

ST 3450 Clashing Symbols: Faith and Culture--An Introduction

Fall, 2005

T. H. Sanks, sj

Tuesdays 12:40 - 3:30 Mudd 206

Objectives: To understand what we mean by faith, what we mean by culture, and the dynamic relationship between them. An introduction to how we do theology.

Content: The seminar will study the various understandings of Christian faith, the developing understandings of culture, and the symbolic character of each. How do we do theology if we take seriously the local culture and the increasingly globalized context? We will begin with some consideration of the American cultural context.

Method: The seminar will require regular reading and participation in discussions. To prepare for the discussions, each student should write a one or two page (typed, double spaced) report including: 1) points of simple clarification, e. g., technical terms, words in foreign languages, etc. ; 2) major issues raised in the readings; and 3) your own questions stimulated by the reading.

Grade: Final grade will be based both on the written work and the quality (not quantity) of oral participation.

Required texts:

M. Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith and Culture*.

R. Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart*.

H. R. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*.

K. Tanner, *Theories of Culture*.

P. Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*.

R. Haight, *Dynamics of Theology*.

R. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*.

R. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*.

Articles in Course Reader.

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Weekly Assignments:

- Sept. 6** Introductory Class--The Why, What, and How of the course
- Sept. 13** Topic: Overview of the Issues
Readings: Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols*; Case Study # 1 (Reader)
- Sept. 20** Topic: A Specific Example: American Culture
Reading: R. Bellah, *Habits of the Heart*
- Sept. 27** Topic: Classic Typologies
Reading: H. R. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*; Case Study # 2 (Reader)
- Oct. 4** Topic: The Notion of Culture
Reading: Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, Part I, The Notion of Culture; C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Chaps. 1, 4 (Reader).
- Oct. 11** Topic: Culture and Theology
Reading: Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, Part II, Culture and Theology; Case Study # 4.
- Oct. 18** Topic: The Notion of Faith & Meaning of Symbol
Reading: Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*; Haight, *Dynamics of Theology*, Part 1.
- Oct. 25** Reading Week
- Nov. 1** Topic: Contemporary Understandings of Faith
Reading: Dulles, *The Assurance of Things Hoped For: A Theology of Christian Faith*, Ch. 8 and Ch 14; K. Rahner, *Belief Today*, "Faith Today," pp. 47 - 89; and K. Rahner, *Grace in Freedom*, "Faith and Culture," pp. 67 - 77; K. Rahner, "Theology of the Symbol," Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, Ch. 2 (Reader).
- Nov. 8** Topic: Culture and Local Theology
Reading: Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, Chs. 1, 2, and 3; Case Study # 3 (Reader)
- Nov. 15** Topic: Theology, Tradition, and Christian Identity
Reading: Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, Chs. 4, 5, 6, and 7; Case Study # 5 (Reader)
- Nov. 22** Topic: Theology Between the Global and the Local
Reading: Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*; J. N. Pieterse, "Globalization as Hybridization." (Reader)
- Nov. 29** Topic: Function of Revelation and Scripture
Reading: Haight, *Dynamics of Theology*, Parts 2, and 3.
- Dec. 6** Topic: Symbol and Method in Theology
Reading: Haight, *Dynamics of Theology*, Parts 4, 5, and Conclusion

Dec. 13 Concluding Class & Evaluation

Dec. 16 Final Papers Due