

THEO 190 CORE:

Ignatian Traditions

[3-credit course]

RATIONALE OF COURSE  
AND RELEVANT RESOURCE-MATERIAL

The proposed course is designed for transfer students, ranging from those with two years of college completed to those with more than one semester of transfer credit. All transfer students will be required to take this course (or Philosophy 190) regardless of how many other courses they take in Philosophy or Theology because it serves as an introduction to LUC's institution-specific mission. In this regard, the course aims to communicate and transmit LUC's commitment to ethical behavior, social justice, sustainable living, and global solidarity as well as its distinctive grounding in the Jesuit Catholic tradition.

The approach to the proposed course will be mediated by philosophical and theological discourse, weighted a bit in selections based on faculty in the two departments.

- (1) The course will introduce students to Jesuit Catholic perspectives on reality (including a theological anthropology of the human person) and the religious heritage in which such perspectives are grounded.
- (2) The course will explore the different ways of knowing humans are capable of, with an emphasis on critical and imaginative thought as well as the relationship of such thought to the university's Ignatian mission.
- (3) The course will explore a Catholic approach to ethics that (i) postulates God as the ultimate and common good, and (ii) investigates how person-centered theories about right action can be built on such a vision of the good but include an ethic of care that extends to the entire living environment.

Concern for the human person will be the theme that links the university's Jesuit Catholic heritage and mission to (a) different kinds of philosophical and theological thinking, (b) an exploration of different kinds of knowledge and the knowing subject who appropriates them, (c) a focus on the common good, justice, human rights, care for the environment and the living world, and (d) a concern for the excluded and marginalized.

An important LUC mission document, *Transformative Education in the Jesuit Tradition* (hereafter "TE"), states:

The CORE should result in a radical transformation not only of the way the student sees him or herself but also in the way the student habitually perceives, thinks, and acts in the world. In order to accomplish this, the CORE must be more

than a set of distribution requirements; it must be an integrated curriculum designed to produce ever deepening reflection and new habits of the heart, mind and will. It should enable students to integrate faith with intellectual and cultural life. The CORE experience needs to be something consistently describable by all students rather than merely dependent on teachers, syllabi, etc.

Accordingly, the course will both expose students to a variety of core texts and ways of thinking and help students develop the ability to reflect on and engage them with the aim of articulating a thoughtful, coherent response to the mission and life of the university.

While the texts suggested below are not all philosophical or theological texts in the technical sense, they are to be addressed philosophically and theologically. The goal of the course is not only to engage in historical or textual study of, for example, Plato or Hume, Augustine or Martin Luther King, Jr., but also to engage their thinking in relation to the themes of the LUC mission. The instructor is to be encouraged to invite other individuals to speak to the class on particular topics (e.g. Steve Mitten, S.J. in the Institute for Environmental Sustainability on environmental ethics, Marcia Hermansen, Tracy Pintchman or Devorah Schoenfeld on parallels to Jesuit spirituality in Islam, Hinduism or Judaism) where the speaker can make an explicit and in-depth link to the mission document.

The course should address the following themes, by lectures, significant class discussion, and even film, combining both content and the experiential.

### **Part I: The Human Person: Reality and the Transcendent**

An exploration of the Catholic understanding of the person, in which persons are attuned to the human need for transcendence, meaning, the divine (God); some study of how religious experience is reflected in different cultural and historical contexts; development of the analytic and expressive ability to reflect on one's own personal spirituality; and an articulation of how a spiritual journey can be supported by the Loyola experience.

- a. The following list offers examples of texts that would be appropriate for this unit of the course.
  - A response to TE's (*Transformative Education*): "A Hunger for an Adult Spirituality"
  - The Hebrew Bible: Genesis 1 and 2
  - Christian Scriptures, "The Sermon on the Mount" (Matthew 5-7); "The Prodigal Son" (Luke 10) and "The Good Samaritan" (Luke
  - Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins; the Poetry of Rumi and Hafiz [Charles Taliaferro, *The Golden Cord: A Short Book on the Secular and the Sacred* (2013)]<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Readings suggested are representative. The course instructor is at liberty to add other readings, but should use at least some of those nominated here.

- Lawrence Kushner, *God Was in This Place and I, I Did Not Know* (This is an introduction to Jewish spirituality for those who would like to include a Jewish approach)
- Eknath Easwaran, *The Essence of the Bhagavad Gita* (for Hindu spirituality)
- Tobe Melora Correal, *Finding Soul on the Path of Orisa: A West African Spiritual Tradition* (for Yoruba religion)
- Plato, *Republic* (The Cave)
- Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (narrative structure of the self).
- Selections from Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is*
- G. K. Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday*.
- David Loy, *Nonduality: A Study of Comparative Philosophy*. (Focuses on the nonduality of subject and object in Buddhism, Vedanta, and Taoism, with reference to Western thinkers including Wittgenstein, Heidegger and William Blake.)

## **Part II: Human Persons: Knowers of the Good and the Beautiful**

In the Jesuit Catholic understanding of the person, a person is an inquirer/knower. The course will explore the implications of being an inquirer/knower, such as being observant and attentive to human experience, open-minded and imaginative in seeking understanding, critical and balanced in judging, and attentive to balancing rationality and emotional intelligence. The following list offers examples of texts that would be appropriate for this unit of the course.

- A response to TE's "A Hunger for Integrated Knowledge"
- Brief extracts from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.
- Selections from Augustine's *Confessions*.
- Selections from Boethius, *The Consolations of Philosophy*
- *A Pilgrim's Journey: The Autobiography of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, Intro and Translation by Joseph Tylanda, S.J. (Ignatius Press, 2001).
- Short story, "Revelation" by Flannery O'Connor (The Complete Stories, FSG, 1971)

## **Part III: Human Persons and Solidarity in Action**

In the Jesuit Catholic tradition, the human person is a locus of value. The student will develop an understanding of what it means to say that human beings are children of God, or ends in themselves, with intrinsic value. He or she will also come to understand the ways in which human beings can be originators of value, identifying objective common, social, and personal goods. Some explanation must be given of how Catholic moral norms, oriented to action, are ultimately grounded in the Catholic understanding of the human good. The following list offers examples of texts that would be appropriate for this unit of the course.

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- Response to TE's "A Hunger for a Moral Compass"
- Selections from John Paul II's *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (Social Concern, 1987).
- Selections from the U.S. Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter, "Economic Justice for All" (1986).
- Selections from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship*.
- The political poetry on peace and justice by Denise Levertov.
- Dorothy Day's spiritual autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*.

Since we live in an era of globalization, the course will include global perspectives on the Jesuit Catholic ethic of civic participation. The following list offers examples of texts that would be appropriate for this unit of the course.

- Response to TE's "Hungers for Civic Participation and a Global Paradigm".
- Chapters from Martha Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*
- Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address
- Martin Luther King, *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*
- Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory*
- David Batstone, *Not for Sale: The Return of the Global Slave Trade*
- Diana Eck, *A New Religious America*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, the student will be able to: (1) demonstrate a cogent understanding of the LUC vision and mission, (2) demonstrate comprehension of the content of the course as presented in required readings; and (3) respond and react to the LUC mission statement in ways that are indicative of some personal engagement with it, drawing on the disciplines of Philosophy and Theology (as well as other possible disciplines, including Religious Studies, History or Anthropology).