UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: Fall 2008
Instructor: Dr. D. Lyle Dabney
Course #: THEO 111
Sections: 1002 and 1003
Course Title: Explorations in Christian Theology
Course Sub-Title: Theological Anthropology

Description:

What is human existence and what makes for a good life? While this question has been answered in classic ways in the history of the western tradition, it has been raised anew and become an important issue again in contemporary culture and Christian theology. This undergraduate course will introduce students to this discussion in an exploration of central themes in Christian theology such as God, Christ, Creation, Sin and Salvation, Sacraments, and Revelation through the lens of this renewed concern about the question of human being and becoming. The course will be divided into four parts. The first will examine the earliest human narrative that shaped the west: the heritage of the classical tradition. The second will investigate the rise of Christendom and the answer that the western theological tradition has offered to the question of our humanity. The third part will survey the emergence of modernity and the development of the new responses to the human question that it has championed. The final part of the course will explore the state of some of the central contemporary issues in the debates about being and becoming human in the light of the Biblical narrative.

The goals of this course are three: first, to enable the student to become conversant with some of the major forms of Christian anthropology in both their historical development and current configurations; second, to bring the student to an understanding of the underlying logic shaping this doctrine in the tradition; and third, to help the student begin to think through what he or she believes about human being and becoming today. In this way the class will be further prepared to meet the Student Learning Outcomes for the Knowledge Area of Theology adopted by the University in May of 2005. According to that document, each student should be able to perform the following three tasks:

1. Describe theologically the basic content of the Catholic faith in relation to other Christian and religious traditions as well as other world views.
2. Interpret theological texts and frameworks in their historical contexts.
3. Articulate implications of Christian faith for growth in holiness and the promotion of justice in the contemporary world.

The student will be evaluated according to the following three criteria: a) two exams designed to demonstrate the student’s mastery of the material presented in lectures, discussions, and readings (worth 25 and 35% of the final grade respectively, together a total of 60%); b) two book
review and response papers of about 10 pages each (worth 15% of the final grade respectively, together worth 30%); and c) class participation including attendance and discussion of readings as well as two brief essays (1 paragraph each) (10% of final grade). The due dates for each of the assignments will be specified on the syllabus available before the first day of class on CheckMarq and on the Raynor Library electronic reserves. Any exam taken or paper submitted later than the dates specified on the class syllabus may be subject to a reduction of the grade earned. Final grades will in general be assigned as follows: of the 100 possible points, A = 90% and above, B = 80 to 89%, C = 70 to 79%, D = 60 to 69%, F = anything below 60%.

Academic dishonesty will result in a grade of A$F@ or A$0" on an assignment or the course as a whole, in accordance with the New University Policy on Academic Honesty of 2006. As specified in that policy (see http://www.marquette.edu/pages/home/resourcecommons/bulletin), acts of academic dishonesty may include but are not limited to: copying material from a web page and submitting it as one’s own work; quoting extensively from a document without making proper references to the source; the illegitimate use of materials in any form during a quiz or examination; copying answers from the quiz or examination paper of another student; plagiarizing (submitting as one’s own ideas the work of another) or falsifying materials or information used in the completion of any assignment which is graded or evaluated as the student’s individual effort; obtaining, through theft, bribery, or collusion, or otherwise improperly securing an examination paper prior to the time and date for the administration of the examination; impersonating a candidate at an examination or availing oneself of such an impersonation; or submitting the same work for more than one course without the consent of the instructors of each course in which the work is submitted.

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class period. Any student who misses an excessive number of classes, as defined by the attendance policy of the College of Arts and Sciences (more than 4 absences for a 75 minute class), will have his or her final grade lowered or, in extreme cases (6) will be given a A$WA@ (Withdrawal for Excessive Absences). Once again, the policy can be found at http://www.marquette.edu/pages/home/resourcecommons/bulletin.

Required texts: