

UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: **Fall 2010**
Instructor: Patrick Carey
Course #: THEO 4270/5270
Section: 101
Course Title: **American Catholic Life and Thought**

Description:

What is American and what is Catholic in American Catholicism? How did and do Catholics, who were and are a minority in the United States, establish and define their identity as Americans and as Catholics? Contemporary sociological studies indicate that young Catholics (i.e., those born after 1980) consider themselves Americans first and Catholics second, or, as some sociologists describe it, young Catholics put “conscience first, tradition second.” Do these sociological characterizations of young Catholics describe the reality of young Catholics today? In trying to answer these and other questions this course examines how Catholics in the past both criticized and adapted to American social, intellectual, and religious culture; how they understood and passed on their Catholic tradition; and how other Americans responded to and were changed by the Roman Catholics in their midst. The course investigates the historical experiences and writings of a number of representative American Catholic clerical and lay apologists and analyzes the development of American Catholic thought from the colonial period to the present.