

TH017 Introduction to Christian Theology: Living Commitments

Woods College of Advancing Studies, Summer, 2009 T & Th, Summer Session II, Campion 235
Instructor: Stephen J. Pope, Theology Dept. (popest@bc.edu 2-3892)

Course description:

Considers the essentials of commitment and a committed relationship. Looking at different kinds of relationships, from the religious relationship with God to an intimate and sexual relationship with a partner, course considers the characteristics of intimacy, good communication, a living covenant, and a good marriage.

Course requirements:

- 1.) Attend every class; inform the instructor via e-mail in cases of absences
- 2.) Read carefully the assigned readings of the day (listed on the outline of assignments below) and come to class prepared to discuss the readings.
- 3.) ALWAYS BRING COURSE TEXTS OF THE WEEK WITH YOU TO EVERY CLASS; bring the Catholic Study Bible with you to every class
- 4.) Short quizzes most class meetings on the assigned readings of the day; no make-ups; unexcused absences receive a zero (absences with physician's note accepted); the single lowest quiz grade will be dropped (quiz average constitutes 20% of grade);
- 5.) Mid-term exam (20% of grade)
- 6.) Five page interview paper, details to be explained in class (20% of grade)
- 7.) Final exam, written in class (40% of grade)
- 8.) Extra credit will be given for one five page, typed, doubled-spaced book review on one of the recommended titles (below), turned in with the final or before.
- 9.) Constructive class participation is valuable and will improve one's grade.

Class rules: please

- 1.) Arrive in class on time
- 2.) Turn off cell phones, no text messaging in class
- 3.) No open laptop computers
- 4.) No eating in class
- 5.) Observe all aspects of academic honesty -- see BC website for any questions --
<http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/resources/policy/#integrity>
- 6.) Respectful and attentive participation is encouraged; no side comments when someone is speaking to the class

Required texts: (all available in bookstore and on reserve in O'Neill library)

The Catholic Study Bible (Oxford) 9780195283914

John Paul II, On the Family (USCC/NCCB)

Robert Ellsberg, The Saints' Guide to Happiness (New York: North Point Press/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003)

Timothy Radcliffe, OP, What is the Point of Being a Christian? (Burns and Oates, 2005) 0860123693

Kevin Kelly, Divorce and Second Marriage: Facing the Challenge (Sheed and Ward, 1997) 155612890

Robert D. Enright and Joanna North, eds., Exploring Forgiveness (University of Wisconsin Press, 1998) 0299157741

James Martin, In Good Company (Sheed and Ward, 2000) 1580510817

Jonathan Sacks, The Home We Build Together: Recreating Society (Continuum, 2007)

Recommended:

Carolo Maria Martini, The Gospel According to St. Paul (Word Among Us Press, 2009) 1593251459

James T. Bretzke, S.J., A Morally Complex World: Engaging Contemporary Moral Theology (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2004) 0814651585

William F. May, The Physician's Covenant, 2nd ed. (Westminster John Knox, 2000) 0664222749

Course Outline and Assignments:

Class 1, 6/30: Introduction
Exodus 19-22
Gospel of Mark, Intro

Class 2, 7/2: Commitment in contemporary society
Read for this class:
Gospel of Mark chs 1-2,
Richard Clifford (on truth in the Bible), "Did It Happen? Is It True?" at
http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=4561
Martin, In Good Company
View in class: Woody Allen, "Crimes and Misdemeanors"

Class 3, 7/7: God and happiness
Read:
Mark chs 3-4
Ellsberg, Saints' Guide to Happiness

Class 4, 7/9: Commitment to faith
Read:
Mark chs. 5-6
Radcliffe, What is the Point of Being a Christian?
Intro through ch. 4

****Attend Radcliffe lecture on campus, Saturday July 11**

Class 5, 7/14: Commitment to the church
Read:
Mark chs. 7-10
Radcliffe, chs. 5 through Conclusion

Class 6, 7/16: Mid-term exam

Class 7, 7/21: Sex, marriage and family
Read:
Mark, chs. 11-13
John Paul II, On the Family, to p. 60
Kelly, Divorce, pp. 1-85

Class 8, 7/23: Forgiveness and reconciliation
Read:
Mark chs. 14-16
Enright and North, Forgiveness, chs. 1-3, 5-8

Class 9, 7/28: Identity and commitments in pluralistic societies
Sacks, The Home We build Together, through ch. 8
**Interview paper due in class today

Class 10, 7/30: Identity and commitments pluralistic societies
Read: Sachs, complete

Class 11, 8/4: Final exam

Class 12, 8/6: No class in lieu of attending lecture on July 11