

Christianity and Culture in Dialogue

Core 2101BI – TTh 2:30-3:45pm

Classroom: Mooney 16

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Office hours: TTh 10:15-11:15am and by appt.

Course Description

This course is taken by second year students as part of the University Core Curriculum. CORE 2101 considers the relationship between Christianity and culture through an approach based on principles of dialogue, development, and community. Texts from the Christian tradition paired with texts from non-Christian traditions demonstrate direct connections across culture(s) that influence the development of the Catholic intellectual tradition. The course seeks to foster the development of a community of conversation through a focus on key questions and significant texts that address these questions.

*Prerequisites: CORE 1101, ENGL 1201, ENGL 1202

Course Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the central questions at work in the encounter between Christianity and culture, faith and reason, religious belief and science, belief and unbelief, and Christianity and society through written assignments, quizzes and exams.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the notion of historical development as it manifests itself in the Catholic intellectual tradition’s engagement with the world, through in-class analysis of texts, and written assignments comparing primary texts in historical sequence.
3. Students will participate in a community of discourse by means of a careful reading of a common set of primary texts, and by learning to analyze and critique ideas through engagement with other students in class.

Grade Composition

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Class Participation | 20% |
| 2. Opinion Paper | 5% |
| 3. Historical Figure Presentation | 5% |
| 4. Historical Figure Analysis Paper | 10% |
| 5. Comparative Analysis Paper | 15% |
| 6. Dialogue Panel Discussion | 10% |
| 7. Pop Quizzes | 15% |
| 8. Final Exam | 20% |

Course Requirements

1. Class participation is important in this class and each person’s input is valuable. Your participation grade will be based on your:

- Coming to class prepared to discuss the readings.
- Demonstrating signs of attentive listening during class.
- Asking relevant questions, especially about material you did not understand.

- Making comments that are thoughtful and insightful.
- Making sure that others have the opportunity to share in the discussion.
- Turning in all assignments on time.

2. A 1-1.5 page **Opinion Paper:**

Hard copy due in class on January 19

Summarize your worldview, including as many of the following as possible:

- Your view of human history
(How did humanity come into existence? How has society developed? Is this a good thing?)
- Your view of human nature
(Is it fundamentally good or bad?)
- Your view of the ideal society
(What would it be like? What would it take to establish it?)
- What matters most in life?
- Why do you believe what you believe?

Note: This is an opinion paper. It will not be graded for being right or wrong, but for being clear and concise. This paper requires no research, but rather thought and reflection. Simply summarize what you already believe.

Purpose of the Opinion Paper:

- For you to articulate your worldview, so that you can compare it with others', both fellow students and historical figures, and know that:
 - You are not alone
 - There are other options
 - You can learn from others' strengths and shortcomings
- To prepare you to analyze worldviews by beginning with the one you know best.
- For you to have realistic and clear expectations of the professor's grading early in the course.

3. A 4-6 minute **Historical Figure Presentation**

On the second week of class every student will be assigned a different historical figure to represent. The selection process will occur via a combination of personal preference and chance. Please look ahead at the possibilities and consider at least three possible choices, as the figure you represent will be yours for this presentation (3.), the Historical Figure Analysis Paper (4.), and the Dialogue Panel Discussion (6.).

For your presentation, summarize the life and contribution of your figure on the day that we first discuss that figure. (See calendar below for specific dates, beginning with Augustine on 2/9. Plato and Paul are not options.)

Note: one page of type-written material, double spaced ≈ 2 minutes spoken material. Therefore, you should have the equivalent approximately 2-3 pages of written material.

Format: spoken, either 3rd person (about the person) or 1st person (as if you are them), with optional PowerPoint visuals, should you desire to produce them.

4. A 5-6 page Historical Figure Analysis Paper

Due via email one week following your Historical Figure Presentation. (Example, someone presenting on Augustine on 2/9 would have to submit their paper by 2/16.)

For the same historical figure about whom you gave your presentation, summarize their worldview, including as many of the following as possible:

a) Their view of human history

(How did humanity come into existence? How has society developed? Is this a good thing?)

b) Their view of human nature

(Is it fundamentally good or bad?)

c) Their view of the ideal society

(What would it be like? What would it take to establish it?)

d) Their understanding of the relationship between faith and reason

e) What matters most in life, according to them?

f) Why do they believe what they believe?

g) How were the person's beliefs shaped by their life story?

Sources: make sure to incorporate citations from **at least 1 additional primary source** (written by the figure) and **2 additional secondary sources** (written about the figure) beyond what is in the course reader or available online.

*Note: Wikipedia and Sparknotes are okay first places to look for ideas about other places to look and for basic information, but they are *not viable sources* for an academic paper. Anything good that you find there that you want to use you must confirm in a printed source, which you may use. If you use any source without citing it, that constitutes plagiarism (1st infraction: zero on the paper; 2nd infraction: zero for the course).

In addition to submitting this paper via the usual means (listed below), please post your paper on Blackboard under the Discussion Board tab, so that your work can help others on their Comparative Analysis Papers.

5. A 8-10 page Comparative Analysis Paper

For this paper, consider **at least three different figures from the course** and their views on **one of the following topics**, noting that the due dates vary according to the topic:

Topic A: Are Christianity and philosophy compatible?

(Plato + at least two of Paul, Augustine, Justin Martyr, and Tertullian)

Due 3/1

Topic B: Are faith and reason compatible?

(Choose three or more from Aquinas, Ibn Rushd, Maimonides, Anselm)

(Add Julian of Norwich and/or Hildegard of Bingen if so desired)

Due 3/20

Topic C: Are religion and modern science compatible?

(Genesis, Galileo, and Darwin)

Due 4/3

Topic D: What is the basis for the ideal society?

Include at least two religious perspectives (Tolstoy, Newman, Vatican II) and

two non-religious or anti-religious views (Locke, Hobbes, Marx)

Due 4/26

Whichever topic you choose, compare the figures' views on the topic and how they arrived at those views. What was it about their life stories and historical contexts that made them similar (to the extent that they are similar) or different (to the extent that they are different)?

Sources: you are permitted to incorporate material from your own Historical Figure Analysis. You are required to read and cite the Historical Figure Analyses of at least two of your classmates (posted on Blackboard under Discussion Board as they become available).

****Grading, Formatting, and Submission of All Papers**

All papers in this course will be graded on five categories, in each of which:

- excellent work receives full points
 - work that *needs some improvement* receives partial credit
 - work that *needs much improvement* receives zero credit
1. Relevance: Do you fully address the topic?
 2. Clarity of content: Is your reasoning easy to follow?
 3. Grammatical clarity: Are your wording and syntax clear?
 4. Accuracy: Is your work free of factual errors? Are there sufficient citations?
 5. Character: Does your work demonstrate respect, openness and empathy toward opposing viewpoints, inquisitiveness, and creativity?

Each category will be scored:

from 0 to 1 points on the Opinion Paper, for a total of 5 points;

from 0 to 2 points on the Historical Figure Analysis Paper, for a total of 10 points;

from 0 to 3 points on the Theme Analysis Paper, for a total of 15 points.

Format: a MS Word document, double-spaced, Calibri, 11-point font, standard margins, with citations and works cited.

The name of the file should be: <your last name> <paper title> <the two letters of your section in caps> For example: JonesPlatoRocksBG.doc

Submission: (after the Opinion Paper)

1. Log in to this course on Blackboard.
2. Go to the Assignments folder on the left sidebar.
3. Upload your document under the relevant assignment via SafeAssign. (This automatically checks for plagiarism.)
4. Also send a copy of the file to george.faithful@shu.edu;

I will reply confirming that I have received it. *If you do not receive a confirmation by 9am the next morning, bring a hard copy to our next class, along with a copy of the file on a thumb drive.*

Late papers will affect your participation grade in the course, as their lateness demonstrates that you were not able to prepare to contribute to class discussion in a timely manner. Writing is a part of the learning process, and by writing you become the person that we need you to be to have the discussions we need to have in class.

6. The final four course meetings will constitute a series of **Dialogue Panel Discussions**.
- Each student will play the part of one of the figures studied in class (ex. Plato)
 - Give a 5-minute summary of his or her beliefs
 - Engage in a panel-style Q&A with the other figures in the spotlight that day
 - Ask at least one question for each of the other presenters
 - Be prepared to answer the questions of others
 - (Ex. Plato dialoguing with Augustine, Justin, etc.).
 - Those students not engaged in presenting will each be expected to ask at least one question of one of the figures each day of the discussion.

*****Grading of Presentations**

All presentations in this course will be graded on five categories, in each of which:

- *excellent* work receives full points
- work that *needs some improvement* receives partial credit
- work that *needs much improvement* receives zero credit

1. Clarity: Was the presentation easy to understand?
2. Relevance and accuracy: Did the presentation remained on-topic throughout and was it free of factual errors?
3. Respect and candor: Did the presenters respectfully express their own views?
4. Empathy: Did presenters respond to others' point of view with compassion, both during the main presentation and during Q&A?
5. Creativity: Does your work demonstrate inquisitiveness and creativity?

Each category will be scored:

from 0 to 1 points on your Historical Figure Presentation, for a total of 5 points.

from 0 to 2 points on your Dialogue Panel Discussion, for a total of 10 points.

7. **Pop Quizzes:** An undetermined number will be given, of which all will count toward the final grade except for one (each student's lowest quiz grade will be dropped). Each will consist of a few questions that can be answered briefly. These are not essay questions - they are designed to determine your ability to identify the essential points in the assigned readings. They will be given without advance warning and may occur at any point during a given lesson. There will be no possibility to make them up. Always come to class prepared for a potential quiz, with paper and writing implements at the ready. Quiz topics are cumulative.

8. There will be a **Final Exam** for the course at **8:00-10:00am on Monday May 14 (BG section), 8:00-10:00am on Tuesday, May 15 (BD), or 2:30-4:30pm on Tuesday, May 15 (BI)**. Part of this exam will be a common essay that all sections will write. The common essay will require knowledge and intelligent application of readings from the class. Students should not make end of semester travel plans without consulting the exam schedule first.

Attendance Policy:

More than two unexcused absences will result in a **failing grade for class participation**.
More than four unexcused absences will result in a **failing grade for the course**.

For an absence to be considered excused you must have documentation from a medical professional or the Office of Student Affairs (or Athletic Dept. in the case of athletes) indicating that you were unable to attend the particular class from which you wish to be excused. In cases of

an extended absence (due to serious illness or emergency) you must obtain documentation from the Office of Student Affairs indicating the reason for the absence.

If you stop attending class it does not mean you have withdrawn from the course. In order to withdraw you have to fill out a withdrawal form (obtainable from the dean's office or the department office). **Non-attendance is not withdrawal.** Being late two times is the equivalent of one absence. If you are late, please take the nearest available seat by the door.

Please take care of personal matters before class (e.g., bathroom, etc.); apart from an emergency there is no good reason to get up and leave the classroom while class is going on.

If you must eat during class, for whatever reason, please do so in a way that is not disruptive and be sure to clean up after yourself.

Electronics Policy:

There shall be no laptops used during class time. This is a text-centered, discussion-based course. In order for us to be fully present to each other, we must free our shared space from potential distractions, however useful for research, writing, and non-face-to-face communication.

Cell phones and any other electronic devices should be **turned off and stored away** during class.

Grading Scale

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|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------|
| 95-100=A | 90-94=A- | 86-89=B + | 83-85=B | 80-82=B- | |
| 76-79=C + | 73-75=C | 70-72=C- | 66-69=D + | 60-65=D | 0-59=F |

Required Texts

1. The CORE 2101 Reader, *Christianity and Culture* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2010).
2. Other material is available on Blackboard to be downloaded for class. Your professor will notify of you of any additional texts.

Course Calendar:

Tues, 1/17 Intro to the CORE 2101 Reader, why writing matters, what is a worldview
Thurs, 1/19 Worldview discussion, **Opinion Papers due no later than classtime**

Tues, 1/24 A brief history of everything; assignment of historical figures

Part I: Christianity and Culture

Themes: relation of truth and power; relation of early Christianity to surrounding culture; the nature of community.

Thurs, 1/26 Plato, *Euthyphro*

Tues, 1/31 Plato, *Crito*
Thurs, 2/2 Paul, *First Letter to the Corinthians* (1-8)

Tues, 2/7 Paul, *First Letter to the Corinthians* (9-16)

Thurs, 2/9 Augustine, *City of God*, Book XIX (Reader, pp. 47-62); **presentations begin**

Tues, 2/14 Justin Martyr, *First Apology* (Reader, pp. 63-72)

Thurs, 2/16 Tertullian, “What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?” (Reader, pp. 73-84)

Part II: Belief and Reason

Relation between knowledge through revelation and knowledge through reason alone.

Tues, 2/21 Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274): *Summa Contra Gentiles* and *Summa Theologica* (Reader, pp. 85-98)

Thurs, 2/23 Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (1126-1198): *The Decisive Treatise Concerning Theology and Philosophy* (Reader, pp. 99-107)

Tues, 2/28 Moses Maimonides (1135-1204): *Epistle Dedicatory* and Introduction to *Guide for the Perplexed* (Reader, pp. 108-122)

Thurs, 3/1 Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love* (Reader, pp. 123-124)

Hildegard of Bingen, *The Book of Divine Works* (Reader, pp. 125-128)

Topic A Comparative Analysis Papers due

Tues, 3/6 Anselm, *Proslogion* (Reader, pp. 129-139)

Part III: Belief and Science

Themes: sources for truth; the meaning of being human; different kinds of truth.

Thurs, 3/8 Galileo, “Letter to the Grand Duchess Cristina” (Reader, pp. 140-146)

Tues, 3/13 SPRING BREAK

Thurs, 3/15 SPRING BREAK

Tues, 3/20 Genesis 1-11 (Reader, pp. 147-154)

Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man* (Reader, pp. 155-180)

Topic B Comparative Analysis Papers due

Part IV: Belief and Unbelief

Themes: belief and ethics; unbelief and ethics; the possibility of faith in the modern age.

Thurs, 3/22 Tolstoy, *Confession* (Reader, pp. 181-212)

Tues, 3/27 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (Reader, pp. 213-236)

Part V: Christianity and Contemporary Society

Themes: faith and the just ordering of society; economic justice; love and justice; Catholicism and Liberalism; social science and faith.

Thurs, 3/29 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Reader, pp. 237-240)

Tues, 4/3 Thomas Hobbes, *Elements of Law* and *Leviathan* (on Blackboard)

Topic C Comparative Analysis Papers due

Thurs, 4/5 HOLY THURSDAY

- Tues, 4/10 Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (Reader, pp. 241-256)
- Thurs, 4/12 John Henry Newman, "Wisdom as Contrasted with Faith and with Bigotry" (Reader, pp. 257-269)
- Tues, 4/17 Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes* ("The Church in the Modern World") (Reader, pp. 270-307)
- Thurs, 4/19 John Courtney Murray, *We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition* (Reader, pp. 308-325)

Part VI: Review

- Tues, 4/24 Dialogue Panel: Plato, Paul, Augustine, Justin, Tertullian
- Thurs, 4/26 Dialogue Panel: Aquinas, Rushd, Maimonides, Julian, Hildegard, Anselm

Topic D Comparative Analysis Papers due

- Tues, 5/1 Dialogue Panel: Galileo, Genesis, Darwin, Tolstoy, Nietzsche, Newman
- Thurs, 5/3 Dialogue Panel: Locke, Hobbes, Marx, Vatican II, Murray

Tues, 5/15 2:30-4:30pm Final Exam

Academic Integrity Policy:

All forms of dishonesty, whether by act or omission, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism and knowingly furnishing false information to the University, are prohibited.

Intentional disruption or obstruction of teaching, research or administrative proceedings is prohibited. University sanctions may extend to suspension and dismissal. Work submitted in course must be the product of the efforts of the student presenting the work, and contributions of others to the finished work must be appropriately acknowledged. The presentation of another's work as one's own is a serious violation of the academic process, and it is penalized accordingly. The decision on the appropriate penalty is in the first instance the professor's, and it may extend to a failing grade for the course.

Examples: failure to cite sources and failure to put others' words in quotes.

CORE 2101: Christianity and Culture in Dialogue: The faculty of CORE 2101 considers plagiarism or cheating of any kind a breach of academic honesty. It is the policy of this faculty to fail a student for the entire course if caught plagiarizing. Letters will be sent to the Dean and to the student's academic adviser informing them of the offense.

DISABILITY STATEMENT: Students at Seton Hall University who have a physical, medical, learning or psychiatric disability, either temporary or permanent, may be eligible for reasonable accommodations at the University as per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. In order to receive such accommodations, students must identify themselves at the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS), provide appropriate documentation and collaborate with the development of an accommodation plan. The DSS phone number (973) 313-6003. For further information, please go to <http://shu.edu/offices/disability-support-services-index.cfm>