

Faculty:

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FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING
TF 102-3
FALL 2010

T/TH, 1:30 pm – 2:50 pm
Schlegel Hall, 122

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Faith Seeking Understanding (FQI) is a team-taught, interdisciplinary course in theology and ethics that is usually taken in the fall semester of the first year. FQI is designed to follow the summer course for entering students, Transforming Seminary Education (TSE), and to anticipate the two-semester course History of Christian Experience (HCE1 and HCE2). The purpose of FQI is to help students gain greater confidence and competence in thinking theologically and ethically. The course intends to prepare students for this task by providing an introduction to systematic theology and ethical method. Students will reflect on the interplay between belief and behavior, as they wrestle with traditional doctrines and contemporary issues in theology and ethics. They will gain skill in reading theological texts and thinking doctrinally.

On 10/14, 11/9, and 11/30, the class will divide in three sections for small group discussion. Two groups will meet at the regular class time and one group will meet immediately following class at 3pm. On those days, please come prepared to discuss the reading and the question listed in the syllabus for that date.

Requirements:

1. Attendance and informed participation, including four 2-page reflection papers (40%)
Students will prepare a brief paper (about 500 words) based on the assigned question in the syllabus. These are due on 9/28, 10/14, 11/18, and 12/7. Papers will be due by midnight on the day assigned. You should strive to write as a learning theologian, both open to instruction from others in the Christian conversation and eager to enter into that conversation yourself.

In these papers, students should demonstrate both a clear understanding of the assigned readings and a critical theological engagement with the arguments and themes expressed. Roughly half the paper should be an exposition of the major ideas of the reading(s), with the other half devoted to your theological and ethical response. This can be done either in an exposition-response sequence, or by more of a dialogue with the readings throughout the paper. Please adhere to the 2-page requirement. All papers must be submitted to the CAMS course site, on or before the due date. (You can access this site by going to www.lpts.edu and clicking on Quick Links and then on the CAMS-Student link.) Papers will be returned to you, with grades and comments, no later than two weeks after they are submitted. We advise you to start working on your papers well ahead of the deadline. *Late papers will be penalized a half-letter grade for every day past the due date.*

2. Take-Home Midterm: (30%)

In this exam you will draw together the theological themes of the course to this point (God, Human Being, Sin and Evil) with ethical reflection on oil and water. You will answer three questions, writing about three pages, double-spaced, per question, for a total of 8-10 pages. Questions will be distributed October 21. Exams are due on November 2. You are free to discuss these questions with your classmates, but your writing for the exam must be your own. You may use your books and notes in preparing for and writing the exam; any quotations or paraphrases from written materials must be properly referenced.

3. Final In-Class Examination (30%)

In this exam you will draw together the theological themes of the second half of the course (Jesus Christ, Church, Spirit) with ethical reflection on oil and water. Study questions will be distributed on December 9.

We highly recommend that you take advantage of the services of the Academic Support Center, located on the first floor of Schlegel Hall, in preparing your written assignments for this course.

Required Texts:

Migliore, Daniel L. *Faith Seeking Understanding* (2nd Edition) (Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, MI, 2004) ISBN: 080282787X (*Migliore* in the syllabus)

Jones, Serene, and Paul Lakeland, eds., *Constructive Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005) ISBN: 080063683X (*Jones & Lakeland* in the syllabus)

Library and CAMS Reserves (please make your own copy of the assigned pages):

Charles Campbell, *The Word before the Powers: An Ethic of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), pp. 11-23.

Paul Capetz, "Reformation Views on Celibacy: An Analogy for Gay Protestants Today," in Margaret D. Kamitsuka, ed., *The Embrace of Eros: Bodies, Desires, and Sexuality in Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), pp. 115-131

LPTS Classroom Policies:

Inclusive Language:

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. See for further assistance, http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp.

Academic Honesty:

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and

must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Multiple occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For the Seminary policy, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

Special Accommodations:

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) during the first two weeks of a semester and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Citation Policy:

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003. Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Attendance Policy:

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify one of the instructors of their absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Missing 4 or more sessions of the course or more puts you in danger of failing the course.

Schedule of classes and assignments

Date

Subject/Assignment

TH (9/9) Orientation to the course and to Theological Reflection (P)
Migliore 1-19
Jones & Lakeland, 6-18

T (9/14) Ethical Reflection (W)
Daniel McGuire, *Ethics*, ch. 1 (on CAMS)

TH (9/16) GOD Knowing God (Doctrine of Revelation) (P)
Migliore, 20-43
Jones & Lakeland, 34-43

T (9/21) GOD Trinity and Language for God (Doctrine of the Trinity) (P)
Migliore, 64-91
Jones and Lakeland, 29-34, 67-76

TH (9/23) GOD God as Creator (Doctrine of Creation) (W)

Migliore, 92-116
Russell Butkus, "The Stewardship of Creation" (CAMS)

T (9/28) HUMAN BEING (Theological Anthropology) (W)
Migliore, 139-148
Jones & Lakeland, 77-83

1st Reflection Paper: What do Christians mean when they say that God is Trinity?

TH (9/30) Watch *Thirst*
Water Reading List (CAMS)
POV – New Economy of Water (CAMS – Hyperlink)
POV – Thirst Guide Discussion (CAMS)

T (10/5) SIN AND EVIL (Hamartiology) (P)
Migliore, 117-138; 149-162
Jones & Lakeland, 97-107

TH (10/7) SIN AND EVIL (W)
Jones & Lakeland, 117-120; "A Critique of Adamic Language," pp. 122-124; "Sin as Disobedience and as Personal," pp. 126-7; "Moral Evil versus Natural Evil," pp. 130-131; "Original Sin," p. 132; "Sin as Social or Structural," pp. 134-5.
Charles Campbell, *The Word before the Powers: An Ethic of Preaching*, pp. 11-23 (CAMS)

T (10/12) SIN AND EVIL (P)
Jones & Lakeland, 135-152

TH (10/14) Discussion
Francis of Assisi, "Canticle of Brother Sun" (CAMS)
Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., "Our Responsibility for God's Creation" (CAMS)
Hymns of Creation (CAMS – Hyperlink)
Jim Doenges, "Of Divine Stills and Living Water" (CAMS – Hyperlink)

2nd Reflection Paper: What is the relationship between sin and grace?

T (10/19) Water (W)
Phil Dickie, "Rich countries/Poor water" (CAMS)

TH (10/21) Water (W)
The Earth Charter (CAMS)
Bring with you to class a denominational or other religious resource on water.

MIDTERM TAKEHOME QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED

10/25-10/29 Research and Study Week

T (11/2) JESUS CHRIST (Christology) (P)
Migliore, 163-181

Jones & Lakeland, 183-199

MIDTERM TAKEHOMES DUE

TH (11/4) JESUS CHRIST (P/W)

Migliore, 182-196

Jones & Lakeland, 108-116

T (11/9) Discussion

Laurel Kearns, "The Context of Eco-Theology," in *The Blackwell Companion to Modern Theology*, ch. 29 (CAMS)

Larry Rasmussen, *Earth Community, Earth Ethics*, pp. 227-244; 270-281 (CAMS)

TH (11/11) JESUS CHRIST (P)

Migliore, 197-222

Jones & Lakeland, 161-162; "Asian Christologies," pp. 182-3

T (11/16) CHURCH (Ecclesiology) (P)

Migliore, 248-273

Jones & Lakeland, 201-209, 219-238

TH (11/18) CHURCH (W)

Migliore, 274-300

Paul Capetz, "Reformation Views on Celibacy: An Analogy for Gay Protestants Today," in Margaret Kamitsuka, ed., *The Embrace of Eros*, pp. 115-131 (CAMS)

3rd Reflection Paper: In what ways do Christians affirm both the particularity and the universality of Jesus Christ?

T (11/23) SPIRIT (Pneumatology) (P)

Migliore, 223-247

Jones & Lakeland, 239-245; 274-278

11/25-26 Thanksgiving Break

T (11/30) Discussion

John Cobb, "Ecology and Economy" (CAMS)

Larry Rasmussen, *Earth Community, Earth Ethics*, pp. 220-226 (CAMS)

TH (12/2) SPIRIT (W)

Migliore, 301-329; 330-353

Jones & Lakeland, 60-66

T (12/7) Oil (W)

Robert Hirsch, "The Inevitable Peaking of World Oil Production" (CAMS)

4th Reflection Paper: Explain your Christian theology of the religions (see Migliore, pp. 306-319, for several options). What does your view imply for the salvation of non-Christians?

TH (12/9) Oil (W/P)

Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, pp. 135-136; 136-139

FINAL EXAM STUDY QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED