

RGT1101HF Foundations of Theology Syllabus
Regis College, Toronto School of Theology
Subject to Change

Course Identification

Course Number: RGT1101HF
Course Name: Foundations of Theology
Campus: Regis College

Optional tutorials will be arranged to support students who are new to theological studies and encountering theological and philosophical texts for the first time.

Instructor Information

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

None

Course Description

This course examines the historical development and contemporary practice of theology as an exercise of intellectual probity and religious commitment. Topics include the origins of Christian theology, its historical development, the relationship of religious narrative to religious doctrine, faith and reason, revelation and authority, tradition and development. The course introduces the theological methodology developed by Bernard Lonergan.

Course Methodology

This course employs the completion of preparatory reading prior to each class, regular mandatory bulletin board discussion, written assignments, on-line quizzes, final take home examination.

Preparation for First Class

Please read the following two selections (bulletin board questions are not required for the first class, see the Unit One Schedule of Readings and Assignments for guiding questions):

Berger, Benjamin. "Introduction" in *Law's Religion: Religious Difference and the Claims of Constitutionalism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015, pp. 3-21. Regis STL. Scan available on course website.

Casanova, José. "The Secular, Secularizations, Secularism" in *Rethinking Secularism*, eds. Craig Calhoun et al. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 31-53. Regis STL. Scan available on course website.

Course Itinerary

Reading Schedules with assigned class preparation readings, guiding questions, suggestions for library research and other resources for each unit are available on the course website.

Unit One: Beyond Encounter – Interpreting and Responding to Religious Narratives

- Session 1: Reflecting on Post-Secular Religious Narratives
- Session 2: Sixteenth Century Spiritual Narratives: Rhetorical Reading
 - *The Autobiography of Ignatius of Loyola*
- Session 3: Sixteenth Century Spiritual Narratives: Structuralist Reading
 - *The Life of Teresa of Avila*

Transitional Class

- Session 4: Contemporary Indigenous and Christian Narratives
 - Discovering the spiritual other, introducing Blair Stonechild, *The Knowledge Seeker: Embracing Indigenous Spirituality*
 - Discovering self-transcending, religious agency, introducing Bernard Lonergan's *Method in Theology*

Unit Two: What is Theology?

- Session 5: Mediation in History (Lonergan and Ronald Niezen)
- Session 6: Meaning (Lonergan and Charles Taylor)
- Reading Week: No Class
- Session 7: Religion / Conversion (Lonergan and Hans Urs von Balthasar)
- Session 8: Foundations / Hermeneutics (Lonergan and Paul Ricoeur)

Unit Three: Foundational Aspects of Religious Narrative

- Session 9: Revelation and Tradition
- Session 10: Doctrine and Development
- Session 11: Faith and Reason
- Session 12: Dialectic of Authority

Class Preparation and Mandatory Bulletin Board Participation

Attendance at class is required. Weekly reading assignments should be completed prior to each class. Students submit questions based on the readings to the online course bulletin board by noon the Wednesday prior to the 2:00 pm class on Thursday. Students may comment on other students' question by the Tuesday following class. Students are not allowed to make more than three postings in any given week. The professor will review bulletin board exchanges on a regular basis and generally respond during the class lectures.

Due Dates for Written Assignments and Online Quizzes (due at beginning of session as noted below)

Unit 1: Beyond Encounter

- Session 01: No Writing or Quiz Due
- Session 02: No Writing or Quiz Due
- Session 03: 1 Page Written Assignment

Transitional Class

- Session 04: 1 Page Written Assignment

Unit 2: What is Theology?

Session 05: 1 Page Written Assignment

Session 06: Online Quiz

Reading Week October 27: No Class

Session 07: Online Quiz

Session 08: No Writing or Quiz Due

Unit 3: Foundational Topics

Session 09: 2 Page Written Assignment

Session 10: No Writing or Quiz Due

Session 11: No Writing or Quiz Due

Session 12: Online Quiz

Exam Week: Final Take Home Examination

Detailed instructions for each written assignment and rubrics with criteria for grading are found on the course website in the "Course Material" folder. Written assignments are submitted using the upload link that accompanies the instructions for the assignment.

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 Outcomes

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

Personal and Spiritual Formation

reflected intentionally on their encounter with a religious text within its cultural/religious context;

identified, articulated and assessed their intellectual and affective responses to a text;

evaluated critically an account of cognitional theory, social anthropology, and religious anthropology in relation to their own cognitive, affective and religious experience;

developed pastoral agency by relating their own voice as theologians to the word spoken by the tradition;

Religious Heritage

distinguished and interrelated the doctrinal and systematic functions of theology;

appreciated the significance of historical consciousness for the development of a dynamic ecclesiology;

analyzed and interrelated the anthropological and theological issues at stake in the development and permanence of the doctrine of their religious heritage;

identified key moments and elements of the development of church doctrine on Revelation, Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, authority and the relation of faith and reason;

Cultural Context

identified and assessed the secular/religious horizons within which they interpret texts and respond to pastoral needs;

identified, applied and assessed one or more approaches to interpreting texts within their cultural/religious contexts;

identified some key characteristics of the post-Vatican II context of indigenous, Canadian and (Québec) theology;

Public Leadership

collaborated effectively in diads and small groups;

identified implications of doctrine for witness to justice, ecological integrity and preferential care for youth and marginalized peoples;

applied course learning to assess the pastoral need in a selected region (e.g. GTA) and propose a strategic apostolic response;

Research and Scholarship

distinguished text as data for interpretation and text as hypothetically interpreted;

accessed and assessed relevant secondary literature to assist in their interpretation of texts;

identified the principle terms and relations of Lonergan's cognitional theory (including its affective and spiritual dimensions), social anthropology (including the structure of the human good and the dimensions of meaning) and religious anthropology (including conversion, the distinction of faith and belief, and the differentiation and interrelation of inner and outer word);

contrasted an aspect of Lonergan's cognitional theory, social anthropology or religious anthropology with the approach of another theologian;

distinguished spiritual, pastoral, theological and methodological reflection.

Course Resources

Required Course Texts

Students may wish to purchase Lonergan's *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto). A limited number of copies are available through Crux Bookstore in Wycliffe College on the lower level, entrance off Tower Road.

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: three online quizzes (5% each, 15% total), three 1-page papers (10% each, 30% total), one 2-page papers (25%), final take home examination (25%), bulletin board preparation (5%). 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.

Maintaining Course Enrolment. To complete registration, a student enrolls in course(s) and pay fees. Courses of students who have not paid fees will be automatically removed (FINCA – financially cancelled) on a specific date each term (see the College website for Dates to Note). If a student's enrolment record is financially cancelled, he or she is no longer entitled to attend classes.

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). Sanctions may include failure in an assignment, failure in a course or possible expulsion from the university.

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).

The following paragraph complies with University of Toronto policy requirements for the use of online plagiarism detection technology.

"Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site."

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>).

Library Resources. Please do not annotate, underline or highlight library books. Marks render the books unusable for machine readers required for student accessibility services. Students and other patrons defacing library resources may incur penalties including suspension of library privileges.