Gonzaga in Florence

Course Name: Christian Spirituality
Course Code: RELI 370
Semester: Summer 2017

Classroom number:

Instructor’s Data:
Rev. Thomas Muller, M.Div, Dipl. Art
semplificare@gmail.com
Office hours: (usually right before or after class and by appointment)

Prerequisites: None

Course Description:
The course aims at deepening our understanding of Christian spirituality through the study of its major movements throughout history, allowing us to discover connections and perhaps also disconnections with the tradition out of which our own spiritual practice grows. We will give particular attention to expressions of Christian spirituality as they developed in Italy and, more specifically, in Florence. We will base our research both on local resources (works of art, worship and popular forms of spirituality) and on academic studies in the field.

Course Objectives:
• clarify the concept of Christian spirituality;
• gain an understanding of some of the major expressions of Christian spirituality, both through movements, communities and single personalities and through the arts;
• experience a variety of contemporary expressions of lived Christian spirituality;
• develop a reflective tool, through writing, to create greater awareness of one’s own spiritual journey in the context of a larger story;
• develop the ability to observe and describe religious contexts and practices
• deepen the capacity to observe and describe works of art.

Teaching Method:
The course will include lectures, presentation of images, reflections, discussion and site visits. Student preparation and participation are crucial for the success of the course. The pedagogical value of a method has to be enacted by each participant in the process.

Teaching Commitment
I understand teacher and students to comprise a learning community that stimulates and challenges each other in the pursuit of a deeper understanding of the material at hand. My role is to prepare, guide and verify the learning process and to be available to students for encouragement and support.

Required Readings
Philip Sheldrake, Spirituality a Brief History
Printed material given in class or sent by email
Material on hold in the library

Assessment Criteria:
Attendance and participation in class and site visits 25%
Journal 25%
Reflection papers 25%
Final paper 25%
Failure to submit or fulfill any required assessment element results in failure for the class.

Details about the various written assignments are as follows:

**Journal:** can be handwritten (legible) or typed (double spaced, Times New Roman point 12 or other easily legible format). Students are encouraged to include drawings, sketches, photos or other visual material. It should include a reflection on some significant event during the week and is due by Monday morning scheduled class time.

**Reflection papers:** five one to two page (250 - 500 words) weekly papers on an assigned topic.

**Final Paper:** a six to eight page essay (1500 - 2000 words) on a topic agreed upon with the instructor, consisting in the articulated and convincing treatment of a topic pertinent to the course.

**Decorum**

Cell-phones off; no food and beverages admitted, except for bottled water

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 and Late Work Policy**

Attendance is taken at the beginning of class from the first day of the semester. The student entering class after attendance is taken has to contact the professor at the end and announce his/her presence. However, this does not mean that coming late is accepted. Two late arrivals may be excused, three turn automatically into an absence and will affect the attendance and participation part of the final grade.

Students can be late for one week’s work. It is their responsibility, however, to make up for the missed work. If they miss a quiz or a report they are not allowed to have it at another time, unless the absence is for certified medical reasons and the professor and Dean agree.

More than two absences, including site visits, missed is going to be penalized as follows:

- One extra absence by lowering the attendance and participation grade
- Two extra absences by lowering the final grade by a whole letter grade
- Three extra absences by grading the whole course F

Papers submitted late will receive a grade penalty as follows: 1 day-1 letter grade (e.g., A- to B-), 2 days-2 letter grades (e.g., A- to C-), more than 2 days-grade of 0 / F on the assignment.

The evaluation is done according to the following criteria:

- well formulated argument (rhetorical strategy)
- ability to approach an issue from various points of view and evaluate them critically
- good use of bibliography. Sources need to be cited and listed at the end in the Bibliography. Class notes can build the frame of your argumentation, but will not be cited as primary sources.
- clarity of expression including quality of style (grammar, spelling).

**Significance for the final grade of attendance and participation**

A: the student has no absence, is punctual and respectful with the professors and the classmates, is always prepared for class (has done the reading and writing assignments); He/she vividly participates in class discussions and contributes with interpretations which prove fine critical sense and creativity, using a grammatically correct, semantically rich and conceptually clear language.

B – the student is respectful and punctual, is prepared for class, participates in discussions, has a good level of understanding the issues under focus and an appropriate use of language.

C – has an adequate but schematic or superficial understanding of the texts and issues under focus, is not always prepared for class, uses a simple language.

**Grades Significance for written assignments**

Grade A: the work is an excellent synthesis of elaborated course in-puts, extensive reading and original ideas; it is well articulated in a balanced argumentation and formulated in a clear, fluent style.
**Grade B:** the work shows a good elaboration of the course inputs, a well-conducted discourse and a good use of bibliography; it has a good level of style.

**Grade C:** the work proves a basic understanding of the research issue, but does not use the bibliography properly/or does not express ideas in a persuasive clear style or lacks in discourse planning, therefore needing improvement.

**Grade D:** The work is acceptable, but weak in terms of formulating and discussing the question under focus and organizing the discourse. It relies on non-academic sources and does not, in general, comply with the requirements, unless in minimal way.

**Grade F:** The work is not acceptable in terms of the basic requirements or has not been submitted in time.

**Grade 0:** the work has not been submitted

**Grade 0 + Main Campus Report:** the work has been plagiarized.

**Grades Conversion Example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version I</th>
<th>Version II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A= 94-100</td>
<td>93.6-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A - = 90-93</td>
<td>89.6-93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+ = 87 – 89</td>
<td>86.6 – 89.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B= 84-86</td>
<td>84.6 -86.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B- = 80-83</td>
<td>79.6 -84.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+ = 77-79</td>
<td>76.6 – 79.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C = 74-76</td>
<td>73.6 – 76.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C- =70-73</td>
<td>69.6 – 73.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+ = 67-69</td>
<td>66.6 – 69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D = 65- 66</td>
<td>64, 6 – 66, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F = below 65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Academic Honesty**

Academic honesty is essential to education and represents the bond of trust between the university, the instructor and the student. **Academic dishonesty** is any action by which a student seeks to claim credit for the intellectual effort of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic exercise. It includes unauthorized assistance in tests and examinations; intentionally impeding or damaging the academic work of others; submitting another person's work as your own, or providing work for this purpose; submitting work of your own that has been substantially edited and revised by another person, or providing such an editing and revision service for others; submitting material from a source (books, articles, internet sites) without proper citation and bibliographic reference; paraphrasing material from a source without appropriate reference and citation; submitting substantially the same piece of work in more than one course without the explicit consent of all the instructors concerned; assisting other students in any of the above acts. **Students who are academically dishonest will receive “0”, zero on the work in question or a failing grade for the course as a whole, depending on the importance of the work to the overall course grade and the judgment of the instructor.**

**Plagiarism**

Academic dishonesty can manifest itself in plagiarism, defined as claiming intellectual property on somebody else's work, in other words as cultural theft. Written assignments will be submitted to the plagiarism detection procedures of TurnItIn.com., activated on Blackboard.

A plagiarated assignment/paper, research project, etc will be graded 0 (zero) and sent to the Main Campus accompanied by a report.

**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.