Course Name: DIETRICH BONHOEFFER  
Course Code: 390  
Semester: Spring 2016

Classroom number 306  
Scheduling: Tuesday, 3.30-6.30 pm

Instructor Data:  
Name: Prof. Alessandro Andreini  
E-mail-address: a.andreini@sanleolino.org  
Office hours: by appointment. Generally, I will be available immediately before and after classes.

Prerequisites: 200 level religious studies

Course Description:  
The purpose of the course is to meet the human and spiritual experience of one of the most significant theologians in 20th century in Europe. Born in 1906 and died in 1945, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life crosses many of the critical events of the century: the two world wars, the crisis of the European upper-middle class and of its model of life, the spreading of modernity and ideologies, the Nazi regime, the Hebrew question, the effort in favour of peace.

Since his unexpected choice to study theology and to become a Lutheran minister, Bonhoeffer's life seems to be an exemplar tentative to understand the different challenges of his time and to give a new and free answer to each one of them: above all, to face them as a Christian. As he used to say, we live in an age in which it is impossible to fix a complete and clear project for our personal existence: our lives seem to be nothing else than a series of failed attempts, so that our inner life lasts unaccomplished. The only possibility we have to measure and understand the sense of our life seems to be to measure the value of each fragment of it.

Indeed, we can look to Bonhoeffer's life as a collection of several precious and prophetic fragments through which we can face many challenges that still have a deep relevance for us today: the future of Christianity in a world come of age, the challenge of ecumenism and peace, the experience of Christian life together, the value of friendship, the opposition against Hitler.

Course Objectives:  
The course expects to put students in touch with the exemplary life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, his choices, his point of view about some of the most relevant questions of human life. By the end of the course, students would have to get a clearer idea about the history of Europe during the first part of XX century and a personal comprehension of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's human and Christian values.

Teaching Method:  
Since the course is based on the meeting with a witness, it will privilege Bonhoeffer's voice and the decisive moments of his life in dialogue with history. The course will pass through lectures, debates, oral reports, film screening. Mostly, the course needs students involvement because it intends to be a possible answer, through the help of Bonhoeffer's teaching, to some of our deeper questions about life. For this reason, students are also responsible for the success of the teaching method, as the pedagogical value of a method has to be enacted by each participant in the process.

Teaching Commitment:  
Education is possibly one of the most important and moving human task: to help new generations in understanding the world in which they live, hoping that they will be able to give their own contribution for the building of a better world. Culture is a matter of transmission: that's why we even have a sort of duty in doing it!
Decorum
Cell-phones off; no food and beverages admitted, except for bottled water,
No technical devices are accepted (laptops, I pads, etc)
Disrupting behavior (doing something else during the course, engaging in private conversations, playing with electronic devices) is not accepted and if repeated it will negatively affect the attendance and participation part of the final grade or may result in removal from the course.

Attendance Policy according to Gonzaga University’s policy regarding absences

Assessment Criteria
Attendance and participation 20 %
Oral reports/class debate 20 %
Midterm 20 %
Final 20 %
Essays 20 %

Two essays are required (at a minimum of 12 pages together but preferably more)
- First essay: delivery date – February 23
- Second essay: Delivery Date – April 19

The essay consists in the articulated and convincing treatment of a topic pertinent to the course, with a clear formulation of the issue to be investigated and an equally clear conclusion.
On the delivery date hard copies typed in standard format are to be handed in to the professor at the beginning of class and an electronic copy readable by Word-Windows or Microsoft Word is to be submitted by email.
Standard format: Title, minimum 6 pages, Times New Roman, 12, 2 line spacing, Bibliography

Academic Honesty
Academic honesty is essential to education and represents the bond of trust between the university, the instructor and the student. Copying or plagiarizing would be useless in matters that have to do with your personal point of view about life.

Special Accommodation for students with learning disabilities
Documented learning disabilities or other medically certified problems that need special accommodation for any of the student's expected academic performances will be treated with the due attention.

Required Readings
Faith in a world come of age: text by Dr. Don Alessandro Andreini

Recommended Additional Resources (you can find them in the library)
Life together by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Letter and Papers from Prison by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Dietrich Bonhoeffer. A short life, by Renate Wind
Till the Night be Past: The Life and Times of Dietrich Bonhoeffer by Theodore J. Kleinhans
The Bonhoeffer Phenomenon: Portraits of a Protestant Saint by Stephen R. Haynes
Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy. A Righteous Gentile vs. the Third Reich by Eric Metaxas

On-site lessons calendar

12.1 Course presentation and syllabus discussion.


2.2 To be free in order to be responsible. The challenge of responsibility. What is a Christian Ethics? What can we do to accomplish the works of God? The adventure of conspiracy against Hitler.

9.2 Jesus Christ, the centre of human life. Why becoming Christians? Christ, the true man. Class work on the Michelangelo's Final Judgment.


23.2 Mid term

1.3 Projection of the film Sophie Scholl. The last days by Mark Rothemund (Germany 2005) about the attempt for anti-nazi resistance of a small group of Christian university students in Munich, called "The White Rose". Class discussion on the film.


22.3 Prayer, the essential struggle of Christian life. Is it possible to teach and learn prayer? Jesus Christ praying in the psalms. The Psalter, school of prayer. The Lord's Prayer, synthesis of the whole Psalter. Class work on a Bonhoeffer's prayer.


19.4 Final