

Prayer, Poetry, and Hopkins -- SPST 3525

Fridays 12:40 -- 3:30; JSTB # 117

Rev. Francis X. McAloon, S.J., Ph.D.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Focusing upon the writings of the 19th century English Jesuit and poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins, this course examines the Christian spiritual practice of praying with poetry using *lectio divina*. Grounded in Paul Ricoeur's theory of interpretation we shall

- immerse ourselves in Hopkins' poetry, letters, journals, and sermons (the world *of* the text);
- examine aspects of Hopkins' intellectual, religious, and cultural context (the world *behind* the text); and
- engage the world "*in front of* the text" through various means, including *lectio divina*, form criticism, poetics, and methods of interpretation and appropriation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Open to students in all degree programs, this is a 3000-level seminar with some lecture and a great deal of reading, reflection, and discussion, as well as some writing. Students are expected to:

- Complete all assigned readings in preparation for class.
- Actively participate in class discussions.
- Submit occasional 1-2 page response papers.
- Memorize and recite for the class one Hopkins sonnet.
- Write a research paper appropriate to one's degree level (10-20 pages), on a topic to be determined in consultation with the professor.
- Offer an in-class oral précis of one's research.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- (1) Introduce the academic discipline of Christian Spirituality.
- (2) Learn or further develop one's practice of *lectio divina*.
- (3) Study the life, writings, and spirituality of Gerard Manley Hopkins.
- (4) Develop skills in literary, poetical, and hermeneutical analysis.
- (5) Develop or enhance one's love for poetry!

TEXTS

Casey, Michael. *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*. Liguori, MO: Liguori/Triumph, 1996. ISBN: 0892438916. REQUIRED.

Jenkins, Alice, ed. *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Sourcebook*. (Routledge Guide to Literature). New York: Routledge Press, 2006. ISBN: 0415255244. REQUIRED.

Lichtmann, Maria. *Poetry as Prayer: Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2002. ISBN 0-8198-5936-2. REQUIRED

Milward, Peter. *A Commentary on the Sonnets of G.M. Hopkins*. Chicago: Loyola Press, 1969. ISBN: 0-8294-0936-X. OPTIONAL.

Oliver, Mary. *A Poetry Handbook* ("A Harvest Original"). San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994. ISBN: 0156724006. REQUIRED.

_____. *Rules for the Dance: A Handbook for Writing and Reading Metrical Verse* ("A Mariner Original"). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998. ISBN: 039585086x. REQUIRED.

Phillips, Catherine, ed. *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Critical Edition of the Major Works*. The Oxford Authors, Frank Kermonde, gen. ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990. ISBN: 0192813862. REQUIRED.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

- 40% Research Paper & Class Presentation
- 30% Occasional Short Papers
- 30% Class Participation and oral interpretation of poem