

**COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS
FIRST-YEAR PROGRAM
FALL 2004
FYPR 109: Christian Perspectives on Suffering 1: Attempting to Understand**

Prof. Joanne Pierce
Office: Smith 421
Office Phone: x 3452
E-Mail: jpierce@holycross.edu

Section 01: TR 11:00-12:15 a.m. (Smith 426)
Section 02: TR 2:00 - 3:15 p.m. (Stein 225)

Office Hours: M: 3:15 – 4:15 p.m.; T: 7:00-8:00 p.m.; R: 1:00-1:50 p.m.; and by appointment

FYP Theme: “Confronted by suffering and loss, how then shall we live?”

Course Description: For almost 2000 years, Christians have tried to come to terms with the human experience of suffering and loss. In this semester, we will look more closely at how Christian reflection has connected the painful experience of suffering with both the destructive reality of sin, as well as the liberating hope of redemption and grace. To do this, we will read sections from the Old and New Testaments; selections from important Christian writers (for example, St. Augustine and Anselm of Canterbury); and short stories, primarily from the genres of science fiction and speculative fiction.

Course Assignments:

Quizzes. Each student will be expected to take five short quizzes in class. The lowest quiz grade will drop. More details will be given in class.

Exam. Each student will be expected to take a final exam (during the final exam period). More details will be given in class.

Essays. 1) Each student will be expected to hand in reflection essays (2-3 pages) on each of the four assigned common readings. More details will be given in class.

2) Each student will be expected to do a worship service visit or other “outside” experiential reflection essay (minimum: 5 pages). There will be at least four opportunities this semester: the film “The Passion of the Christ”; the presentation by Therese Schroeder-Sheker (10/26); the liturgy for All Saints’ Day; the liturgy for All Soul’s Day. More details will be given in class.

Journals. Each student will be expected to keep a journal of reflections on the common readings, the course material, and other FYP events. These journals will be collected periodically and read by the instructor. More details will be given in class.

Class Discussions. In order for a seminar to be fruitful, each student should expect to attend every class meeting, and to participate in general class discussions. In addition, students will be assigned (in groups of two) to lead one in-class discussion of a particular topic, usually focusing on assigned readings from primary sources. More details will be given in class.

Course Grades:

Reflection essays (4):	20%
“Experiential” essay:	20%
Quiz average:	20%
Final Exam:	20%
*Participation:	20%
Total:	100%

*Participation includes: leading one class discussion (with another student); activity in general class discussion; evaluation of the journal. Some students participate with more ease orally in class; others participate more effectively in written form in the journal. The important element is *engagement*: engagement with the readings and with the flow of the class “process” as the course progresses.

Course Books:

Required (Bookstore)

Catherine Cory and David Landry, eds. *The Christian Theological Tradition*. 2d. ed.

Augustine. *Confessions*. Henry Chadwick, transl.

Alister McGrath, ed. *The Christian Theology Reader*. 2d. ed. [On Order]

(and common readings, in order of use)

Raymond Scheindlin. *Book of Job*.

Margaret Edson. *W;t*.

Erich Maria Remarque. *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

Jean Améry. *At the Mind's Limits*.

Other Readings (ERes)

Short stories: All short stories from the science fiction collections and anthologies listed.

Primary readings: Selections from primary source material taken from three collections, edited by Joel Harrington, Karen Jolly, and William Placher (volumes 1 and 2).

Secondary readings: Selections from textbooks by Herwig Arts, Justo González, Alister McGrath, and Carl Volz.

Many of these books will also be available on reserve in the Reserve Room, Dinand Library (2d floor).

The Bible: Best Versions On-Line

www.usccb.org/nab/bible/ (New American Bible)

<http://etext.virginia.edu/rsv/browse.html> (Revised Standard Version)

<http://www.devotions.net/bible/00bible.htm> (New Revised Standard Version)

<http://bible.gospelcom.net/bible?version=NIV> (New International Version)

The Bible: Also Available in Reference, Dinand Library (Main Reading Room, First Floor)

The Holy Bible (New Revised Standard Version, 1989): Ref. BS 191.5 .A1 1989 N48

The Holy Bible (New International Version, 1984): Ref. BS 195 .N37 1984

Course Readings:

The theological readings for the course are divided into two groups: primary readings and secondary readings. Each class meeting has a specific topic. The readings for that topic have been assigned at the end on the preceding class, under the instruction “Prepare for next class.”

Primary readings are taken from primary sources, that is, from scriptural texts, or from theological documents written by original theologians themselves. **Secondary readings** are taken from textbooks, and provide background information, as well as explanations and clarification of theological ideas. Secondary readings can help you understand primary readings, but remember: it is important for you to try to read and analyze the texts yourself, and not necessarily be swayed by another person’s opinion of what the text says. You are responsible for both primary and secondary readings (unless you are asked to “skim”).

A third group of readings is also an important part of this course: **short stories** taken from the genre of science fiction (or speculative fiction, as some call it). These stories allow us to examine some key ideas in a very different context (like “thought experiments”) and, in doing so, can prompt the reader to consider issues in a different light, or to examine other, unforeseen repercussions.

NOTE: Materials on the Net are helpful, but these **MUST** be used with caution. **ALWAYS** check the source of a document (usually noted at the end of the document with a copyright). **REMEMBER** that search engines will list all materials that refer to the search term(s), and some

of these may be the sheer opinion of private individuals or groups (as opposed to newspaper articles, for example). NEVER reply or send comments to an unknown person, and be very wary of entering into chat room conversations.

Class Schedule

Class week:

- 1) 9/2 R: Introduction to course.
Topic: Why is there Suffering? Three Possible Answers
Prepare ahead of class: Harlan Ellison, "Paingod," (1964, 1981) in *Paingod and other Delusions*, pp. 16-23, Ursula K. LeGuin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," (1973) in *Masterpieces: The Best Science Fiction of the Century*, pp. 212-217, and Arthur C. Clark, "The Star," (1961), in *The Road to Science Fiction, Volume Five*, pp. 304-309.
Prepare for next class: read *Book of Job*.
- 2) 9/7 T: Discussion of common reading: *Book of Job*
Prepare for next class: Read *W;t*.
NOTE: Wednesday, September 8, Mel's Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* is showing at Kimball Theatre (free: 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.).
Recommended, but not required, for the course topic on the meaning of Christ's suffering (it is a very bloody and violent film).
- R: Discussion of common readings: finish *Job*; discuss *W;t*
Reflection essay on Job due
Prepare for next class: Primary reading: Genesis, chapters 1, 2, and 3; Deuteronomy 28 (also Deut 7: 9-11; 12: 18-21; and ch. 11, all); Exodus 20: 5-6 (compare with Jeremiah 31: 29-30 and John 9: 2-3); Leviticus 24: 10-23; Judges, ch. 2; 1 Kings 9: 4-9. Secondary reading: skim Cory, Chs. 2, 3, 4.
NOTE: Tonight, 7:30 p.m., Prof. Garvey's talk on the FYP, in Hanselman. This is a mandatory FYP event.
- 3) 9/14 T: Topic: Views of Sin in the Old Testament: The Fall; Sin and Punishment.
Prepare for next class: Review guide questions [on Blackboard] for video (*Gospel Truth*); Primary reading: Primary reading: Matthew 5 (all); Mark 7: 1-23; Luke 6: 1-11, 20-49; John 5: 1-15, and 8: 1-11. Secondary reading: Cory, Ch. 6, pp. 75-84 (and Ch. 5, if time permits)

R: Topic: Jesus and the Gospels

Reflection essay on W;t due

View video: *Gospel Truth*; then small group discussions

Prepare for next class: Primary reading: Passion narratives in the Gospels

(choose at least one): Matthew 26 (all) and 27: 1-60; Mark 14 (all) and 15 (all);

Luke 22 (all) and 23: 1-53; John 13: 1-30; 18 (all); 19 (all); in the Epistles

(choose at least one): Romans 5: 12-21; Ephesians 1: 3-10; Philippians 2: 5-11;

Colossians 1: 11-22; Hebrews 2: 6-18 and 9: 11-28; and McGrath, *Reader*, nos.

6.1-6.3, 6.6, 6.9. Secondary reading: Volz, Ch. 2.

11:00 section: Submit Journals

4) 9/21

T: **Quiz 1**, then:

Topic: What is Original Sin? Part 1: Early Christian Theologians

Prepare for next class: Primary reading: Augustine, *Confessions*, Book I (6) –

Book II; McGrath, *Reader*, no. 6.13, 6.18. Secondary reading: Arts, Ch. Four;

Gonzalez, Vol. 1, pp. 207-216.

R: Topic: What is Original Sin? Part 2: Augustine

Prepare for next class: Primary reading: Augustine, *Confessions*, Book III –

Book V; McGrath, *Reader*, nos. 6.14, 6.15-6.17.

2:00 section: Submit Journals

5) 9/28

T: Topic: More Augustine on Sin

Prepare for next class: Primary reading: McGrath, *Reader*, nos. 5.1-5.10;

Augustine, *Confessions*, Book VII. Secondary reading: Volz, Ch. 3, to p. 82.

R: Christ's Suffering and Redemption, Part 1: Early Christian Views

Prepare for next class: Primary reading: Placher, vol. 1, pp. 147-151 (Anselm,

Abelard), 162-164 (Aquinas); McAlister, *Readings*, nos. 5.12, 5.13 (overlaps a

little with Placher selection), 5.14, 5.15. Secondary reading: McAlister,

Introduction, pp. 420-422, 425-426. And Walter M. Miller, Jr., "Crucifixus
Etiam," (1953) in *The Substance of Things Hoped For*, pp. 244-262.

11:00 section: Submit Journals

6) 10/5

T: Topic: Christ's Suffering and Redemption, Part 2: Medieval Christian Views

Prepare for next class: Primary reading: McAlister, *Reader*, nos 1.25, 3.7, 3.8,

3.19.; Secondary reading: McAlister, *Introduction*, pp. 273-280.

R: **Quiz 2**, then:

Topic: Does God Suffer?

Prepare for next class: Read the Apostolic Letter of John Paul II, “On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering” (*Salvifici Doloris*, 1984); the text can be found at

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_11021984_salvifici-doloris_en.html or <http://www.cin.org/suffer.html>
(with footnotes)

2:00 section: Submit Journals

7) 10/12 T: No Class [Columbus Day Break]

R: Topic: Pope John Paul II on Christian Suffering

Prepare for next class: Read *All Quiet on the Western Front*

11:00 section: Submit Journals

8) 10/19 T: Discussion of common readings: *All Quiet on the Western Front* and war film TBA

R: Continue discussion.

Reflection essay on *All Quiet on the Western Front* due

Prepare for next class: Reading TBA

2:00 section: Submit Journals

9) 10/26 T: Guest Lecture: Prof. Mat Schmalz, on Little Audrey as “Victim Soul”
Prepare for next class: Primary readings: McAlister, *Reader*, nos. 5.8, 10.1, 10.3, 10.5, 10.7, 10.9, 10.10 -10.13 (if there is time, 10.21); Augustine, *Confessions*, Book VI (1)-(2), Book IX (16) – (37). Secondary readings: Volz, Ch. 3, pp. 82-93; Cory, pp. 206-208; McAlister, *Introduction*, pp. 567-576.
Note: Presentation today/tonight by Therese Schroeder-Sheker.
More details TBA. This is a mandatory FYP event.

R: **Quiz 3**, then:

Topic: Heaven, Hell and Purgatory, Part 1

Prepare for next class: Robert Silverberg, “The Pope of the Chimps,” (1982) in *Sacred Visions*, pp. 27-49; Susan MacGregor, “Drying Out in Purgatory,” (1998) in *Divine Realms*, pp. 179-199.

11:00 section: Submit Journals

NOTE: November 1 (Monday) is All Saints Day; November 2 (Tuesday) is All Souls Day, in the RC tradition. Some Protestant churches may celebrate All Saints' Day on Sunday (e.g. October 31 or November 7).

10) 11/2
T: Topic: Heaven, Hell and Purgatory, Part 2
Prepare for next class: McAlister, Readings, nos. 1.11, 1.17. Secondary reading: McAlister, *Introduction*, pp. 281-291; Arts, Ch. Five. Other reading: TBA.

R: Topic: "Natural" Evil and Suffering, Part 1
Prepare for next class: Isaac Asimov, "Nightfall," (1941) in *The Science Fiction Hall of Fame, Volume One*, pp. 113-144; Tom Godwin, "The Cold Equations," (1954), in *The Road to Science Fiction, Volume 3*, pp. 216-237; Hilbert Schenck, "The Theology of Water," (1982) in *Perpetual Light*, pp. 170-188.

2:00 section: Submit Journals

11) 11/9
T: Topic: "Natural" Evil and Suffering, Part 2
Prepare for next class: Primary reading: Harrington, pp. 35-40. Secondary reading: Cory, pp. 109-114, 124-125; Gonzalez, Vol. 1, pp. 82-88, 102-105.

R: Topic: Persecutions in the Early Church
Prepare for next class: Primary reading: Harrington, pp. 261-265 (*Thirteen Statements*, and "Letter from a Dutch Anabaptist Martyr"). Secondary reading: Cory, pp. 260-269, 275-287 (skim all of Chs. 17 and 18, if there is time); Gonzalez, Vol. 2, pp. 53-60.

11:00 section: Submit Journals

12) 11/16
T: Guest Lecture: Prof. Stephen Ainlay, Dean of the College, on Anabaptists and Persecution
Prepare for next class: Primary reading: Harrington, pp. 467-478; Jolly, pp. 333-347. Secondary reading: Cory, pp. 196-206, Gonzalez, Vol. 1, pp. 292-300; Vol. 2, pp. 364-367.

R: **Quiz 4**, then:

Topic: Persecutions in the Medieval and Modern Church: Crusades and Nazism
Prepare for next class: Read Anthony Boucher, "The Quest for Saint Aquin," in *Sacred Visions*, pp. 311-329. Other reading: TBA.

2:00 section: Submit Journals

- 13) 11/23 T: TBA
Final due date for “experiential” essays

R: No Class [Thanksgiving Break]
- 14) 11/30 T: Discussion of common readings: “Torture,” “How Much Home Does a Person Need?” and “Resentments” in Jean Améry, *At the Mind’s Limits*; and film: *Judgment at Nuremberg*.

R: Continue discussion.
Reflection essay on Améry essays due
Prepare for next class: read Damien Broderick, “The Magi,” (1982) in *Perpetual Light*, pp. 302-344.
- 15) 12/7 T: Last Class Meeting: **Quiz 5**, then discussion of “The Magi.” Questions about the final exam.
Both sections: Submit Journals

W: Study Period Begins

[12/11 Final Examinations begin]

Final Exam: Section 01 (11:00): Thursday, December 16, at 2:30 p.m. (Smith 426)
Section 02 (2:00): Saturday, December 18, at 2:30 p.m. (Stein 225)

NOTE: The above schedule and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

