

### UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term:           **Spring 2008**  
Instructor:     Joseph G. Mueller, S.J.  
Course #:       Theo 197/896 (Senior Experience)  
Section:        1701  
Course Title:   Capstone Seminar

#### Description:

This is a course designed for seniors majoring in Theology. Other students may register by consent of the Director of Undergraduate Studies of the Theology Department. A particular theological topic is explored, giving attention to issues of method, and the different yet related contributions made by the sub-disciplines of biblical, historical, systematic, and moral theology. This semester our investigation will focus on **the theological topic of suffering and the mystery of redemption**. During the course of the semester, different instructors from the different theological sub-disciplines will be visiting the class, to discuss the theological topic of suffering and the mystery of redemption through the lens of their sub-disciplines. The course aims to provide a seminar-style experience that serves to do the following: 1. integrate major studies; 2. demonstrate the distinction-in-relation among various theological disciplines; 3. orient interested students to the sorts of work that graduate studies would entail.

In order to pursue these goals, this class will be conducted in a combination lecture/seminar format, with a stress on discussion. Conversations in which the texts we have read and the interventions of the various instructors are grappled with – commonly analyzed, appreciated, and critically engaged – will be a major aim of each seminar meeting. Every graduate seminar class I have ever attended or heard about involved the writing of papers. A 15-20 page paper will be required in this class. I am open to a wide variety of topics: if a student is interested in, for example, medical ethics, a paper that considers the topic of the class in relation to that particular discipline would be in order. A student who is thinking about a career in youth ministry might want to explore the resources available for dealing with this topic of suffering and redemption when the audience is not yet out of their teens. The non-Theology students in the class should think about ways to consider the class topic through the lens of their particular studies. Another common requirement of graduate classes is a formal presentation, usually of a paper. There are some obvious reasons for this requirement: the student shares the fruits of his or her research, the student gets practice teaching, the student gets practice presenting before his or her peers. So each student will give a 10-minute presentation of the outlines of his or her paper and will lead the class in a 10-minute question-and-answer discussion on the presentation. Very often M.A.-level classes have exams; we will have a take-home exam based on the readings and professors' interventions.

#### Required texts:

- Readings will be either put up on electronic reserve or distributed in class. For your Bible readings, feel free to use any translation.

