

Spring 2018
T/Th 1:30
mark.massa@bc.edu
Stokes 209 S

Mark Massa, S.J.
Boisi Center
24 Quincy Rd.
Xavier Montecel, TA
xavier.montecel@bc.edu

THEO 1024.03: Exploring Catholicism II: The American Catholic Experience

Course Description:

This is the second part of an introductory theology course. In the Fall Semester, we considered: 1) the philosophical and anthropological bases for faith and religious belief; 2) the historical person of Jesus, as described in the Gospels of the New Testament and other records of the primitive church; 3) how and why religious groups have increased (and decreased) in the United States since the American Revolution; 4) how popular religion (usually called “lived religion”) is both similar to, but also different from, institutional religion; and 5) how “civil religion” operates in the United States, and how it offers a somewhat different theology from denominational religion.

This semester, we will revisit (quickly) the major points of the fall, but quickly move to some new areas for exploring Catholicism: the neo-scholastic tradition of theology (Murray); a Christian approach to literature (Lewis); Catholic feminism (Ruether); ecclesiology (Dulles); and a long look at Vatican II (O’Malley). “Exploring Catholicism II” satisfies one semester of the two-course (year-long) core requirement in Theology at Boston College.

The course operates on the “Socratic Method,” which means that I arrive in class with 10 smart questions, and all of you respond with equally smart answers. This requires everyone to do all of the reading for every class, although everyone will be allowed two “bad hair days” (i.e., everyone will be allowed to respond: “I am not prepared today” to any question twice during the semester). Class participation will not be graded, as I simply call on people randomly. I also prefer that you do not use any form of social media in class (laptops, iphones, etc), and that your note-taking be done by hand.

Required Texts:

Students are expected to purchase or use library copies of the following texts:

Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*

C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*

John Courtney Murray, *We Hold These Truths*

John O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*

Mark Massa, *Catholics and American Culture*

Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Feminism and God-Talk*

Richard Viladesau and Mark Massa, *Foundations of Theological Study: A Sourcebook*

Office Hours:

I will be open and ready for business on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 5:30 in my office at the Boisi Center. (24 Quincy Rd: up the street from Stokes). I encourage students with any questions (or students without questions) to stop by so I can get to know you.

Sherry Hour:

I will be hosting a Sherry Hour from 5 to 6 pm every Tuesday afternoons in my office at the Boisi Center: go out of the front door of Stokes Hall, walk up the hill – on Quincy Road – to the third house on the left): No one is required to attend: it is simply my way of getting to know you better outside of class for the sake of writing recommendations, etc.

Course Requirements:

1) Attendance at all class meetings (save for near-death experiences; **2)** a careful reading of all assigned texts/readings (a requirement central to the Socratic Method of class management); **3)** five assigned “critical essays” (750-1250 words). The four essays with the highest grades (minus the “bad hair day”) will be averaged together toward the final grade. **4)** A final exam – take-home and essay in format.

Grading:

The four highest of the five critical essays will count for 70% of the final grade; the final exam will count for 30% of the overall grade.

Academic Integrity:

All BC students are expected to both know and follow the university policy on academic integrity, which can be found (in excruciating detail) at: www.bc.edu/integrity. If you have any questions about the policy, please see me, and I’ll be glad to explain it in non-breaucrateeze. You are responsible for following the guidelines offered there, whether you have read it or not (so read it).

Assistance for persons with disabilities:

If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodation in this course, please contact either Kathy Duggan (617-5528093; duggankabc.edu; or in her office at the Connors Family Learning Center) for ADHD; or Paulette Durrett (617-552-3470; paulette.durrett@bc.edu; or in her office in the Disabilities Service Office for all other kinds of disabilities, including temporary disabilities (i.e., a broken limb).

For Freshmen only:

Your very own! The Freshman Dean is Rory Browne, whose office is Stokes 140S. 617-552-9259. rory.browne@bc.edu.

CLASS MEETINGS, READINGS, AND EXERCISES

I. A SHORT REVIEW OF AN ANCIENT FAITH

Week 1: A Review of the Basics

January 16: Models for Theology and the Study of Religion (Review)

January 18: Lived Religion, Civil Religion, and (oh my God) Natural Law (Review)

Reading: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*

II. NEO-THOMISM AS “CATHOLI-SPEAK

Week 2: A Dive Into the Deep End

January 23: Numbers, American and Catholic Natural Law

Reading: John Courtney Murray, *We Hold These Truths*, Introduction

January 25: Natural Law and Neo-Thomism

Reading: Murray, *We Hold These Truths*, Chapter 1 (“E Pluribus Unum”)

Week 3: Murray and the Natural Law

January 30: Articles of Peace and Articles of War

Reading: Murray, *WHTT*, Chapter 2 (“Civil Unity and Religious Integrity”)

February 1: What *Is the* “Public Consensus”?

Reading: Murray, *WHTT*, Chapter 4 (“Origins and Authority of the Public Consensus”)

Week 4: There’s No “Ism” Like Thomism”

February 6: All Murray, All the Time

Reading: Murray, *WHTT*, Chapter 5 (“Creeds at War Intelligibly”)

February 8: To Speak Intelligently of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition

*Exercise No. 1 on Murray due in class

III. THE CATHOLIC TRADITION CONFRONTS THE MODERN WORLD

Week 5: Vatican II and All That

February 13: Ecumenical Councils, and What They Mean

Reading: Viladesau and Massa, *Foundations*, Nos. 52, 53, 54, 55. 59; *Lumen Gentium*

February 15: What Happened at Vatican II?

Reading: John O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, Introduction

Week 6: The Tradition of Ecumenical Councils

February 20: The Long Duree

Readings: O'Malley, *What Happened*, chapter 1 ("Big Perspectives")

February 22: The 19th Century and Its Theological Aftermath

Reading: O'Malley, *What Happened*, chapter 2 ("The Long Nineteenth Century")

Week 7: Why Vatican II Changed Everything

February 27: The First Sunday of Advent, 1964

Reading: Massa, *Catholics and American Culture*, chapter 7 ("Into Uncertain Life")

March 1: The Meaning(s) of Vatican II

*Exercise No. 2 on O'Malley due in class

(March 4th through March 11th: Spring Break)

IV. THE THEOLOGICAL MEANING(S) OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

Week 8: The Sacramental Universe in Literature

March 13: Thomas Merton and the Catholic "Literary Revival"

Reading: Massa, *Catholics and American Culture*, chapter 2 ("Young Man Merton")

March 15: CS Lewis and the Reality of Grace

Reading: CS Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, Letters 1-12

Week 9: The Analogical Imagination

March 20: Fallenness, Grace, and Redemption

Reading: CS Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, Letters 13-24

March 22: What Does Lewis Show about the Christian Tradition?
Reading: CS Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, Letters 25-31

V: TO SPEAK RIGHTLY OF GOD

Week 10: To Speak Rightly of God

March 27: Elizabeth Johnson and *She Who Is*
In-Class Discussion of Johnson
*Exercise Number 3 on Lewis due in class

Week 11: Feminism and Theology

April 3: What IS Feminist Theology?
Reading: RR Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, chapter 1 (“Feminist Theology”)

April 5: Male and Female Images of the Divine
Reading: Reuther, *Sexism and God-Talk*, chapter 2 (“Sexism and God Language”)

Week 12: Feminist Anthropology

April 10: A “Non-Liberal” Feminist Anthropology
Reading: Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, chapter 4 (“Anthropology”)

April 12: Can a Male God Save Women?
Reading: Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, chapter 5 (“Christology”)

Week 13: American and Catholic

April 17: Can God Have a Gender?
*Exercise Number 4 on Ruether due in class

VI. CATHOLICS AND AMERICAN CULTURE

April 19: Deviance Theory and American Catholicism
Reading: Massa, *Catholics and American Culture*, chapter 1 (“Boundary Maintenance”)

Week 14: The Inside and the Outside

THEO 1024, page 6

April 24: Merton and Catholicism's Coming of Age

Reading: Massa, *Catholics*, chapter 2 ("Young Man Merton")

April 26: "A Conspiracy So immense"

Reading: Massa, *Catholics*, chapter 3 ("Catholicism as a Cultural System")

Week 15: "The Downward Path"

May 1: Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker

Reading: Massa, *Catholics*, chapter 5 ("The Downward Path")

May 3: The End of All Things: Review

*Exercise Number 5 on Massa due