RS 138B Catholic Practices & Global Cultures

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Office: HSSB 3085  
Office Hours: Tu 1:00-3:00

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TR 11:00-12:15, NH 1111  
Reader: Rafael Gamboa

Course Description: An examination of the ways in which Catholic spirituality and religious practice have been shaped historically by the encounter with various cultures and traditions, e.g., classical Greek, Old Saxon (German), Chinese, Central African, Haitian, Nahua (Mexican), Lakota Sioux, and South Asian.

The course is structured around eight historical case studies in which Christianity was translated from one language and culture into another. In each case, we will engage both secondary literature about the process and primary practice-related texts that emerged out of the process of translation. The following questions will structure our investigation of each of the cases:
1. Who were the various parties to the engagement in question?
2. What was the nature and setting of the engagement?
   a. Where did the engagement(s) occur? What was the nature of the engagement(s)? What were the critical relationships (military, political, intellectual, economic, ethnic, gender, etc.) of each of the parties to each of the other parties in the context of the engagement?
   b. Where were the various parties to the engagement located in time and space? What significant cultural and religious backgrounds did each of the parties in question bring to the engagement?
3. What were the critical points of engagement?
   a. Out of the wealth of things from the various cultures/traditions that could have been highlighted, identify and define the concepts (key terms) that were regarded as essential to the engagement and to the process of translation between cultures.
   b. Explain how and why the abovementioned concepts were emphasized in the engagement. (This is the central focus of your investigation.)
4. Views of the engagement
   a. How did the nature of the engagement appear from different standpoints within and between traditions and cultures?
   b. Discuss the roles of authority, truth, and authenticity in the engagement. Who considers what views to be legitimate? Why and how do they legitimize or de-legitimize the various positions in the engagement?
5. Comparison and assessment
   a. How does this interaction and engagement relate to the previous interactions we have examined?
   b. What similarities and differences emerge?

Course Goals: The primary goal of the course is to analyze and understand how the practice of Catholic Christianity has been shaped historically through inter-cultural and inter-religious engagement. The design of the course assumes that the best way to get at this historically is through a close reading of texts and other cultural products generated by these encounters from the vantage points of the various cultures and traditions involved. The course requirements are intended to develop your ability to analyze secondary materials in light of the course questions, to read primary texts closely in light of a range of secondary materials, and to present your ideas clearly and cogently.
Course Requirements:

1) Preparation for class and participation in class discussions. Since participation in class discussions is one of the expectations for the course, you must turn in the written work for Tuesday and Thursday classes in person in class. Email submissions will not be accepted unless you have requested and received permission to be excused from a class.
   a. For Tuesday’s class, beginning with Week 3 (Saxony) through Week 9 (India), please write a 2-3-page paper outlining answers to the questions (listed above) in light of the background reading for each case study (for a total of seven short papers). These papers will be due in class each Tuesday, beginning with Week 3, and will be graded on a 10-point scale.
   b. For Thursday’s class, either identify a crucial passage from the assigned primary texts that you think merits discussion in class or formulate a question that reflects in-depth reflection on the primary material. Turn in a sheet (or note card) that identifies the passage and indicates why you think we should discuss it or formulates a question and indicates why you think it is important. Completion of this exercise will add another 1-2 points to your weekly total, depending on the level of reflection.

2) A 7-10-page final paper. The final paper should analyze one or more primary texts from one of our units in light of a question of interest to you. The paper may address the questions we discussed in class or questions you come up with on your own. For a grade in the B range, the paper must ask a question of one or more primary texts and provide an answer to the question (i.e. a thesis) that you argue for based on your analysis of the text, making use of assigned secondary material as appropriate. For an A grade, you should do all the above, plus make use of additional relevant primary or secondary material that was not assigned. It can be drawn from the supplementary readings or you can do some extra research. I will ask you to turn in a proposal for your paper on or before May 20th. The papers are due on Friday, June 11th at 5 pm.

3) Additional options (not required). Completion of the above requirements in an exemplary fashion will give you a score of 95% for an A in the course. For additional points, you may sign up to do either or both of the following:
   a. For an extra 2 percentage points, you may volunteer to share one of your weekly papers in class to launch our Tuesday discussion of the course questions.
   b. For an extra 1-3 percentage points (depending on quality), you may prepare a handout for a Tuesday class that summarizes information relevant to our case from the supplementary readings.

Grading
Weekly papers & questions – 80% (seven weeks for total of 84 points)
Final paper – 15%
Additional options – 5%

BOOKS available in the UCEN Bookstore
Werner Jaeger, Early Christianity and Greek Paideia (Belknap, 2003).
Louise Burkhart, Holy Wednesday (Penn, 1996)
Damian Costello, Black Elk: Colonialism and Lakota Catholicism (Orbis, 2005).
Justo Gonzalez, Church History: An Essential Guide. RECOMMENDED for those with little background in the history of Christianity. Order from Amazon.
READER available from Grafikarts, 6550 Pardall Road, Isla Vista (968-3575). REQUIRED.
Course Outline and Reading Assignments
3/30 (1.1) Introduction

Greek (4th century)
4/01 (1.2) Lecture and discussion of Jaeger, Early Christianity and Greek Paideia, 3-67, 68-102.
4/06 (2.1) Analysis of Gregory of Nyssa, Life of Moses, 1-23; Book I: §1-22 and Exodus 1-3.
4/08 (2.2) Analysis of Gregory of Nyssa, Life of Moses, Book II: §1-41 in conjunction with O’Meara, Plotinus, pp. 100-13.

Saxon (9th century)
4/13 (3.1) Discussion of Murphy, The Saxon Savior, pp. 11-117.

Chinese (late 16th/early 17th centuries)
4/22 (4.2) Analysis of Ricci, The True Meaning, #16-20 (pp. 64-67), #445-468 (pp. 363-377), in relation to excerpts from the Spiritual Exercises and the Analects of Confucius.

Nahua / Mexican (16th century)
4/27 (5.1) Louise Burkhart, Holy Wednesday: A Nahua Drama from Colonial Mexico, introduction, pp. 1-100.
4/29 (5.2) Analysis of the Holy Wednesday play, lines 45-103 (pp. 134-63), plus commentary on lines 46-84 (pp. 211-44).
4/29 8 p.m. Public Lecture: Professor Timothy Matavina, Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame, “Faces of Guadalupe in the Americas,” Victoria Hall, 33 W. Victoria St., Santa Barbara.

Kongolese (late 17th/early 18th centuries)
5/06 (6.2) Analysis of the Salve Regina and Salve Antoniana (Thornton, 215-20)

Haitian (16th century to present; primary text is recent)
5/13 (7.2) Analysis of the story of Marie-Carmel at Mass in Elizabeth McAlister, “The Madonna of 115th Street Revisited: Vodou and Haitian Catholicism in the Age of Transnationalism.”

Lakota (late 19th/20th centuries)
5/18 (8.1) Damian Costello, Black Elk: Colonialism and Lakota Catholicism, 1-90.
5/20 (8.2) Analysis of Black Elk’s vision (Costello, 91-132; DeMallie, Sixth Grandfather, 111-42).

Paper Proposals Due – Wednesday, May 20th in class.

Indian / Hindu (late 19th/20th centuries)
5/25 (9.1) Lipner, The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, xiv-xlvi.

Catholicism and Cultures Post-Vatican II (post-1960s)
6/03 (10.2) Wrap-up

Final Paper Due – Friday, June 11th at 5 pm
Supplementary Readings

- Books are on regular reserve.

Greek Culture:
- Mahnerbe & Ferguson, “Introduction” to Gregory of Nyssa/Life of Moses, 1-23.
- Dominic O’Meara, *Platimus: An Introduction to the Enneads*.
- “Plato” and “Platonism,” in ER2.

Old Saxon Culture:
- “Germanic Religious Customs,” Appendix 1 in Murphy, *The Heliand*, 199-200.
- “Germanic Social Ties & Personal Loyalty,” Appendix 2, 201-203.
- James E. Cathey, ed. *Héliand: Text and Commentary*. This is the critical edition of the text with appendices that will help you decipher the Old Saxon.

Chinese Culture:

Kongoolese Culture:

Haitian Culture:

Nahual/Mexican Culture:

Lakota Culture
- DeMallie, *The Sixth Grandfather*.
- “Lakota Traditional Religion,” ER2.

Indian / Hindu Culture:
- Entries on “Vedānta” and “Śaṅkara,” ER2.