

**LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO**  
**“INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY”**  
**THEO 100-025 (6073)**  
**MWF, 12:35-1:25**  
**Mundelein Hall, Room 621**

**WILLIAM MYATT, PH.D.**  
**(773) 508-2355**  
[wmyatt@luc.edu](mailto:wmyatt@luc.edu)  
**Office: Crown Center, 446**  
**Office hours: Tuesday, 9:00am-12:00pm**

**Course Description:**

This course is one of two foundational core courses in the Theology Department. Both foundational core courses (Intro to Christian Theology and Intro to Religious Studies) incorporate the study of scripture, belief and practices, and the historical and social context of religion. The purpose this course is to introduce students to the fundamental questions, sources, and content of the Christian theological tradition, with special attention to Catholic Christianity, and its significance for Christian faith and life in the world today. It will develop a foundation of theological discourse and will introduce the relationship of Christian theology to the study of religion generally, thus ensuring foundational continuity between the two courses on the first-tier level. This will constitute a proper and adequate foundation for any of the second-tier courses. It has no prerequisites.

Upon completion of this gateway course, students will be prepared to engage any second-tier course from among 13 options. All these courses build on the content and the methodological approaches studied in the first tier. Students will be familiar with the Christian understanding of God, the Church, the sacramental tradition, and some measure of dialogue with another religious traditions.

The material for Dr. Myatt’s course is organized according to a three-step process of presentation: (1) a theoretical consideration of faith as an expression of human experience, (2) an introduction to the content of historical Christianity, (3) a reconsideration of historical Christianity from historically marginalized points of view.

**Knowledge Area: Theological and Religious Knowledge**

**Learning Outcome:** Demonstrate an understanding of theological and religious questions and traditions.

This area of study promotes critical thinking and informed reflection on theology and religion. Students ought to develop familiarity with the basic content of, and modes of scholarly inquiry into, selected theological and religious systems, including forms of religious ethics, and to develop productive intellectual attitudes to guide them in their search.

**Competencies:** By way of example, Loyola graduates should be able to:

- Analyze and interpret religious texts, beliefs, and practices using standard scholarly methods and tools.
- Demonstrate knowledge, with attention to historical development, of the central texts, beliefs, ethical understandings, and practices of at least one religious tradition.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the intersections between religion and selected contemporary issues, including ethics, social, political, economic, or cultural issues.
- Evaluate one's own religious perspective and the religious perspectives of others.
- Demonstrate knowledge of central ethical teachings and perspectives of a religious tradition.

**Outcome: Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the tasks of Christian theology.**

~~~~~  
**Required Texts:**

Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*

ISBN: 0060937130

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/0060937130>

Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*

ISBN: 1586176838

<http://www.amazon.com/ConfessionsAugustineIgnatiusCriticalEditions/dp/1586176838>

Susan Ross, *Anthropology*

ISBN: 0814659942

<http://www.amazon.com/AnthropologyEngagingTheologyCatholicPerspectives/dp/0814659942>

~~~~~  
**Grading Scale:**

A = 100-94

A- = 93-90

B+ = 87-89

B = 83-86

B- = 80-82

C+ = 77-79

C = 73-76

C- = 70-72

D+ = 66-69

D = 60-65

F = 59 and below

~~~~~  
**Learning Assessments:**

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Quizzes                      | 40% |
| Facebook participation       | 20% |
| Mid-semester writing project | 20% |
| Final paper/exam             | 20% |

#### Class attendance and punctuality:

Your ability to keep up with course content depends on your attendance in class. Students are thus expected to attend class consistently, being absent only on account of unavoidable circumstances. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Due to the large size of our class, no separate “class participation grade” will be assigned. **However, students who do not miss more than three classes will be given the option of submitting a final paper instead of taking our final exam.** (University-related events will not count against this total.)

Students must also arrive on time in order to be counted present. If you arrive late to class, it is your responsibility to make sure you are counted present. Three tardies will result in an absence.

#### Quizzes:

We have four quizzes (“tests” may be a better word) scheduled for the semester. Questions for these quizzes will be derived from lectures, class discussions, and assigned readings. Questions could include multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

Most of our assignments will be accompanied by questions posted on Sakai to help guide your reading. These questions will also function as a study guide for quiz content (although anything covered in class is “fair game”). These questions will also be incorporated into Dr. Myatt’s powerpoint lectures.

If Dr. Myatt observes that class discussions wane, and if he is feeling especially testy, he may surprise the class with a few pop quizzes. Your scores on these quizzes will be incorporated into your final quiz grade. (Pop quizzes will be open-note but closed-book. It is preferred that students do not use their books for pop quizzes.)

One of your quiz grades will be a library scavenger hunt, in which you will be asked to locate several resources through our library’s website and in the stacks. More information concerning this assignment will be given later in the semester. You are encouraged to get to know Jane Currie, the topical librarian assigned to theology and religious studies.

All told, we will have no more than eight quiz grades throughout the semester.

#### Facebook group:

Students are asked to participate in a Facebook group, where all of Dr. Myatt’s THEO 100

students can share ideas with one another. For each class session, a different student will be assigned the task of starting a discussion thread. You may post a link to an online article, blog post, video clip, or other resource; you may ask a thought-provoking question or start a poll; or you may upload a file or some other resource for our viewing pleasure. It is expected that all students will participate throughout the semester, so you are also responsible for responding to no less than three threads. Comments must be no less than 100 words to receive full credit, but you are also welcome to post briefer comments as often as you prefer. Evaluation is based on Dr. Myatt's assessment of a "good faith effort" on your part.

#### Options for mid-semester writing project:

Papers should be no less than four and no more than five pages long. Students who visit the writing center at least three days prior to the due of the paper and have at least a 30-minute session with a tutor will receive five points extra credit. Submit some form of proof of your visit by the due date of the paper. Papers will be submitted online via "Turnitin." Beginning in November, Dr. Myatt will ask many of you to present your findings to our class. Presenters are encouraged to use multi-media for their presentations.

#### Interview with Executive Director of a Christian non-profit in Chicago:

Identify a Christian non-profit in Chicago that demonstrates the connection between a Christian understanding of God, a Christian understanding of humanity, and a Christian participation in the common good. Write a report on this non-profit by performing an interview with the executive director, observing the non-profit in action, and volunteering for the non-profit. Use sources from assigned readings to point out continuity or discontinuity between this non-profit's philosophy and our course content. Send a suggested non-profit to Dr. Myatt by the conclusion of Week 2.

#### The religious experience in contemporary media:

Choose a film, TV show, song, webseries, or other contemporary media to analyze for its expression of the religious experience. Use one of our texts from the semester to analyze the contemporary expression. It will be easiest to pick a text from the beginning of the semester, where we analyze faith, desire, and the human's concern with "the ultimate."

#### Tracing God and humanity in the history of Christian thought:

Using our assigned resources, locate a recognizable trajectory of theological understanding in the Christian tradition. Demonstrate that there is a thread of continuity between earlier and later expressions. The best papers will demonstrate how more recent expressions have both drawn from and nuanced classic expressions. Reflect on the reasons for this.

#### Options for final:

##### Write your "confessions":

A major component of our semester will be to analyze St. Augustine's personal

recounting of his conversion to Christianity. For this project, you are asked to tell the story of your own faith journey. The best papers will follow Augustine's example by incorporating no less than two theological/philosophical reflections into your story and weaving them into the narrative as a whole. Papers should be no less than eight **four full pages** and no more than ten **five**. As always, students who visit the writing center at least three days prior to the due date will be given five points extra credit. Students who have missed no less than three class sessions are free to submit this writing project in place of taking the final exam.

#### Final Exam:

For students who are absent more than three times, the final exam will be a closed-note, closed-book, and cumulative assessment of how well you have grasped the content of our semester. Some questions will be derived from quizzes, others from blackboard assignments; many will be new. Questions could include multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay.

#### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

If you have a disability and need to request accommodations, please contact The Center for Services for Students with Disabilities (<http://www.luc.edu/sswd/index.shtml>) to obtain the appropriate forms. I am happy to work with you to help you succeed.

#### **TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM:**

Texting and other mobile devices may be used on a limited basis to access our online resources. Laptops may be used for note-taking. Please do not abuse this freedom. Doing so will result in a change of the policy.

#### **STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

Please be aware that the university policy on academic integrity will be in full effect during this course. You can find Loyola policies at these websites:

[http://www.luc.edu/cas/pdfs/CAS\\_Academic\\_Integrity\\_Statement\\_December\\_07.pdf](http://www.luc.edu/cas/pdfs/CAS_Academic_Integrity_Statement_December_07.pdf)

<http://www.luc.edu/english/writing.shtml#source>

[http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicgrievance.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.shtml)

**Cheating:** Academic cheating is a serious act that violates academic integrity. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as

- Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher
- Providing information to another student during an examination
- Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination
- Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor
- Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted
- Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is

- completed outside of the classroom
- Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines
- Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a serious form of violation of the standards of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. Examples of Plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as print, internet, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.
- Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material
- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit
- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper

*Plagiarism, Cheating, or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination.* The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the chairperson of the department involved, and to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

**Pass/Fail conversion deadlines and audit policy.** A student may convert a course registration either in or out of the "Pass/No-Pass" or "Audit" status only within the first two weeks of classes each Fall or Spring semester. The deadline for such conversion in Fall 2013 is Monday, September 9 at 5:00 p.m. Students must submit a request for Pass/No-Pass or Audit to their academic advisor. Students who audit courses are required to attend classes. The last day to withdraw with a grade of "W" is November 1, 2013.

~~~~~

## READING SCHEDULE

Items are listed next to the date that they will be discussed in class. Students are expected to come to class having read the assignment, prepared to discuss its content.

Aug 26 Introductions, syllabus, why theology?

### Theology as the Human Search for Ultimacy

28 Ross, xi-xviii

30 TED talk by Jonathan Haidt (link posted on Sakai/Facebook)

Suggested reading: Tillich, vii-xix.

Sept 2 Tillich, xxi-xxii, 1-18

4 Tillich, 19-34

6 Tillich, 35-46

9 **Quiz**

## Meaning and Truth in Religious Symbols

- 11 potential Sakai reading/viewing assignment (*Life of Pi*)
- 13 potential Sakai reading/viewing assignment (*Life of Pi*)
- 16 Tillich, 47-62
- 18 Ross, 1-9
- 20 Gospel of Mark 1-8 (Sakai)
- 23 Mark 9-16 (Sakai)
- 25 Creeds on the Trinity (Sakai); in-class group project
- 27 **Quiz**

## Theology as Personal Narrative

- 30 *Confessions*, Book 1
- Oct 2 *Confessions*, Book 2
- 4 *Confessions*, Book 3
- 7 **\*\*No class\*\* Mid-semester break**

- 9 *Confessions*, Book 4-5
- 11 *Confessions*, Book 6

**\*\* Mid-semester writing projects due by 11:59pm on Friday, October 11. \*\***

- 14 *Confessions*, Book 7
- 16 *Confessions*, Book 8
- 18 *Confessions*, Book 9
- 21 **Quiz**

## Theology and (letting go of) God

- 23 Ross, 27-39; suggested: Anselm and Aquinas (Sakai)
- 25 Teresa of Avila reading and video (Sakai)
- 28 Aquinas in-class exercise (proofs for God's existence)
- 30 Ross, 39-46
- Nov 1 Ross, 47-56
- 4 Luther (Sakai)
- 6 Descartes/Kant (Sakai)
- 8 Kierkegaard (Sakai)
- 11 **Quiz**; Richard Dawkins TED talk in class

## Theology after Truth

- 13 Ross, 61-75
- 15 David Tracy reading (Sakai) GET CAUGHT UP ON FACEBOOK!
- 18 Tillich, (selections from) 85- GET CAUGHT UP ON FACEBOOK!
- 20 Alain de Botton TED talk "Atheism 2.0" Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail"  
([http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles\\_Gen/Letter\\_Birmingham.html](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html))
- 22 Liberation theology 1 (materials will be made available in class)
- 25 Liberation theology 2 (materials will be made available in class)
- 27 **\*\*No Class\*\* Thanksgiving Break**

29 **\*\*No Class\*\* Thanksgiving Break**

Dec 2 Ross, 85-108

4 Myatt online op-eds (Sakai)

6 Catchup

**FINAL EXAM: Monday, December 9, 1:00-3:00pm; Mundelein 621**