

HONORS SEMINAR: THEMES IN CATHOLIC MYSTICISM

HNRS: 395

Spring Semester 2007

Department of Religious Studies, College of the Holy Cross.

Instructor: Mathew N. Schmalz. Office: Smith 404; Office Phone: 793-2557; Office Hours: Monday 1-2; Tuesday 3-4; Wednesday 2-3; Friday 4-5; (you may also simply stop by or make an appointment any day except Thursday). E-mail: mschmalz@holycross.edu. You may call me “Mat,” “Mr. Mat,” “Professor Mat,” or “Professor Schmalz”—whatever you understand to be most comfortable and appropriate (most choose Professor Mat).

Description: This course provides an introduction to key figures within the Catholic mystical tradition within the framework of the academic study of religion. This course requires no specific prerequisite although a general familiarity with Catholicism is helpful.

Goals: This course has four overall objectives:

- 1) To present a general introduction themes within Catholic mystical reflection.
- 2) To introduce students to some of the central concepts in the academic study of mysticism.
- 3) To allow students to apply central concepts in the academic study of mysticism to diverse forms of Catholic spirituality.
- 4) To learn how to deliver appropriate academic presentations and responses.

Format: Seminar.

Evaluation: There are six (6) graded exercises: Three essays of 8-10 pages, two oral examinations; a response paper combined with class participation.

Grading: All assignments will be given a letter grade. All assignments are weighted equally. When your final grade is calculated, the individual letter grades you have received will be converted into a GPA figure: 4.3 (A+); 4.0 (A); 3.7 (A-); 3.3 (B+); 3.0 (B); 2.7 (B-); 2.3 (C+); 2.0 (C); 1.7 (C-); 1.3 (D +); 1 (D); 0 (F). For papers I often give split grades, such as A-/B+ (3.5) which is calculated as an average of the two GPA values. **Please note you must fully reach a grade to earn it—hence a 3.6 is a “B+” even though it is closer to an “A-“ (3.7).**

Submission of Papers: Each paper must have a centered title with the student’s name and class on the lines below. Thus:

FLUIDITY AND STRATIFICATION IN THE HINDU WORLD VIEW

Jane Doe
Class of 2007

Papers must be submitted as an email attachment in a word processing program that can be read by Microsoft Word. You may also cut and paste your papers into the email. Papers normally will be due via email on the date given by 10 pm. Students will have a 1 hour “grace” period to turn in their papers (i.e. by 11 pm). After the grace period, papers will be marked late, unless an extension has been granted (see below). Late work will be penalized one full letter grade per day. **All papers will be archived to deter collusion.**

Class Policies: Students are required to complete the assigned readings before the class period in which they are discussed. Attendance is also required and I will have a sign in sheet available before each class. **An unexcused will adversely affect your final grade by one-half letter grade (i.e. from a B to a B-).** An unexcused absence is any absence not excused by your class dean.

Incivility: Respecting the learning process is the foundation of the work we do in class. “Incivility” refers to behavior that does not show respect to the learning process. “Incivility” includes: lateness, overt rudeness, disrupting class by talking over other students or the instructor, not coming prepared to class, sleeping in class, allowing cell phones to ring in class, and similar behavior. If you have to leave class early, be sure to inform me beforehand. Please be aware that I usually do not write recommendations for students who engage in uncivil behavior, regardless of how high their final grade may be.

Intellectual Honesty: I advise all students to be aware of the College’s policies pertaining to intellectual honesty. All students will be required to testify to the integrity of their work in a written statement. In order to complete the assignments for this class, students will not need to consult any other source beyond the required texts. If a student does rely upon an outside source for an assignment, he or she should simply cite that work in a parenthetical note (see “Citation Rules” below). **Not citing an outside source that you draw upon will constitute a violation of The College’s Academic Honesty Policy. I reserve the right to submit all papers to an online source that will check for plagiarism.** Work that violates the College’s Academic Honesty Policy will receive the grade of F (0). The student will also then be subject to administrative sanctions ranging from academic probation to expulsion.

To be sure to avoid the possibility of collusion, I would strongly advise all students not to share written work before it is handed in. If you do talk to your fellow students about a particular assignment, be sure to give appropriate acknowledgment to your peers in the final drafts of your written assignments if their help has been particularly useful to you in your writing. If such acknowledgements are not made, it could constitute a case of intellectual dishonesty. If such acknowledgements are not made, it could constitute a case of intellectual dishonesty. **Students are absolutely forbidden from sharing a graded paper with a student who has yet to complete the assignment (i.e. with a student who has an extension). Students who violate this standard will be charged with collusion.**

Citation Rules:

- 1) For interpretative points that come directly from one of the course textbooks, a parenthetical citation such as (Denny, 42) will be acceptable. You do not need to cite “facts” such as when Muhammad was born or how many *varnas* there are in Hinduism.
- 2) For interpretative points that are not your own and instead come from a lecture, a parenthetical citation such as (Schmalz 10/12/03) will be acceptable. Again you do not need to cite “facts.”

- 3) For interpretative points that are not your own and instead come from another student, a parenthetical citation such as (Jane Doe 10/12/06) will be acceptable.
- 4) For all internet sources you must use footnotes and, in the footnote, include the entire address and the date accessed. **You are strongly discouraged from using internet sources.**
- 5) For all other print sources (such as books or journal articles), you must use footnotes that include the author's full name, article or book title, journal title if applicable, publisher, date and page number. **You are strongly discouraged from using other print sources not identified in the syllabus.**

Examples:

Book: Darius Cooper, *The Cinema of Satyajit Ray: Between Tradition and Modernity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 25.

Article: Mathew N. Schmalz, "Images of the Body in the Life and Death of a North Indian Catholic Catechist," *History of Religions* 39 (November): 177.

Extensions: No extensions are allowed without the appropriate permission from the class dean.

E-Mail: Class announcements, outlines and assignments will usually be distributed by electronic mail. Please be sure to check your e-mail regularly.

Required Texts: Georges Bataille, *Erotism*.
Barabara Dent, *Marriage of All and Nothing*.
Francis and Clare: The Complete Works.
Anne Katherine Emmerich, *The Dolorous Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ*.
William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*.
Edith Stein, *The Hidden Life*.
Therese of Lisieux, *Autobiography of a Soul*.
Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*
Francis De Sales and Jane de Chantal, Letters of Spiritual Direction.

PLAN OF THE COURSE

I. DEVOTION TO JESUS

WEEK 1: THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

January 23: Film: *The Passion of the Christ*

WEEK 2: ANNE KATHERINE EMMERICH

January 30: *The Suffering Christ*

READING: Anne Katherine Emmerich, *The Dolorous Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

WEEK 3: THERESE OF LISIEUX

February 6: *The Arrow of Love*

READING: Therese of Lisieux, *An Autobiography of a Soul*.

WEEK 4: AUDREY SANTO

February 13: *Victim Soul*

READING: Mathew Schmalz, "The Silent Body of Audrey Santo;" "Performing the Miraculous in Central Massachusetts;" Susan Rogers, "The Sacramental Body of Audrey Santo;" Paula Kane, "She Offered Herself Up."

WEEK 5: WILLIAM JAMES

February 20: *Healthy Mind and the Sick Soul*

READING: William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

II. THE SUFFERING SELF

WEEK 6: EDITH STEIN

February 27: *One Dance is Enough*

Reading: Edith Stein, *The Hidden Life*.

March 1: Papers Due Via Email at 10 pm.

WEEK 7: SPRING VACATION

WEEK 8: SIMONE WEIL

March 13: *Affliction*
Reading: Simone Weil, *Waiting for God*.

[Presentations and responses scheduled for this week]

WEEK 9: BARBARA DENT

March 20: *Darkness as Friend*
READING: Barbara Dent, *Marriage of All and Nothing*

WEEK 10: EVELYN UNDERHILL

March: 27: *What is Mysticism?*
READING: Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*

[Oral examinations scheduled this Week]

WEEK 11: EVELYN UNDERHILL (CONCLUDED)

April 3: *Classifying Mysticisms*
READING: Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*

III. CELIBATE COUPLES

WEEK 12: FRANCIS AND CLARE

April 10: *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*
READING: *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*.

April 13: Papers Due Via Email at 10 pm

WEEK 13: FRANCIS AND JANE

April 17: *Spiritual Directions*
READING: *Francis De Sales and Jane de Chantal, Letters of Spiritual Direction*.

[Presentations scheduled for this week]

WEEK 14: BATAILLE

April 24: *Transgression and Disgust*
READING: Georges Bataille, *Erotism*.

WEEK 15: BATAILLE

May 1: *Religion and the Erotic*

READING: Georges Bataille, *Erotism*.

May 5-May 12 [oral examinations]

May 12 Final Papers Due