

## Department of Theology

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### GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: **Spring 2009**  
Instructor: Patrick W. Carey  
Course #: THEO 286  
Course Title: American Catholic Theology

#### Content:

Within the American context, Catholics as well as Protestants have had to come to theological terms with religious and cultural pluralism, religious liberty, separation of church and state, voluntarism, and republicanism--to name a few characteristics of the American experience. American Catholic as well as American Protestant theology has likewise been affected by the major intellectual movements in American and European history (e.g., Enlightenment, Romanticism, Liberalism and Modernism, Social Gospel, Neo-Orthodoxy, Neo-Thomism, and varieties of Post-Vatican II theologies).

Some have argued that within this context American Catholics did not develop a theological tradition (until most recently). It is the argument of this course that a Catholic theological tradition was indeed evolving from the time of John Carroll (1780s) to the present, but that historians and theologians have paid little attention to it. It is the purpose of this course, therefore, to (1) acquaint students with the general context in which American Catholic theology has developed, (2) demonstrate some of the major contributions they have made to questions of fundamental theology, ecclesiology, religious liberty, ecumenism, social thought, etc., (3) show how American Catholic theology dialogued in a variety of ways with the major currents in the American experience, and (4) to point out areas of American Catholic thought that are badly in need of more research.

The course investigates the thought of selected thinkers from the late eighteenth century to the present (e.g., John Carroll, John England, Orestes Brownson, Isaac Hecker, John Ryan, Virgil Michel, John C. Murray).

#### Format:

Lectures will be given on each of the major movements in American Catholicism. Selected readings from each of the major periods will then be discussed in class. The last few classes will be devoted to a discussion of student papers.

#### Assignments and/or Examinations:

Three critical (2-double spaced pages) book reviews. One major research paper on a specific issue in a theologian's work.

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### Language Pre-requisites:

- English; depending on research, Latin, French, Polish, German, and Italian would be helpful but not required.

### Required Texts:

- P. Carey, ed, American Catholic Religious Thought (MU Press edition)  
P. Carey, Catholics in America: A History (update edition, 2008)  
P. Gleason, Contending With Modernity