RGT2943H Social Faith, Eco-Justice and Beauty:
Religion and Reconciliation after a Secular Age
Regis College, Toronto School of Theology

Course Identification

Course Number: RGT2943H
Course Name: Social Faith, Eco-Justice and Beauty: Religion and Reconciliation after a Secular Age
Campus: Regis College

This class meets Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9am to 12pm for eight sessions, beginning on Monday May 2, 2016.   Minimum: 6   Maximum: 20

Instructor Information

Instructor: Gordon Rixon, SJ, PhD
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Course Prerequisites or Requisites

One course in theology.

Course Description

This course explores the spiritual integration of social activism, aesthetic appreciation, and critical reflection in a secular context. Students identify theological resources and develop a transdisciplinary approach to examining critically the contribution of religion to ecological, social, cultural and ecclesial reconciliation. Students explore an empathetic understanding of the evolution of ecological awareness and the rights of indigenous peoples. Assigned readings draw on authors such as Craig Calhoun, Cynthia Crysdale, John Dadosky, Robert Doran, Bernard Lonergan, Ronald Niezen, Karl Rahner, Thomas Reynolds, Paul Ricoeur, and Charles Taylor. The course includes two practical sessions in the development of social discernment facilitated in collaboration with social change practitioners from the Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice. The course process includes assigned readings, class discussions, online bulletin board participation and seminar participation in social discernment in the Ignatian tradition. Evaluation is based on regular, guided journaling and a short integration paper.

Course Methodology

Attendance at all sessions is required. Assigned readings are complete prior to each session. No later than 8pm on the day preceding a session, students post a question or short comment of no more than 100 words on assigned readings. Within one week of each session, students post a short 150-200 word journal entry in response to a guiding question. Within two weeks of the last session, students submit a final integration paper of 1,500 words.

Detailed instructions for journal entries and final integration paper with criteria for grading are found in the *Schedule of Readings and Assignments*, which is available on the course website.

Please, papers should be type-written, doubled spaced, left-justified, and have one inch margins on all sides and no more than 12 characters per inch (ie, a standard font, size 10-12 is acceptable). Do not exceed the page limit. Extensions for assignments are to be negotiated with the professor prior to the due-date. All sources must be documented in accord with accepted academic practice such as that described in Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 5th Edition, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. An excellent guide to style is presented in Joseph M. Williams, *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. For additional writing assistance, consult http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/

Course Itinerary and Assigned Readings

Unit One: The Challenge of Transforming Mysticism in the World

May 02 - Session 1: Spiritual Conversation

Introduction to course learning outcomes and process, and a facilitated introduction to the practice of social discernment.

Assigned Readings

Bernard Lonergan, "Sacralization and Secularization," in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 17 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp. 259-281.
Jane Jacobs, *The Nature of Economies* (Toronto: Random House, 2000).
David C. Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World* (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publications, 2015), pp. 1-18.

May 04 - Session 2: Religion and Activism after a Secular Age

Assigned Readings

Charles Taylor, "Modern Social Imaginaries" in *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 159-218.
Craig Calhoun, "Secularism, Citizenship and the Public Sphere" in *Rethinking Secularism*, ed. Craig Calhoun et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 75-91.

May 06 - Session 3: Beauty and Eco-Justice

Assigned Readings

Pope Francis, "Encyclical Letter Laudato Si': on Care for Our Common Home," 24 May 2015, available at www.vatican.va.
John Dadosky, "Philosophy for a Theology of Beauty" in *The Eclipse and Recovery of Beauty: A Lonergan Approach* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), pp. 204-214.
Gordon Rixon, "Beauty, Critical Reflection and Justice," *URAM* 34/1-2 (2011), pp. 130-152.

May 09 - Session 4: Religion and Indigenous Peoples after a Colonial Age

Assigned Readings

Ronald Niezen, "Solitudes" in *Truth and Indignation: Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Indian Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), pp. 145-157.

General Assembly, United Nations, *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (New York: United Nations, 61/295, 13 September 2007), available at http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Call to Action* (Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), available at http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Unit Two: Deepening a Theological Basis for Social Reconciliation

May 11 - Session 5: Resistance, Surrender and the Option for Marginalized Peoples

Assigned Readings

Cynthia Crysdale, "A Theological Model: Grace, Conversion, and the Law of the Cross" in *Embracing Travail: Retrieving the Cross Today* (New York: Continuum, 1999), pp. 125-150.

Robert M. Doran, "The Community of the Servant of God" in *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 108-135.

May 13 - Session 6: Utopia, Providence and Creaturehood

Assigned Readings

Thomas Reynolds, "Able Bodies" The Illusion of Control and the Denial of Vulnerability" in *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008), pp. 73-102.

Paul Ricoeur, "Utopia and Ideology" in *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics II*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and J. B. Thompson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991), pp. 308-324.

Unit Three: Developing a Response

May 16 - Session 7: Ignatian Mysticism in the World

Assigned Readings

Karl Rahner. "The Ignatian Mysticism of Joy in the World," in *Theological Investigations* 3, pp. 277-293.

Frederick Crowe, "Son of God, Holy Spirit and World Religions" in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), pp. 324-343.

May 18 - Session 8: Spiritual Conversation

Review and evaluation of course learning outcomes and process, and a facilitated, differential experience of social discernment.

Assigned Readings

Bernard Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History" in *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan,* vol. 15 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), pp. 97-106.

James L. Marsh, "Intellectual, Moral and Religious Conversion as Radical Political Conversion" in *Lonergan in the World: Self-Appropriation, Otherness and Justice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), pp. 107-127.

Course Outcomes

Basic Program Level (MDiv and MTS): At the successful completion of this course students will have

Personal and Spiritual Formation

engaged intentionally in a spiritual integration of social analysis, aesthetic appreciation, and critical theological reflection;

reflected on their public agency as faith-based actors for change in a pluralist, secular context;

developed an empathetic understanding of some dimensions of the histories of indigenous peoples and the natural environment;

Religious Heritage

identified theological resources for environmental, social, cultural and ecclesial reconciliation;

identified key moments in the development of church doctrine on the autonomy of indigenous peoples and the integrity of the natural environment;

Cultural Context

identified and reflected critically on the ecclesial, social and cultural contexts in which they participate as faith-based agents of social transformation;

Public Leadership

collaborated effectively in diads and small groups;

practiced social discernment as a response to environmental, social, cultural and ecclesial issues in Canada and beyond;

Research and Scholarship

developed a transdisciplinary approach to examining critically the contribution of religion to ecological, social, cultural and ecclesial reconciliation.

Course Resources

Required Course Texts

Where copyright laws permit, scans of course reading will be made available through the course website. Additional readings available through short term loan service at Regis College.

Course Website and E-Mail Communication

This course uses Blackboard for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT portal login page at http://portal.utoronto.ca and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at Blackboard.)

Are you ready to manage the learning technology required by this course?
In order to enjoy the learning opportunities offered by this course, and not get too focused on the learning technology that is assumed from the beginning, you will need to be able to manage the following:
1) PC Windows or Apple computing environment
2) Web browser such as Explorer, Firefox or Safari
3) Logging onto UofT resources with your UTORid and password
4) Receive and send email on the University of Toronto's @mail.utoronto.ca system
5) Download course materials from Blackboard
6) Post and read contributions to the course bulletin board (through Blackboard)
7) Take quizzes and surveys on Blackboard
8) Check assigned grades for completed work on Blackboard
Instructions for some of these activities are posted below.

Note also the information at http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students. For additional help, please attend the Blackboard session available through the Regis Library ASK program, further information available at http://www.regiscollege.ca/ask

Evaluation

Requirements

The semester score will be allocated as follows: eight online bulletin board postings (20%), eight journal entries (40%), final integration paper (40%). Class attendance is mandatory. All semester scores are subject to review and adjustment.

Grading System
> A+ (90-100)
> A (85-89)
> A- (80-84)
> B+ (77-79)

B (73-76)
B- (70-72)
Failure

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

Late work. Students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. Instructors are not obliged to accept late work, except where there are legitimate, documented reasons beyond a student's control. In such cases, a late penalty is normally not appropriate. If accepted, all other late work may be subjected to a 5 mark penalty per day.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University of Toronto grading policy (http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm).

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker they can obtain assistance.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* (linked from http://www.tst.edu/content/handbooks) and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (available at link below).

Students will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges and available at the following link (http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm.

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of *Behaviour on Academic Matters* http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm).

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http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

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