GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: Fall 2015
Instructor: Bryan N. Massingale
Course #: THEO 8617
Course Title: Catholic Social Thought

Content:

While the seminar gives significant attention to documents arising out of the papal encyclical tradition, these are not the exclusive focus of the seminar. One of the concerns of the seminar will be the question of how these documents relate to, shape, and are influenced by broader currents of Catholic social ethical reflection and discourse . . . currents that can be collectively labeled “Catholic Social Thought.”

Given the sprawling nature of “Catholic social thought,” this seminar will focus on social thought arising out of and upon U.S. society. That is, after a study of the documents of the universal magisterium, we will focus on issues, movements, and thinkers in the United States.

The seminar will focus upon “tradition” and “innovation/growing edges” in the heritage of Catholic Social Thought. That is, after a through consideration of the papal tradition, we will focus on what has not been considered and especially new issues and pressing concerns yet to be adequately addressed by official Catholic Social Teaching. Among these will be racial justice, income inequality/wealth disparity, the voice of women, and just sustainability.

While this seminar is of immediate interest and relevance for budding Catholic theologians, I think it would also be of interest and value to students of other faith traditions as well, given the influence of the Catholic social tradition upon other forms of faith-based social reflection and the influence of the Catholic community in matters of social concern in the US.

Format:

Seminar presentation and discussion, with lecture from the professor as needed.

Assignments and/or Examinations:

- Careful and attentive reading (a lot!)
- Seminar presentation and leadership
- Book Review
- Major seminar paper

Language Pre-requisites:

- Superior facility with written English is more than desirable. Otherwise, facility with those languages needed for one’s research project.