Course Description

This is the second part of a two-semester course, Introduction to Christian Theology I and II. It introduces students to the sources, content, and fundamental questions of the Christian theological tradition. The first part of the course began by exploring the notion of religion, and introducing students to the academic study of religion and theology. Following this introduction, the course traced the emergence of the Christian theological tradition within its historical context, and its theological development through the centuries. The second part of the course, in the spring semester, focuses on spirituality and the lived experience of Christian faith. This semester opens with a study of the emergence of contemporary forms of global Christianity. It then turns to the study of spiritual experience, through exploring the expression of faith, doubt, and spiritual searching in autobiographical literature. The course then addresses diverse ethical issues in the contemporary world, followed by an investigation into theological responses to non-Christian religions, focusing on Christian-Jewish relations and theological reflection on the Holocaust.

Purpose

The purpose of this course is to provide an academic investigation of a religious tradition that has had a great impact on world history, and continues to influence the world in countless ways. The course aims to offer students a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the sources and forms of this tradition, to enable them to better interpret the Christian theological tradition and its cultural and social impact on the world.

Participation in this course does not require belief in or practice of Christianity, nor does the course encourage or persuade students to adopt any particular religious belief or practice. Students are welcome to voice their own responses to and interpretations of the material, and are invited to feel equally free to express statements of faith, doubt, assent, or rejection of the theological traditions studied in this course. However, such statements must be made with recognition of the distinct difference between religious statements and statements about religion. That is, students must be able to distinguish between expressions of religious belief or lack thereof, on the one hand, and scholarly observations about religion, on the other hand. While this course welcomes students to express the former if they choose to do so, the course remains firmly grounded in the latter, examining the Christian theological tradition through the methods of the academic study of religion.
Required Texts


Course Requirements

- Completion of reading assignments
- Midterm Exam, July 18
- Paper, July 23
- Presentation on a Contemporary Ethical Issue
- Final Exam
- Regular Attendance
- Attention to and participation in class discussions

Grading

The final grade will be determined by the following components:

25% Midterm
20% Paper
15% Ethics Presentation
25% Final Exam
15% Class Participation

Paper Guidelines

Read the spiritual memoir or autobiography of one theologian in entirety, and in addition, read at least one secondary text on your chosen material. (The secondary text will be a book or article by another theologian that provides commentary on the primary text.)

Your paper will be comprised of two main components: 1) scholarly commentary on the text, and 2) reflection on how the text relates to your own spiritual experience. Please note that these two sections do not need to be separate sections of the paper, but may be interwoven.

In the first component, you will discuss the primary text from a scholarly perspective, aided by your secondary text or texts. Do not merely summarize the memoir; rather, discuss the complex issues it addresses, and use critical thinking skills to engage the text.

In the second component, reflect upon how the memoir relates to your own spiritual experience, and informs your understanding of your experience. As with all assignments in this course, this exercise is open to and inclusive of people of all varieties of religious or non-religious affiliations. Reading texts, particularly memoirs of spiritual experience, has the capacity to
instigate self-reflection, and this assignment asks you to delve into deep self-reflection, and to
write of this process of reading and reflection.

Length: minimum 1800 words, maximum 2000 words.
1800-2000 words will be approximately seven pages of double-spaced text. Note that the length
requirements are measured by words, not pages.
Format: Times New Roman font, double-spaced.
Citations: Citations may be done according to the conventions of either MLA or Chicago, using
either footnotes or in-text citations.

Boston College Mission Statement

Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits
itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and
to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the
achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring
to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual
idea of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a
Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all
human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live
justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value
systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive
intellectual heritage.

Important Policies
http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html

Written Work
Graduate and undergraduate students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work.
Written materials must be typed in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough, yet
concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA, CLA format per instructors decision.
Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use
of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You are encouraged to make use of campus resources
for refining writing skills as needed [http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html].

Scholarship and Academic Integrity
It is expected that students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to
reference properly is plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to,
plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on examinations or assignments, and
submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one
course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work.

Request for Accommodations

If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Dr. Kathy Duggan (dugganka@bc.edu), Associate Director, Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities or AHD) or Dean Paulette Durrett, (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for students with disabilities, (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations. For further information, you can locate the disability resources on the web at http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html.

Attendance

Class attendance is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive by the beginning of and remain for the entire class period. When an occasion occurs that prevents a student from attending class, it is the student’s obligation to inform the instructor of the conflict before the class meets. The student is still expected to meet all assignment deadlines. If a student knows that he or she will be absent on a particular day, the student is responsible for seeing the instructor beforehand to obtain the assignments for that day. If a student misses a class, he or she is responsible for making up the work by obtaining a classmate's notes and handouts and turning in any assignments due. Furthermore, many instructors give points for participation in class. If you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Types of absences that are not typically excused include weddings, showers, vacations, birthday parties, graduations, etc. Additional assignments, penalties and correctives are at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. In all cases, students are expected to accept the decision of the instructor regarding attendance policies specific to the class.

Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is the responsibility of students to review course syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult the faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. If asked, the student should provide accurate information about the obligations entailed in the observance of that particular holiday. However, it is the responsibility of the student to complete any and all class requirements for days that are missed due to conflicts due to religious holidays.

There may be circumstances that necessitate a departure from this policy. Feel free to contact the WCAS at 617-552-3900 for consultation.
Course Calendar and Reading Assignments

Reading, June 25  *The Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Reformation*

McGrath, 135-159

Reading, June 27  *Christianity in the Contemporary World*

Christianity in the Twentieth Century, McGrath, 188-196
Contemporary Denominations, McGrath 199-214

Reading, July 2  *Christianity in the Contemporary World*

– available on Canvas

Reading, July 9  *Narratives: Medieval Mysticism*

– available on Canvas

Julian of Norwich, excerpt from “Showings”
– available on Canvas

Reading, July 11  *Narratives of Faith, Doubt, and Conversion*

St. Teresa of Avila, from *The Book of Her Life* – available on Canvas

St. Augustine of Hippo, from *Confessions* – available on Canvas

St Ignatius of Loyola, from *St. Ignatius’s Own Story* – available on Canvas
**Reading, July 16** *Narratives of Faith, Doubt, and Conversion*

Flannery O’Connor, from *Her Letters* – available on Canvas

John Henry Cardinal Newman, from *Apologia pro vita sua* – available on Canvas

Thomas Merton, from *The Seven Story Mountain* – available on Canvas

**July 18, Midterm Exam**

**Reading, July 18**

John Popiden, “Moral Theology: Faith and a Christian Way of Life.” From College Student’s Introduction to Theology. Liturgical Press,
-available on Canvas

**July 23**

*Ethics Presentations*

**July 25** *Christianity Amongst Other Religions*

(readings TBD)

**July 30** *Christian-Jewish Relations*


**August 1**

Final Exam