

Reading for Transformation

SPST 4118

Fall 2007

Friday 12:40-3:30

JSTB Classroom #216

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Employing Ricoeur's *Interpretation Theory* and drawing upon the writings of Sandra Schneiders, we explore strategies for reading, understanding, and appropriating classic texts of Christian Spirituality. This semester we begin with a selective engagement with the Gospel of John and then critically engage the following classic texts: Athanasius' *Life of Anthony*; Julian of Norwich's *Showings*, Ignatius of Loyola's selected writings, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life Together* and *Prayerbook of the Bible*. This seminar is open to students from all GTU graduate programs and satisfies masters level degree requirements for a methodology course in Christian spirituality.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To introduce graduate students to the academic study of Christian Spirituality
- ❖ through the hermeneutical writings of Paul Ricoeur and Sandra Schneiders,
- ❖ focusing upon the critical existential interpretation – reading for transformation – of selected classic texts within Christian spirituality, and
- ❖ writing a graduate level research paper (appropriate to one's degree program).

EVALUATION AND GRADING

30%	Weekly Papers
30%	Class Participation and Presentations
40%	Major Paper

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together and Prayerbook of the Bible*. English ed., Geoffrey B. Kelley. Trans. Daniel W. Bloesch and James H. Burtness. *DBWE 5*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.
- Colledge, Edmund, O.S.A. and James Walsh, S.J., trans. *Julian of Norwich: Showings*. The Classics of Western Spirituality, ed. Bernard McGinn. New York: Paulist Press, 1978.
- Ganss, George E., ed. *Ignatius of Loyola: The Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*. The Classics of Western Spirituality, ed. Bernard McGinn. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1991.
- Gregg, Robert C., trans. *Athanasius: The Life of Anthony and The Letter to Marcellinus*. The Classics of Western Spirituality, ed. Bernard McGinn. New York: Paulist Press, 1980.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University Press, 1976.
- Schneiders, Sandra M. *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting The New Testament As Sacred Scripture*. 2nd ed. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press/A Michael Glazier Book, 1999.
- Wind, Renate. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Spoke in the Wheel*. Trans. John Bowden. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992. [Recommended]

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Reading and Participation:** All students, including auditors, must complete weekly reading assignments before each class and actively, responsibly participate in class discussions.
- **Class Presentation:** In addition to small and large group discussions throughout the semester, all students will occasionally present on their ongoing research. Doctoral students are required to lead a class discussion on one of our four major authors.
- **GTU Library Workshops:** New students are encouraged to participate in the GTU library's wide offering of on-line and on-site tutorial workshops for gaining graduate-level library skills. If you are unfamiliar with Turabian, you are strongly encouraged to sign-up for this workshop. For more information, go to <<http://library.gtu.edu/reference/workshops.html>>.
- **Weekly Response Papers:** During September, there are no writing assignments. Beginning in October, students will write weekly 1-2-page response papers (double spaced, 12 pt. font, formal essay style) on the reading for each class session. Because these papers focus upon the reading of the day, late submissions are not accepted. In the event of an absence, students should submit a 3-4 page paper on the reading for the next class session. Students should structure their weekly essays in terms of the three worlds surrounding the text, that is, (1) the world OF the Text (2) the world BEHIND the text, and (3) the world BEFORE the text. Over the course of the semester, these weekly essays should evolve into well-crafted critical existential engagements with the texts we read. Students are free to focus attention upon themes, topics, or criticisms of their choosing. Please avoid extended quotations from the text; instead use parenthetical page references, e.g., "(Schneiders, 134)."
- **Major Paper Options**
 - **Students in pastoral degree programs** (MDiv, STB, ThM/MTS projects) may write one research paper (see below) or two 5-7 page "reading for transformation" papers, which are longer, more focused versions of their weekly papers. While these papers do not require research outside of course materials, your particular interest in a text may require you to explore relevant outside resources. These papers (hard copies) are due the class following our final class discussion of the text about which you choose to write. The dates listed are final due dates: Athanasius (10/12); Julian of Norwich (11/9); Ignatius of Loyola (11/30); D. Bonhoeffer (12/15)
 - **Students in academic degree programs** write a research paper of a length appropriate to their degree program: PhD and DMin write 18-20 pages; MA, STL, and ThM/MTS (thesis) write 13-15 pages, and students in pastoral programs choosing this option should aim for 10 pages. The length of papers listed above are the maximum number of pages, including endnotes and bibliography. All papers must follow the Turabian stylebook. Research topics are approved in consultation with the professor and must focus on one of our four major authors. Doctoral students choosing to use this paper for GTU "research readiness" purposes must consult with the professor. Please note the following deadlines:
 - Due **October 31**, an email attachment to fmcaloon@jstb.edu, which includes a brief paragraph (no more than one page in length, double spaced, 12 pt. font) indicating the text you've chosen to research and some initial thoughts on possible topics, themes, or questions you would like to explore. Your choice of text is final, but you are not bound by these initial thoughts on your project.
 - Due **November 16**, a formal thesis statement, preliminary outline, and bibliography of at least five secondary texts for masters-level students and ten secondary texts for doctoral level students. Please do not include class readings in this initial bibliography. Bibliographies must follow Turabian style. Submit a hard copy at class.
 - Due **December 14**, a final hard copy of your paper in the professor's JSTB mailbox before 5pm. No extensions without filing for a course incomplete prior to Dec. 14. If you cannot complete all semester requirements by December 14, 2005, you must petition for an incomplete before the end of the semester.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

9/7 Introductions; Syllabus; Lecture.

Theory: Schneiders' *The Revelatory Text* (hereafter *RT*), 1-26.

Praxis: Gospel of John 4:1-42; *RT*, 180-99.

9/14 Ricoeur's Philosophical Hermeneutics.

Theory: Ricoeur's *Interpretation Theory*, (hereafter *IT*), pp xi-xii, 1-44, 71-95. Also read two handouts: Ricoeur's "Philosophical Hermeneutics and Theology," *Theology Digest* 24 (summer 1976): 154-64 and Francis X. McAloon, "Ricoeurian Hermeneutics," in *Poetry and Prayer: Reading for Transformation through the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Ph.D. diss., Graduate Theological Union, 2001), 54-72, 81-93.

Praxis: Gospel of John 4:1-42; Sandra Schneiders "Inclusive Discipleship (John 4:1-42)," in *Written That You May Believe* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), 126-48 (handout).

9/21 Ricoeur's "Metaphor and Symbol."

Theory: *IT*, 45-69; *RT*, 27- 43; McAloon, 72-92.

Praxis: Gospel of John 20:1-18; Sandra Schneiders "Seeing and Believing in the Glorified Jesus (John 20: 1-10)" and "Encountering and Proclaiming the Risen Jesus (John 20:11-18)," in *Written That You May Believe* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), 180-201 (handout).

9/28 Schneiders' Appropriation of Ricoeur's *Interpretation Theory*.

Theory: *RT*, 97-179.

Praxis: Sandra Schneiders "A Community of Friends (John 13: 1-20)," in *Written That You May Believe* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), 162-79 (handout).

Please note: from this point forward in the semester, additional readings (handouts) may be assigned.

10/5 Athanasius, *The Life of Anthony*.

10/12 Julian of Norwich, *Showings: The Long Text*.

10/19 **No Class Session**. [*I am presenting at the International Hopkins Conference in Dublin, Ireland; attendance at a GTU Library Workshop – especially Turabian 101 – serves as substitute for this class session.*]

10/26 **Reading Week – No Class Session**.

10/31 For those doing research papers, email initial research agenda to fmcaloon@jstb.edu.

11/2 Julian of Norwich, *Showings: The Long Text*.

11/9 Ignatius of Loyola, *The Autobiography and Selected Letters*.

11/16 Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises and Selected Letters*. *Second submission concerning research agenda due.*

11/23 **Thanksgiving – No Class Session**

11/30 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* and *Prayerbook of the Bible*.

12/7 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* and *Prayerbook of the Bible*.

12/15 T.B.A. *Final Paper Due by 5:00 pm-- hard copy in faculty mailbox at JSTB offices.*

[September 6, 2007]