DESCRIPTION: This course will focus on central issues of Christian theology today:

a. Who is God and what is God’s relationship to Creation and Humanity
b. Who is Jesus and what does Jesus reveal about God and about humans
c. How have Christian believers interacted with and expressed their understanding and experience of God and Jesus across history.

REQUIRED TEXTS


Foley, Edward, From Age to Age: How Christians have Celebrated the Eucharist (Chicago: LTP Publications, 1991) ISBN 0929650417


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

a. Reading of all assigned materials and participation in class discussions
b. Take Home Mid-Term Essay (4-5 pages) DUE OCTOBER 6**
c. In Class Mid-Term Exam: October 20 (multiple choice and essay)
d. New Testament Analysis (Individual Component DUE OCTOBER 27; Group Presentation due November 3)
e. Term Paper Topic, Bibliography and Brief Outline: (1 or 2 pages total): DUE November 8
f. Term Paper (7-8 pages) DUE DECEMBER 1**
g. Final Exam (course Part II multiple choice T/F on December 8; cumulative oral – individual appointments during final exam week)

** Paper Guidelines:

a. The Take Home Mid-Term Essay will be a review of the major issues discussed in class for the first half of the semester. The student will respond in essay form to three questions.
b. The New Testament Analysis will be an application of methods of New Testament study to selected biblical texts. Each student will first analyze a set of texts individually and then combine findings with others in the class according to pre-selected groups. These groups will be assigned in class. Each group will present its findings in a class presentation.
c. The Term paper will present a theme from contemporary experience (for example, Globalization/Free Trade; AIDS, War/Peace, Terrorism, etc.) and will bring this topic INTO DIALOGUE with the course material. The topic will be selected by the student and approved by the instructor.
d. The Term paper should present a coherent theme, clear organization and flow of ideas from Introduction to Conclusion, careful citing of positions taken through footnotes, personal engagement in the subject matter, demonstrated mastery of the various issues involved with the topic and a well presented and informed personal opinion on the topic addressed.
e. Questions regarding sources, substance or interpretation are welcomed during my office hours.

GRADING

*The take home mid term essay and in-class mid-term will comprise 1/3 of the grade. The New Testament Analysis and Part II Exam will comprise 1/3 of the grade. The term paper and cumulative oral final will comprise 1/3 of the grade

*Opportunities for extra credit writing (contingent upon related special events taking place at the University) will be offered.

ATTENDANCE

… will be taken. Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade. University policy specifies that first year students “will receive a grade of XF (failure) whenever s/he has been absent unexcused once more than double the number of weekly meetings of the course.” (translates into 5 unexcused absences for this course).

ACADEMIC HONESTY

It is expected that students are familiar with the university’s academic honesty guidelines.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Villanova seeks to make reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability, please contact me outside of class, and make arrangements to register with the Learning Support Office (95636; nancy.mott@villanova.edu).

OFFICE HOURS

Mondays: 12-2pm; Thursdays 1:30-3:00. Other times by appointment
Office location: St. Rita’s Hall lower level
Office phone: 610-519-4089
Email: don.giannella@villanova.edu
Part I
INTRODUCTION

August 25: Introduction/Definitions/Pre-suppositions… Theology/Religion
SCHILLEBEECKX HANDOUT GIVEN

August 30: Who are we? Clarifying our class view in relation to the Christian story (God; Jesus; Human Condition)
Read: handout: Schillebeeckx

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN VIEWS ON GOD’S RELATION TO CREATION AND HUMANS

September 1: The Biblical Story of the Origins of the World and Humans
Read: Genesis 1-3; Edwards pp. 1-13

September 6: The Biblical Story of the relationship with God, the Earth, Humanity
Read: Genesis 4-12
Write: Summary of each chapter in your own words in preparation for discussion

SEPTEMBER 8: ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA DAY: ADJUSTED SCHEDULE

September 13: The Relationship of God and Humanity within a Contemporary Worldview
Read: Edwards pp. 14-34 MID TERM THEMATIC ESSAY QUESTIONS GIVEN

September 15: Theological Perspectives on God’s Creative Activity:
The Process of the Universe and Creation
Read: Edwards pp. 35-55

September 20: Theological Perspectives on God’s Creative Activity:
Development of Humanity and the ‘Language’ of Sin
Read: Edwards pp. 56-77

September 22: God’s Spirit in Relationship with Creation
Read: Edwards pp. 78-100

September 27: The Meaning of Jesus – Fulfillment of God’s Plan for Creation
Read: Edwards pp. 101-125
CHRISTIANITY BEGINS IN THE HISTORICAL PERSON: JESUS OF NAZARETH

September 29: Understanding Jesus within a Developing Community of Belief
Christological Developments
Read: Wright: pp. 14-33

October 4: Who Do YOU Say that I am? Truth or Heresy
CHURCH COUNCILS HANDOUT GIVEN
Read: Wright: pp. 96-125

October 6: MID TERM THEMATIC ESSAY QUESTIONS DUE
Introduction to Christian Scriptures; Presuppositions
ASSIGN INDIVIDUALS TO GROUPS FOR NEW TESTAMENT ANALYSIS
FALL BREAK

October 18: Who did the Early Believers say that he is? – and Mid Term Review Session
Read:
  a. Mark 1: Matthew 1:4-11; Luke 1:4-13; John 1

October 20: MID TERM EXAM

Part II
October 25: Mid-Term Exam Return/Review; Begin: The Jesus who lived in History
Read: Wright: pp. 34-53

October 27: The Jesus who lived in History (continued)
Jesus and the Kingdom of God
Read: Wright: pp. 54-73
INDIVIDUAL NEW TESTAMENT ANALYSIS DUE

November 1: Retrieving the Words and Deeds of Jesus Initial Work

Group 1
Mk 2:1-3:12 (Mt 9:1-12:16; Lk 5:17-6:19)
Mt 11:2-19; Lk 7:18-35
Lk 15:1-32 (Mt 18:12-14)
Mk 7:1-23 (Mt 15:1-20; Lk 11:37-41)
Lk 18:9-14
Jn 7:53-8:11

Group 2
Mk 4:1-20 (Mat 13:1-23; Lk 8:4-15)
Mt 20:1-16
Lk 17:7-10
Lk 10:29-37
Mk 4:30-32 (Mt 13:31-33; Lk 13:18-21)
Mt 4:24-7:29; Lk 6:17-7:1 (Mk 1:21-22)

Group 3
Mt 12:22-30; Lk 11:14-23 with Mk 3:22-27; compare Mt 9:32-34
Mt 8:5-13; Lk 7:1-10 with Jn 4:46-54
November 3: Retrieving Words and Deeds of Jesus: GROUP PRESENTATIONS

November 8: GROUP PRESENTATIONS FINISH and The Death of Jesus: What Happened?
Read:
Mk 11:1-33; Mt 21:1-27; Lk 19:28-20:8; Jn 12:12-19; Jn 2:13-22
TERM PAPER TOPICS DUE

Read: Wright: pp. 74-95

November 15: The Resurrection of Jesus
Read: Wright: pp. 126-149

November 17: The Folly of the Cross, The Spirit, The Believers in Transition #G#
Read: Wright: pp. 126-149
Macy Handout: pp 15-66

THE BELIEVERS INTERPRET AND LIVE THE MEMORY AND MESSAGE OF JESUS

November 22: The Message and the Believers interact with the culture of the first and Second Millennium
Read: Macy Handout: pp 67-102

THANKSGIVING BREAK

November 29: Questioning, Reaction: Unity/Diversity
Read: Macy Handout: pp. 103-182
ORAL FINAL EXAM APPOINTMENT SIGN UPS

December 1: God, Jesus, Humanity Issues and Answers
Read: Macy Handout: pp. 189-201
Bring: Issue to be discussed within parameters described in class
TERM PAPER DUE

December 6: God, Jesus, Humanity Part II Some or All? ##
Read: Edwards: pp. 126-128
Wright: pp. 174-197

December 8: Part II Exam, Final Reflections CATS Reports (this class will take the whole period)

FINAL EXAM APPOINTMENTS WILL BE ARRANGED to take place on either Thursday December 15 1-6pm OR Saturday December 17 6:30-10:30pm (The official exam time for this course is Saturday December 17, 4:15-6:45) Schedule will be arranged in class (November 29) by seniority.