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

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1000

TIMES/DAYS: TR 8:00 – 9:30

INSTRUCTOR: Jina Kang

CORE AREA: Foundations, Theological Inquiry

FLAGGED: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS
This course is an introductory course to the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) which will focus on the development of ancient Israelite traditions as well as development of interpretations of the biblical text. Students will critically engage with selected biblical texts representing issues of social, societal, political, and theological concerns. Students are encouraged to critically engage with the biblical text in comparative consideration of contemporary conceptualizations of social justice, power dynamics, and spirituality.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
Having successfully completed this course, students will: 1) acquire basic familiarity with the content and history of interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, 2) examine and critically evaluate development of select traditions through the span of ancient Israelite history, 3) develop basic skills in critical and creative analysis of the Hebrew Bible, and 4) develop practice in integrating theological inquiry and related meaningful action.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND
None

REQUIRED TEXTS
1. Bible – New Revised Standard Version
5. Additional readings provided on BrightSpace

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS
1. Class attendance and participation
2. Quizzes
3. Research papers
4. Group presentation
COURSE TITLE: New Testament Contexts

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1010.01 and THST 1010.04

TIMES/DAYS: TR 8:00-9:30 AM and TR 9:40-11:10 AM

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Judy Yates Siker

CORE AREA: Theological Inquiry

FLAGGED:

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

This course examines the writings of the New Testament through the lenses of three overlapping contexts: 1) the world behind the text (critical analysis of Greco-Roman and Jewish social/religious contexts); 2) the world of the text (critical analysis of the early Christian writings themselves with particular attention to the religious claims and religious questions that arise out of these writings), and 3) the world in front of the text (critical analysis of how these writings have served as authoritative guides for Christian faith and practice over the last 20 centuries, up to and including contemporary interpretation and application of the New Testament).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1) Students will know the content and contexts of the writings of the New Testament and the range of interpretive approaches to the New Testament.
2) Students will be able to conduct analysis and exegesis of the New Testament texts as they unpack the various worlds behind, in, and in front of the texts.
3) Students will learn the connections between Christian faith and practice as exemplified in the New Testament writings themselves and in subsequent interpretation of the New Testament.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

None

REQUIRED TEXTS

The Harper Collins Study Bible (NRSV) preferred though the New American Bible (NAB) or New International Version (NIV) are also acceptable.


(Any additional readings will be found on Brightspace at My LMU Connect.)

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

In addition to weekly reading assignments and class participation, coursework includes four brief quizzes, a mid-term exam, a final exam, one class presentation and accompanying paper.
COURSE TITLE: Introduction to New Testament Contexts
COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1010.2
TIMES/DAYS: MWF 9:10-10:10
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Ryan Michael Huber
CORE AREA: Theological Inquiry
FLAGGED: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS
In this course students study the literature of the New Testament with an emphasis on three contexts:
1. The world behind the text (e.g., When were the NT books written? What specific historical contexts are the NT authors addressing? Who are the authors and what are their unique emphases?)
2. The world of the text (e.g., What are the literary is dynamics of the texts? What theological claims do these writings make? How do they relate to one another as canonical literature?)
3. The world in front of the text (e.g., How do modern readers interpret the NT writings? How do contemporary readers participate in meaning-making? What are the implications and common uses of the NT texts in the world today?).

Students will be introduced to the writings of the New Testament in relation to their political, literary, socio-cultural and religious context(s); Students will be asked to evaluate the writings of the New Testament as statements of faith of Early Christian communities; Students will be challenged to consider early Christian diversity and the role this diversity played in the formation of the Christian Canon; Students will be introduced to the tools and methodologies of the “scientific” study of ancient scripture; Students will consider the role their personal social-location plays in the interpretive process; Students will also be encouraged to consider a variety of contemporary religious issues as they relate to and are informed by our understandings of ancient Christian Scripture.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
By the end of this course students will:
1. Demonstrate an appropriate level of understanding of the New Testament and modern Biblical Studies;
2. Demonstrate growth and integration of their intellectual, social, cultural, and spiritual selves, and through a critical self-reflective process evaluate and articulate their beliefs, values, faith, and culture, as well as understand and respect those of others;
3. Students will critically reflect on what they have learned to demonstrate reasoned judgment and respect for human dignity in working as ethical, compassionate leaders with and for others to build a more just world. (ref. Office of Assessment: Undergraduate Learning Goals and Outcomes)
4. Demonstrate the capacity to research and write on a given topic in the area of New Testament scholarship and cite/reference according to The Chicago Manual of Style.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND
None

REQUIRED TEXTS

*Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*
Edited by Joel B. Green

*The Harper-Collins Study Bible: Student Edition*
b by Society of Biblical Literature (Author), Harold W. Attridge (Editor), Wayne A. Meeks (Editor)

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS
1) Complete Assigned Readings before class for which they are assigned
2) Class Participation
3) 10 Quizzes,
4) Scripture Paper
5) Midterm Exam
6) Final Exam
COURSE TITLE: New Testament Contexts: History, Theology, and Interpretation
COURSE NUMBER: THST 1010.03
SECTION TIMES/DAYS: T/R 9:40 – 11:10 AM
INSTRUCTOR: L. Arik Greenberg, Ph.D.

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

This course will explore the development of earliest Christianity as seen in the New Testament and related early Christian literature. We will focus on the diverse beliefs and practices of first and second century Christians, reading selected New Testament texts with an eye toward understanding the beliefs and socio-cultural contexts of the communities that wrote and transmitted them. Such contexts include the Greco-Roman world (the larger context that gave rise to Christianity) and the Hellenistic-Jewish matrix that birthed earliest Christianity in Roman controlled Palestine. The goal is to gain an understanding of the great diversity of early Christian theology, worship and literature, while recognizing the basic spiritual unity of early Christianity.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will learn the basic aspects of studying the New Testament, utilizing primarily the historical critical method and touching on other complementary models such as feminist criticism. We will also treat the texts respectfully, recognizing that they are living documents of religious communities of faith. As such, discussion will also address how critical scholarship can bolster, rather than ruin faith. We will handle some very difficult questions about faith, which may challenge some students’ current beliefs. However, people of faith will find that their faith will grow stronger through such exercises. By this method, one learns where one’s beliefs derive from, and are enabled to make a conscious choice in how to believe. Additionally, it is important to know the varied history of early Christianity, including the debates over doctrine that initially divided the various Christian sects. Through understanding how these debates were settled, we too can learn how to proceed with similar debates in our own churches today, safeguarding the integrity and sanctity of our “healthy doctrines” while preparing the Church for evolution and growth in the modern world. Dr. Greenberg offers the example of earliest Christian diversity as a model for the possibilities within the modern ecumenical movement.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

An open mind is crucial. A basic knowledge of the history of Western Civilization will help facilitate learning about the Greco-Roman and Jewish context of the New Testament.

REQUIRED TEXTS


A Bible (certain editions are preferred for this class)

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

Weekly reading of approximately 2-3 textbook chapters plus pertinent Biblical texts
3 short papers (5-7 pages)
1 take-home midterm exam
1 in-class final exam
COURSE TITLE: THST 1010-05 New Testament Contexts: History, Theology, and Interpretation

COURSE NUMBER: 78597

SECTION TIMES/DAYS: MWF 3:00-4:00 PM

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. William J. Shaules

CORE AREA: Theological Inquiry

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS
In this course students study the literature of the New Testament with an emphasis on three contexts:

The world *behind* the text (e.g., When were the NT books written? What specific historical contexts are the NT authors addressing? Who are the authors and what are their unique emphases?)

The world *of* the text (e.g., What are the literary dynamics of the texts? What theological claims do these writings make? How do they relate to one another as canonical literature?)

The world *in front* of the text (e.g., How do modern readers interpret the NT writings? How do contemporary readers participate in meaning-making? What are the implications of the NT texts in the world today?).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
Throughout the course students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the following:

- The basic content of required New Testament readings
- The historical circumstances of the communities addressed by New Testament writers
- Major New Testament theological themes
- Major New Testament literary techniques
- Non canonical Jewish and Christian literature
- The basic geography of first century Palestine, Asia Minor, and Greece
- The diversity of scholarly interpretations of the NT, from the Patristic era to today
- The diversity of religious beliefs and practices in first-century C.E. Greco-Roman and Jewish traditions
- The diversity of practices and beliefs within Christianity today
- Skills in reading, writing, critical thinking, academic research, and engaging in respectful dialogue.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND
None

REQUIRED TEXTS
The New Revised Standard Version or the New American Bible


COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS
Attendance
Assigned reading prepared before every class
Participation in lecture/discussion/VoiceThread assignments
Completion of four tests during the semester
A 12-15 page research paper or research presentation to the class
Completion of a final exam
TERM: Spring, 2018
COURSE TITLE: New Testament Contexts
COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1010.06
TIMES/DAYS: 1:00 – 2:30pm, T/Th
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Jeffrey Siker
CORE AREA: Theological Inquiry
FLAGGED: N/A

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS
In this course we engage the writings of the New Testament in light of several contexts: 1) the immediate religious and social/historical contexts of early Judaism; 2) the larger religious and social/historical contexts of the Greco-Roman worlds in the first few centuries CE; and 3) the history of interpretation of the life and teachings of Jesus and Paul, especially as people have sought to apply these understandings to contemporary contexts.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1) Students will know the content and contexts of the writings of the New Testament, as well as a range of interpretive approaches to the New Testament.

2) Students will be able to analyze and interpret the New Testament texts in light of the religious and social/historical contexts that gave rise to these writings.

3) Students will value the challenges of appropriating the New Testament writings for changing contexts in Christian history, from antiquity to today.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND: None

REQUIRED TEXTS

The Harper Collins Study Bible (NRSV) preferred though the New American Bible (NAB) or New International Version (NIV) are also acceptable.


Additional reading on Brightspace.

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

Three reading quizzes.
Midterm Exam.
Two 4-5 page papers.
Discussions.
Final Exam.
COURSE TITLE: American Catholicism

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1020-01 and 1020-02

TIMES/DAYS: MWF 10:20-11:20 and 11:30-12:30

INSTRUCTOR: Catherine R. Osborne

CORE AREA: Foundations: Theological Inquiry

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

This course will introduce the academic discipline of religious studies through an investigation of the history of American Catholicism. After a brief historical overview, the course will turn to units organized around key terms including power, ritual, “space and place” (architecture and the urban experience), suffering, gender, and race. We will explore questions of migration, conversion, mission, pluralism, devotion, and justice in light of various historical developments, including the Enlightenment, colonialism, revolution, immigration, slavery, the Cold War, Vatican II, and the sexual and cultural revolutions of the 1960s.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1) Identify key concepts in religious studies and apply those concepts to the study of American Catholic history; 2) Engage primary and secondary texts creatively and critically; 3) Connect perennial theological questions to the faith and culture of American Catholics in the past and present, especially in the Los Angeles area; 4) Analyze the cultural diversity of American Catholicism within its historical and theological context (class participation, quizzes, papers, final exam); 5) Understand how American Catholicism has both been shaped by Catholicism in Europe, Mexico, Central America, etc, and has reached out to try to shape other contexts

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

None

REQUIRED TEXTS

Michael Pasquier, Religion in America: The Basics
Mark Massa and Catherine Osborne, eds., American Catholic History: A Documentary Reader (2nd ed)
The New St. Joseph Baltimore Catechism
Dorothy Day, Loaves and Fishes

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

Frequent short writing assignments; a quiz at the end of each unit; a final exam; and participation in a group project studying a Catholic church in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.
COURSE TITLE: Exploring the Catholic Theological Tradition

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1030.04 and THST 1030.06

TIMES/DAYS: THST 1030.04 – MWF, 1:50-2:50 pm
THST 1030.06 – MWF, 3:00-4:00 pm

INSTRUCTOR: Elissa Cutter

CORE AREA: FND: Theological Inquiry

FLAGGED: n/a

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

This course examines some of the distinctive practices and beliefs in the Catholic theological tradition. It will introduce the structure, teachings, and practices of the Catholic tradition, including key historical, theological, and practical contours in dialogue with contemporary questions. Students will explore key themes and characteristics within the history of the Catholic theological tradition and learn how to identify the way in which these themes and characteristics influence the theology and practices of the Roman Catholic Church today. By reading and reflecting on the voices from both the history of the Catholic Church and today, students will learn how to understand and interpret writings that make up the Catholic theological tradition and inform the lives and practices of Catholics in the modern world.

Cross-listed with CATH 1030.04 and CATH 1030.06

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Identify and analyze the foundational theological questions of Catholic Christianity and develop a theological vocabulary.
2. Develop the skills to read carefully and critically from a variety of sources, especially in learning to interpret religious sources critically and creatively.
3. Connect ultimate questions to Catholic faith and practice.
4. Assess diverse religious approaches and contexts, in particular by exploring foundational issues while valuing the creative tensions in the Catholic tradition and their relevance today.
5. Appreciate the intrinsic value of theological inquiry and its relation to meaningful action.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

None

REQUIRED TEXTS

- The Bible
- Jack Mulder, What Does It Mean to Be Catholic?
- Norman Tanner, S.J., ed. Vatican II: The Essential Texts

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

Attendance and class participation
Online reading quizzes
2 tests and a final exam
In-class reflections and group assignments
Partner presentations
COURSE TITLE: In Search of a Way: Spirituality, Faith and Culture

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: 1050.1 and 1050.2

TIMES/DAYS: M/W/F 11:30-12:30 PM | 12:40-1:40 PM

INSTRUCTOR: Matthew J. Pereira

CORE AREA: Theological Enquiry

FLAGGED:

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS: In this introductory course, we will analyze the crucial role of faith, religion and spirituality (all broadly construed) in the formation of the individual and communities through reading a diverse range of texts, from the New Testament, primary source documents in religious traditions (e.g., Gregory of Nyssa; Augustine of Hippo), classics of literature (short stories, e.g. Flannery O’Connor; Albert Camus; Leo Tolstoy) and theoretical readings (e.g., William James, Karl Marx; Paul Tillich). The variegated nature of faith, religion and spirituality will be carefully analyzed through a number of interpretive lenses including theological, historical, cultural, social class, gender, ethnicity and race. The perennial existential questions (e.g. identity, love, suffering and death) are explored within a number of primary sources. The students will also be introduced to seminal theorists of religion (e.g. Karl Marx, William James, Sigmund Freud) and learn to employ their conceptual models for assessing the role of religion and the spiritual life in various cultures.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
- Students will acquire a working definition of spirituality, which allows them to analyze issues related to culture, faith, religion and the spiritual life.
- Students will become critical and empathetic interpreters of the diverse iterations (e.g. texts and art) of spirituality in religious traditions and the contemporary marketplace.
- Students will learn to wrestle with existential questions by listening to and learning from diverse voices in the past and present.
- Students will develop their own approach to the integration of spirituality, belief and practice in the contemporary world.
- Students will become acquainted with theorists on religion and learn how to employ their concepts for the interrogation of spirituality, faith and culture
- Students will learn to analyze themes related to spirituality, faith and culture in contemporary literature.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND: NONE

REQUIRED TEXTS
- Other Primary Source Readings will be available on Brightspace.

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS: Analytical Paper | Group Presentation | Research Paper
Description: This course will introduce students to the meaning and significance of spiritual practice in its distinctively Christian expressions and expressions associated with other traditions. The focus of the course is on "lived religion" - the embodied, eclectic and often improvisational character of spiritual experience, both collective and individual. Students will attend to and learn to interpret ways in which spiritual identity and meaning can be construed, whether in explicitly religious terms, or more implicitly, arising from secular traditions or the heart of human experience itself. Students will examine classical Christian texts, both ancient and modern, secular texts of meaning, and accounts of contemporary spirituality, considering along the way the relationship between spiritual practices, religious experience, and theology (disciplined talk about God). The course will take up big spiritual questions, including: what does it mean to be human? How are human relationships experiences that take us beyond ourselves (transcendence)? How do we make sense of death and an afterlife?

Student Learning Outcomes:
Students will be able to…

- explain what make something a spiritual practice and why it “works” for people (its inner logic);
- explain what a religious tradition is and how it exists in a constant and mutually-influential relationship with historical and contemporary contexts and cultures;
- identify and describe analytically how such factors as socio-economic class, social acceptance or rejection, ethnicity, race, and gender shape the way people understand and use faith traditions;
- show how Christian tradition has helped people respond to their spiritual questions now and in the past, critically distinguishing Christian responses from those of systems of secular meaning, other religious traditions, and contemporary spiritual accounts;
- study, interpret, and evaluate Christian and other primary sources from cultures and epochs distinct from our own as records of how human beings have addressed big spiritual questions.

Prerequisites: none

Required Texts:

- A Study Bible, in electronic or print form. I recommend, for example…

Expectations: Expectations include class participation, reflection papers, oral presentations, a midterm examination, journal entries, a research project, and a final examination.
COURSE TITLE: In Search of a Way

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1050.4 and THST 1050.5

TIMES/DAYS: MW 8:00-9:30am and MW 12:40-2:10pm

INSTRUCTOR: Cyril Hovorun

CORE AREA: Theological Inquiry

FLAGGED:

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

This course introduces students to the meaning and significance of theology and spiritual practice in their distinctively Christian expressions. The focus of the course is on "lived religion" experienced in both collective and individual ways. This approach includes considering the central ideas about God, human beings, and world. It also seeks to understand the critical role of practice in shaping spiritual meaning and identity. Students will attend to and learn to interpret ways in which spiritual meaning can be construed, whether in explicitly religious terms, or more implicitly, arising from the heart of human experience, e.g. as with the many contemporary expressions of spiritual identity that stand in oblique relationship to explicit religious traditions and symbols. Through a study of classical Christian spiritual texts, both ancient and modern, students will consider such theological questions as the relationship between religious experience and the development of theological thought. The course will take up such ultimate questions as: who am I and what is my place in the whole scheme of things? What is of ultimate value? What makes for a meaningful life? How can we best make sense of suffering and loss, diminishment and death?

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

In the end of the course, students will be expected to be able:

1) to outline main tenets of the Christian traditions;
2) to speak in the language of those traditions;
3) to engage with people who believe and who do not believe;
4) to distinguish and evaluate forms and meanings of "spirituality";
5) to interpret "spiritual" texts, both antique and modern;
6) to project general theological and spiritual ideas to their own contexts;
7) to explain their own tradition to lay unprepared audiences.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

There are no prerequisites for the course.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Texts for reading and reflection will be provided by the instructor. There is no a textbook for the class.

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

The course will consist of lectures, seminars, and reading classes. In the seminars, students are expected to reflect on the materials provided to them in the lectures. In the reading classes, students will read together with the instructor excerpts from the texts on Christian spirituality and interpret them.
COURSE TITLE: Psychology, Spirituality, and Transformation

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1050.06 and THST 1050.07

TIMES/DAYS: MWF 10:20am-11:20am and MWF 11:30am-12:30pm

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Butler

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS:

This course will introduce students to the historical and cultural significance of spiritual practices. It will explore Christian expressions of spiritual practices in conjunction with spiritual expressions associated with other religious/nonreligious traditions (Islamic, Jewish, Buddhist, and Taoist). The focus of the course is on the historical ramifications and future implications of spirituality—the converging nature of God, religion, history and culture on the body (individual and communal). It also seeks to understand the critical role of practice in shaping spiritual meaning, identity, and tradition. Students will consider such theological questions as the meaning of "spirituality" and the relationship between religious experience and the development of theological thought. Although the name of this course is “In Search of a Way,” it might be more appropriate to think of it as “In Search of My Way.” Searching for “my way” recognizes the manner in which our past present and future all meet in our body, and how that will determine which spirituality individuals “take up” as a necessary means for living “with God.”

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

SLO1: Begin to understand spirituality as a historically, culturally, and geo-specifically complex structure;
SLO2: Personally define spirituality in conversation with historically and contextually Christian and non-Christian text sources;
SLO3: Critically and creatively explore the human Divine relationship as it pertains to spirituality (spiritual experience, both individual and communally);
SLO4: Critically engage historical and contemporary texts on spirituality as sources to explore ultimate questions;
SLO5: Critically explore the relationship between faith, practice, history, culture and personal identity;
SLO6: Imagine future iterations of individual and communal spiritualities;
SLO7: Determine the role of spirituality for human action and justice; and
SLO8: Understand how to create strong academic questions.

REQUIRED TEXTS


COURSE TITLE: In Search of A Way

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1050.8

TIMES/DAYS: MW 2:20-3:50

INSTRUCTOR: Rachel Fox

CORE AREA: FND: Theological Inquiry

FLAGGED:

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS
This course will explore the topic of Christian Spirituality from both a historical and practical context. We will specifically look at Christian Spirituality as a path of formation for the human spirit, the human conduct, and therefore ultimately the human identity. In our examination of the path of Christian spirituality, we will consider some of the classical Christian spiritual teachers as well as some modern voices. We will look at this spirituality in broad over arching themes along with focusing on a few particular Christians and their spiritual journeys.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. Student will be able to identify key elements and practices of Christian spirituality both historical and modern.
2. Student will be able to understand the impact which the beliefs and practices of Christian spirituality have on identity and the formation of a new identity in Christ as seen in Scripture and in Christian spiritual teachings.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND
n/a

REQUIRED TEXTS:

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS: As this is a 4unit course the expectation is that one will spend 12 hours a week on this class. Since we spend 3 hours a week in class time, the expectation is that you will spend on average 9 hours per week on work outside of class.
COURSE TITLE: God & the Good: Introduction to Christian Ethics

COURSE NUMBER: THST 1060

SECTION TIMES/DAYS: 01 (8-9am) & 02 (9:10-10:10am) MWF

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Nicholas R. Brown

CORE AREA: Theological Inquiry

FLAGGED:

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

What is Christian Ethics? What resources underpin and inform its moral vision? What makes this vision similar and distinctive from other ethical traditions? Is it possible to reconcile this vision with a secular, modern and pluralistic society? And what kind of practical moral guidance does it provide in addressing contemporary moral debates? These are the fundamental questions we will explore to enhance our understanding of Christian Ethics and to examine its application in a 21st century society. In doing so we will consult a variety of sources including biblical texts and the writings of various Christian ethicists and theologians to help us flesh out a Christian normative framework which we will then use to critically evaluate issues of war/violence, economics and bioscience.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Acquire a basic fluency in Christian Ethics including some of its primary sources, methods of moral analysis as well as some of the strategies it employs in ethical reflection.

Practically apply Christian ethical reflection to concrete cases of contemporary moral debate.

Develop critical reading and thinking skills.

Develop the ability to craft persuasive oral and written argumentation which articulates one’s own ethical perspectives in respectful conversation with others.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

None

REQUIRED TEXTS


COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

Two Exams
Thirteen one-page analysis papers
Group Debate
One Term Paper
Four Quizzes
Class Participation
COURSE TITLE: Comparative Theology

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1080-01

TIMES/DAYS: MWF 10:20 AM-11:20 AM

INSTRUCTOR: Prof. John Becker

CORE AREA: Theological Inquiry

FLAGGED:

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS
Comparative Theology takes a comparative approach to theological inquiry working in, across, and through cultural and religious boundaries. This course will examine fundamental religious questions as addressed within Mahāyāna Buddhism and Christianity whereby illuminating resonating and diverging features. The course attends to the major beliefs and practices in their historical development and in their contemporary forms. Comparative Theology emphasizes the comparative analysis of primary religious sources and focuses on how diverse religious approaches to ultimate questions might be mutually illuminative concerning the human condition. Questions to be explored include: Who am I? Why am I here? Why do we suffer and die? Who/What is Ultimate Reality? How is the world related to Ultimate Reality? What is our ultimate goal? How do we reach our goal? What is the relationship between spiritual and social liberation?

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
SLO1: Value the existential importance of ultimate questions;
SLO2: Understand the historical tension and interplay between society and faith;
SLO3: Become familiar with Christian and Buddhist terminology and beliefs;
SLO4: Express and interpret ideas through oral communication;
SLO5: Appreciate theological inquiry and reflection as to pertains to a “life lived;”
SLO6: Interpret Buddhist and Christian sources critically and creatively.
SLO7: Prepare, practice, and deliver an original oral presentation.
SLO8: Engage in discussion based dialogical learning.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND
None

REQUIRED TEXTS
TBA

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS
• Attendance  20%
• Participation  20%
• Student Leaders  10%
• Quiz (x 2)  20%
• Final/Presentation  20%/10%
COURSE TITLE: Comparative Theology

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1080-01 and 1080-02

TIMES/DAYS: MWF F 12:40-1:40 and 1:50 to 2:50

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Mugdha Yeolekar

CORE AREA: Theological Inquiry

FLAGGED:

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS
Given the religious, cultural, racial, and linguistic pluralities, discerning global from the local is becoming increasingly challenging in Los Angeles. In this essentially pluralistic discourse, learning to define one’s own faith becomes an essentially correlative exercise. In this context, doing comparative theology for this class would mean at least three different things: one, developing an empathetic attitude towards the other religious tradition by understanding the epistemic differences in their theologies; two, learning to find the place of one’s own faith in this world through critical correlations with the “other;” and, three, aiming to create an interfaith dialogue between the two traditions by analyzing points of contact throughout the history. The first part of the course will be an introduction to Hindu theology and praxis. The second part of the course will focus on understanding Christian theology and praxis. The final part of the course will consist of analyzing ‘points of contact’ between Hindus and Christians from three vantage points: missionary encounters in Goa, British colonial encounters, and Hindu-Christian interfaith dialogues.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
SLO1: Identify and analyze foundational theological questions.
SLO2: Identify and examine the major beliefs and practices of Hinduism and Christianity.
SLO3: Interpret Hindu and Christian sources critically and creatively.
SLO4: Connect ultimate questions to Hindu and Christian faith and practice.
SLO5: Compare Hindu and Christian approaches to ultimate questions.
SLO6: Assess Hindu and Christian approaches and contexts.
SLO7: Appreciate the intrinsic value of theological inquiry and its relation to meaningful action.
SLO8: Integrate a comparative perspective into one’s worldview.
SLO9: Value religious diversity.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND
None

REQUIRED TEXTS
Understanding Catholicism (Monika K. Hellwig) 0809140632/9780809140633

An Introduction to Hinduism (Gavin Flood) 0521438780

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS
Active Participation: 20%
Exams (two) 20% each
Annotated Bibliography 10%
Final Paper 30%
COURSE TITLE: World Religions in Los Angeles

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1500.01

TIMES/DAYS: Section .01 T/R 8:00 – 9:30 AM

INSTRUCTOR: L. Arik Greenberg, Ph.D.

CORE AREA: Studies in American Diversity

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS:
This course is an introduction to the academic study of religion and of world religions, and to the religious traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as well as several other current religious trends. The course examines the historical evolution, the fundamental doctrines and beliefs, the practices, institutions and cultural expressions of these religious traditions. The course also deals with some of the essential differences and similarities which exist among each religious tradition, and points to the uniqueness of each of them. Special emphasis is placed upon how these religious traditions have emerged within the context of Los Angeles, how they have changed, grown and adapted to their new surroundings.

Discussion will also address how critical scholarship can bolster, rather than ruin an individual’s faith. Students will be encouraged always to bear in mind their role in the world and how the study of world religions and familiarizing oneself with their texts can assist in illuminating our relationships to each other and determining our current global responsibilities.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
At the end of this course students will 1) demonstrate that they will think both empathetically and critically about conflicting religious claims; 2) demonstrate that they have gained knowledge of the history and culture of several major religious traditions; and 3) through class participation and written assignments have improved their verbal and written skills.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND
None, other than an open mind and a willingness to see the commonalities and cherish the diversities between people’s faith traditions.

REQUIRED TEXTS [textbooks will be available through the bookstore at a discounted bundle-pricing from the publisher]


COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS:
40% Written Assignments (four reflection papers)
10% Class Participation
25% Mid-Term Exam (On Eastern Traditions, written in green books)
25% Final Exam (On Western Traditions, written in green books)