After exploring sacrament in its broadest sense, the meaning of sacramentality, and other fundamental elements of Roman Catholic sacramental theology, we will examine each sacrament both in its role in the life of the church as well as its role in each individual’s faith journey. We will address historical background and contemporary issues about the Sacraments of Initiation -- Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist; the Sacraments of Healing -- Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Sick; and Sacraments at the Service of Communion --Marriage and Holy Orders.

This course is conducted entirely online. It is asynchronous, i.e., it is not necessary for you to be online at a particular time, but it is not self-paced, i.e., there are deadlines by which participants must meet requirements.

We do our work through the use of readings, the guidance of the instructor’s introductory comments, and conversation. Posting on a discussion board, where students interact with each other and with the instructor, is at the heart of the course experience. The instructor will be present online every day and will be part of the ongoing discussion.

Course requirements: for MA students: pre-class assignment (15%), participation (50%), a research exercise (15%), final exercise (20%); for doctoral students: pre-class assignment (15%), participation (50%), a research exercise (35%)

**PRE-COURSE WORK**


2. Write an essay in response to the question “What is a sacrament?” Illustrate how the assigned reading supports your description and enhanced and/or challenged your initial understanding. (750 -900 words)

Essays are submitted privately to the instructor through the assignment feature of the Canvas course site on or before the first day of class.

**REQUIRED READING**


Other assigned readings will be available on the Canvas course site.