UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: Fall 2014
Instructor: Dr. Robert Masson
Course #: THEO 2420
Sections: 101, 102
Course Title: Bridging the Racial Divide

Description:

Examination of racism, ethnic tension, and theology from the perspective of “white privilege” and African-American experience in American Christianity, and particularly in American Catholicism. Reflects on the intersection of these areas to discover, on the one hand, what race, ethnic tension, and struggles for social justice can tell us about theological notions, and on the other hand, to discern how specific theological notions contribute positively or negatively to our understanding of race, ethnic tension and social justice.

The project for our course is inspired by novelist James Baldwin’s suggestion that Christians, particularly white Christians, need to do their first works over. He explained:

“To do your first works over means to reexamine everything. Go back to where you started, or as far back as you can, examine all of it, travel your road again and tell the truth about it. Sing or shout or testify or keep it to yourself: but know whence you came.”

Since I have written an introduction to theology and since students have completed an introduction to theology, we will look back on those roads and examine them in light of issues of race, ethnic tension, and struggles for social justice, to ask how we might better tell the truth about whence we came and about where we are headed.

Grades will be determined by class discussion, journal entries & quizzes, midterm examination and final paper.

Fulfills the University core requirement for diversity and for second-level theology.