; 2) to enhance their listening and communication skills through attentive participation in class discussions on aspects presented in a lecture format with an emphasis on a systematic theological approach to the field; 3) to be exposed to the writings of contemporary Orthodox Christian theologians; 4) to experience and reflect on an Eastern Orthodox worship service and various media presentations.

Prerequisites: None

Required Texts:
Michael Pomazansky, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* (St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2009)
Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Penguin Books, 2015)
Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2019)

Coursework/Expectations: 4-CREDIT HOUR POLICY
At LMU, one credit hour is defined as a minimum of 3 hours of work by an average student per week for a 15-week semester. That means that a 4-unit class must average a minimum of 12 hours of work a week and a minimum total of 180 hours of work for the semester (inclusive of class contact time). Typically, this will mean one hour of classroom instruction and two hours of out-of-class student work each week for each unit of a course. This course meets for three hours per week and expects a minimum of 12 hours per week on class-related assignments.
Semester: Fall 2023
Course Title: In Search of a Way
Course Number/Section: THST 1050.5
Times/Days: Tuesday & Thursday 3:40-5:20 pm
Instructor: Roy Pereira, S.J., Ph.D.
Core Area: FND: Theological Enquiry
Flagged: None

Course Description:
In Search of a Way situates itself in the lives of university students who find themselves in new waters, having left the comfort of their homes & the friendships they developed with their high-school classmates. Just this transition can be stressful. But given that we continue to be in Uncertain Times, the anxiety can be doubled. The pandemic is still amongst us. But there are other social, political, economic uncertainties as well. How does one grow into adulthood during these uncertain times? How do I develop my relationship with others, with God & as importantly with myself? In order to make progress along the path, the pilgrim makes use of received wisdom from the past which can be in the form of religious texts or inspiring autobiographies. Our current context & our own personal life experiences reflected upon also contribute to making this journey memorable. In search of a Way focuses on this journey and revolves around it. Through the use of the main text, other readings, songs with meaning, & films, we shall walk closer specifically towards our way of proceeding.

Student Learning Outcomes:
1. To learn how to reflect on our life experiences & to be able to create a narrative for further growth on the lines of the Catholic & Ignatian tradition. To further learn how to critique such a narrative in a sensitive manner so that we become better versions of ourselves.
2. To learn how to practice the art of ‘walking the path’ in various aspects of life, to understand what it means to bring awareness and understanding to such practice, and to consider how such practice can become a means of entering more fully into the life of the world.
3. To engage seriously with the ethical and spiritual meaning of following a way of life—for oneself and for the betterment of the larger community and the cosmos.
4. Examine and evaluate critically the diverse ways in which religious traditions impact personal and social transformation over time.

Prerequisites/Recommended background: None
Required Text:
ISBN: 978-1-95-785200-3 (available at LMU Bookstore)

Course Work/Expectations:
Active Participation & Attendance 15%
Weekly Posting on Bright Space 30%
Midterm Presentation 25%
Final Paper 30%
SEMESTER: Fall 2023

COURSE TITLE: In Search of a Way

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1050.07

TIMES/DAYS: TR 11:50am – 1:30pm

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Christopher A. Daily

CORE AREA: Theological Inquiry

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

This section of ‘In Search of a Way’ will take a comparative approach by examining diverse ways that communities and individuals around the world interpret and practice their religious beliefs. Travelling through time and space, we will investigate many different ‘living religions’ – which is to say that we will focus upon the ways in which ordinary people express, engage, apply, recreate, and otherwise do religion and spirituality in their daily lives. Religions covered include Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianities, and Islam.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will come to understand:

a) many different religious conceptions of the divine (or lack thereof), creation, the meaning of life, death, and afterlife and how these beliefs convert into rituals and practices;

b) the influence a culture’s conception of religion has upon its living people and institutions;

c) how the rise of science has failed to displace core religious understandings;

d) the basic tools and approaches used in the academic study of theology and religions;

e) the many ways of living in this world other than our own;

f) and, given that all the religious systems covered in the course can be found in southern California, you will also grow to appreciate how these core ideas lead to alternate living experiences amongst LMU’s neighbors. This insight will provide you with a new vision of the multicultural landscape of Los Angeles.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

No prior study of religion or theology is required.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The course will make use of readings from a wide array of primary sacred texts and supporting scholarly studies. All course readings will be uploaded to Brightspace.

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

1.  50%  Two Exams (worth 25% each)
2.  25%  Learning Journal (reflective entries are written throughout the semester)
3.  15%  Final Comparative Essay
4.  10%  Class Preparedness and Participation
SEMESTER: Fall 2023

COURSE TITLE: God and the Good: An Introduction to Christian Ethics

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1060.3

TIMES/DAYS: Mondays/ Wednesdays / Fridays 9:25-10:35

INSTRUCTOR: Jonathan Rothchild, Ph.D.

CORE AREA: Theological Inquiry

FLAGGED: N/A

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS
This course introduces central thinkers, methods, themes, and concepts of Christian Ethics. Students will critically analyze the moral arguments in relation to fundamental questions about theological anthropology (e.g., freedom, agency, responsibility, sin), basic goods and values (e.g., teleology, deontology, virtue theory), theological frameworks (e.g., liberation, feminist, natural law, revisionist) and wider cultural, political, and legal contexts and developments. The course addresses theoretical and practical dimensions of ethics as well as current case studies in the areas of violence and criminal justice, immigration, anti-blackness, comparative religious ethics, and sexual ethics. Students will consider and comparatively evaluate contested moral arguments pertaining to these case studies.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
• Identify and analyze foundational theological questions (SLO #1);
• Interpret religious texts critically and creatively (SLO # 2);
• Connect ultimate questions to Christian faith and practice (SLO # 3);
• Assess diverse religious approaches and contexts (SLO # 4);
• Appreciate the intrinsic value of theological inquiry and its relation to meaningful action (SLO #5);
• Appreciate the contributions of theological ethics to contemporary moral debates (SLO # 6).

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND: None

REQUIRED TEXTS
• Other readings will be made available on Brightspace.

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS
• Reading summaries
• Exams
• Group Presentation
• Final Research Paper
SEMESTER: Fall 2023

COURSE TITLE: Comparative Theology (Course Theme: ‘Death & the Meaning of Life’)

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1080.01

TIMES/DAYS: TR 9:55am-11:35am

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Christopher A. Daily

CORE AREA: FND: Theological Inquiry

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

In this course, we will explore diverse notions of the meaningful life and the good death through the analysis of different global religious beliefs and practices of living, dying, and death (including voluntary death, martyrdom, and sacrifice), as well as rites of mourning and commemoration. In studying a religion’s theology of death, students will also come to understand a religious system’s theory about the meaning and purpose of life and how to live a good life. At the end of the course students will have gained a comprehensive understanding of the complex variety of death practices and of the symbolism of death and the meaning and purpose of life in many major religious traditions. Religions covered in the course include Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianities, and Islam.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, students will come to understand:

a) many religious ways of explaining life, death, dying, and the afterlife (particular religions covered include Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Chinese religions);

b) the influence a culture’s theory of death has upon its living people and institutions;

c) how the rise of science has failed to displace core religious understandings of life and death;

d) the basic tools and approaches used in the academic study of theology and religions;

e) the many ways of living (and dying) in this world other than our own;

f) and, given that all of the religious systems covered in the course can be found in southern California, you will also grow to appreciate how these core ideas lead to alternate living and dying experiences amongst LMU’s neighbors. This insight will provide you with a new vision of the multicultural landscape of Los Angeles.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

No prior study of theology or religion is necessary.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The course will make use of readings from a wide array of primary sacred texts, as well as excerpts from supporting secondary scholarly studies. All course readings are uploaded to Brightspace.

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

1. 40% Examinations (one Midterm Exam and one Final Exam, worth 20% each)
2. 30% Learning Journal (reflective entries are written throughout the semester)
3. 20% Final Comparative Essay
4. 10% Class Preparedness and Participation
Core Area: Theological Inquiry

Course Title: THST 1080-02 Comparative Theology: Hinduism, Jainism, and Christianity
Time and Days: Section 1 MWF 03:05 pm to 04:15 pm
Instructor: Abhishek Jain

Course Description:
This course takes a comparative approach to theological inquiry, examining fundamental religious questions in relation to two or three religious traditions (one of them being Christianity). The course emphasizes comparative analysis of primary religious sources and focuses on how diverse religious approaches to questions of ultimate concern might be mutually illuminative. The course also includes interactive encounters with practitioners of the religion under consideration.

Learning outcomes:
At the end of this course you will be able to:

1. identify and analyze foundational theological questions;
2. identify and examine major beliefs and practices in Hinduism, Jainism, and Christianity;
3. interpret Hindu, Jain, and Christian sources critically and creatively;
4. connect ultimate questions to Hindu, Jain, and Christian faith and practice;
5. compare Hindu, Jain, and Christian approaches to ultimate questions about self and the world;
6. assess Hindu, Jain, and Christian approaches and contexts;
7. appreciate the intrinsic value of theological inquiry and its relationship to meaningful action;
8. integrate a comparative perspective into one’s worldview;
9. value religious diversity.

Prerequisites/Recommended Background:
There is no requirement for any recommended background to participate in this course, but students from Theological Studies, Environmental Studies, Psychology, Biology, Modern Languages and Literature, History, and Film Studies majors are highly encouraged to take this course.

Required Texts:
Paul Dundas 2002. *The Jains*
Jack Miles 2020. *Religion As We Know It: An Origin Story*

Course Work / Expectation:
One unit is defined by LMU as a minimum of 3 hours of work by an average student per week for a 15-week semester. Because being a college student is the equivalent of a full-time job, this 4-unit course should average a minimum of 12 hours of work a week and a total of 180 hours of work for the semester (inclusive of class contact time). This means that your time spent outside of the classroom including reading, studying, writing, discussing with friends, and visiting field sites will average 9 hours of work per week.
SEMESTER: FALL 2023

COURSE TITLE: Introduction to the Qur’an

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1081 01

TIMES/DAYS: TR 8am-9:40am

INSTRUCTOR: Prof. Saqib Hussain

CORE AREA: Theological inquiry

FLAGGED: N/A

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS
This course is an introduction to the Qur’an. It starts with an historical background to the Qur’an, its canonical layout, the typical structure of its chapters (= surahs), and an introduction to the Islamic exegetical tradition. We then look at the Qur’an’s intertextual engagement with various biblical traditions. We will consider the textual transmission of the Qur’an, and its significance in Muslim practice. We end by examining several qur’anic theological and legal issues.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
At the end of this course students will: 1) demonstrate knowledge of the basic structure of the Qur’an, its historical background, and its interpretive traditions; 2) demonstrate an understanding of the Qur’an’s theology, legal content, narrative content, and genres; 3) demonstrate that they can engage both empathetically and critically with conflicting religious claims; 4) through class participation and written assignments improve their verbal and written skills.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND
None

REQUIRED TEXTS


COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS
- Weekly readings
- Weekly quizzes
- Written midterm essays
- Written final exam