UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: Fall 2015
Instructor: Dr. Jame Schaefer
Course #: THEO 1001
Sections: 114, 116
Course Title: Introduction to Theology
Topic: Experiencing God-Biblical, Historical & Scientific

Description:

Approached from an ecumenical perspective that all people can experience God, this course is designed to introduce students to the scholarly study of the ways in which experiences of God are expressed in the Catholic theological tradition. Selected texts from the Bible to current times are examined to identify key persons, events and concepts, to understand them within the contexts of the times in which they were written, and to recognize their basic differences from other Christian, Judaic and Islamic perspectives. Throughout, the meaning of major theological concepts discovered in assigned texts (e.g., creation, salvation, grace, justice) will be probed for their meaning today.

The Core Curriculum Outcomes (CCO) of Theology 1001 are: #1 To describe theologically the basic content of the Catholic faith in relation to other Christian and religious traditions as well as other world views; #2 to interpret theological texts and frameworks in their historical contexts; and, #3 to articulate implications of Christian faith for growth in holiness and promotion of justice in the contemporary world. In this version of the course, the following specific student outcomes are anticipated:

1) A basic theological vocabulary and knowledge of key persons, events, concepts and themes in the Catholic Christian tradition (CCO #1) to be achieved by careful reading, note taking, and demonstration of knowledge through class discussions and on section and final examinations.

2) An historical perspective from which to view theological discourse (CCO #2) about experiences of God by reading introductions to the texts, listening carefully to lectures on the contexts in which the various texts were written and the authors’ understandings of the world, and using the contexts orally and in writing to determine the probable meanings of the texts.

3) Critical thinking skills appropriate to the discipline of theology, including the ability to compare ways in which concepts and themes developed over time (CCO #2) by identifying and following the various themes that surface historically in the texts, comparing the nuances of these themes in class discussion and writing on the section and final examinations, and applying as well as extending their significance to contemporary situations during the final examination.

4) An awareness of the basic characteristics of Judaism and Islam in comparison with Christianity (CCO #1) by careful reading of assigned texts, listening to lectures, participating in small group discussions, and responding accurately to an examination question.
5) Express orally and in writing the implications that the Christian faith has for growth in holiness and promotion of justice in the contemporary world (CCO #3) by reflection on the prophetic calls to justice and Catholic social teaching and by application to issues today.

6) An intellectual horizon needed to commence a second-level course in theology by successfully completing this course.