

God, the Lover and the City: Explorations in Catholic Faith and Culture
Summer Rome Program 2015

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Course Description: Augustine famously begins his *Confessions*, declaring to God: “You have made us for yourself and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” The human person, created by God and called to participate eternally in divine life, is a lover. He is also a thinker, a rational animal as Aristotle and Aquinas put it, made to understand the things of nature and to contemplate himself and divine being. And, the human person is social, created to live in a temporal polity.

Given this theological starting point, “God, the Lover and the City: Explorations in Catholic Faith and Culture” asks the following questions: how are we supposed to understand the human drive towards the beautiful and the transcendent? What are we to make of human rationality and its limits? How is faith related to reason? What difference does the Catholic faith make to our social and political lives? The course examines these questions from the perspective of the Catholic theological, literary and artistic tradition in dialogue with contemporary culture.

Required Texts:

Becket, Samuel. *Waiting for Godot*. Grove Press, 2011 (Available in Kindle format).

de Lubac, Henri. *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988.

John Paul II. *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*. New York: Knopf, 1994 (Available in Kindle format).

O’Conner, Flannery. *The Complete Stories* (Available in Kindle format).

Ratzinger, Joseph. *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006 (Available in Kindle format).

A Note on Texts for the Course: Students are encouraged to purchase digital copies of the required texts where available. All additional required reading for the course will be available to students on eCollege (the equivalent of Blackboard) in PDF format.

Students are encouraged to bring some form of an e-reader: Kindle, iPad, laptop, etc. (N.B., smart phones are *not* sufficient for managing course reading.)

Course Requirements: First and foremost, students are required to read the assigned texts. Participation in class discussions will factor significantly in the student’s final grade. Students will be required to keep a reading journal during the summer (see below). There will be a final exam; and students will be required to submit a term paper by July 27. Papers are to be submitted on eCollege.

The Reading Journal: upon completing each reading assignment, the student is to write an entry into his or her journal, reflecting upon the readings. There is no specified limit or size for the entry. It is assumed that some entries will be longer than others. The student is free to

reflect as he or she likes: N.B. it is not a bad entry to write out questions that one has or to explain what or why one doesn't understand the reading.

The journal can be done by hand in written format, or it can be completed electronically and submitted on eCollege.

The Term Paper: at the end of the course and after all readings have been completed you will be given a choice of several prompts to write on. The paper will be an extended essay, reflecting upon the readings of the course. The paper will be five to seven pages long and due on **July 27**. The term paper should be submitted via eCollege.

The final grade will be determined accordingly: 25% class participation (discussion, evidence of having kept up with the readings), 25% final exam, 25% reading journal, 25% term paper.

Class Periods:

[1] Thurs., June 4: Introduction to the Course; the ambiguity of human experience

Reading:

Pope Benedict XVI, *Introduction to Christianity*, Chapter 1 (PDF)□

To Be Read in Class:

Steven Weinberg, *The First Three Minutes* (selection, PDF).□

Augustine, *Confessions* (selections, PDF) [opening chapter (human drive towards God); selections from book 8—beauty and truth]

Images: Apollo, Greek statuary, industrialization, Shoah

Listening (in Class):

Vivaldi, *Lute Concerto and Two Violins in D*
Mozart, *Eine Kleine Nachtmusic*
Edgar Varese: *Hyperprism* (5:00)
Pierre Boulez: *Structures* (first 5:00)
John Adams: *Harmonielehre* (first 5:00)

[2] Sat., June 6: “Is Music Sacred?” (1 hour class)

Reading:

Robert Reilly, “Is Music Sacred?” in *Surprised by Beauty: A Listener's Guide to the Recovery of Modern Music* (Washington D.C., 2002) (PDF)

Listening:

Selections from various classical and contemporary composers

Sunday, June 7: *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* (PDF)

To be read at the Catacombs San Callisto

[3] Mon., June 8: Contemporary Intellectual Challenges (Evening Class: 7-9)

Reading:

Friedrick Nietzsche, Selections (PDF)

Listening:

Edgar Varese: *Hyperprism* (5:00)

Pierre Boulez: *Structures* (first 5:00)

[4] Weds., June 10: Samuel Becket

Reading:

Samuel Becket, *Waiting for Godot*

[5] Thurs., June 11: Gabriel Marcel, Metaphysics of Hope

Reading:

Gabriel Marcel. "Sketch of a Phenomenology and Metaphysic of Hope" (PDF)

Listening (in Class):

Mozart: *Dies Irae* (2:00)

Krzysztof Penderecki: *Polish Requiem (Dies Irae)* (1:30)

Henryk Gorecki, Symphony no. 3 (*Totus Tuus* written in honor of JPII's visit to Poland)

[6] Fri., June 12: Pope Benedict XVI on Beauty and Truth

Reading:

Benedict XVI, "Wounded by the Arrow of Beauty" (PDF)

Listening (in Class):

Arnold Schoenberg, *String Quartet* no. 2. (30:00)

Krzysztof Penderecki: *Trenody for the Victims of Hiroshima*

[7] Tues., June 16: *Ascensis Mentis* and the Experience of ‘Beauty’ (1 hour class)

Reading:

Plato, selection from *Symposium* (PDF).

Images: Symposium

At Ostia:

Augustine, selections from *Confessions* (PDF).

Confessions 7.10.16-7.17.23

Confessions 9.10.23-25

[8] Thurs., June 18: Francis of Assisi at Assisi (class to be held at San Damiano)

Reading:

Chesterton, *Francis of Assisi*

[An introduction to Francis, selections of his prayers to be read in class]

Listening:

John Cage: Interview on Silence (noise), “Cage plays amplified Cacti and Plant materials with a Feather,” 4’33”

[9] Mon., June 22: St. John Paul II on Art

Reading:

St. John Paul II. “Letter to Artists” (PDF)

Images: Francis Bacon, Rothko, Mark Chagall

[10] Tues., June 23: Grace and Catholic Literature

Reading:

Flannery O’Connor, *A Good Man is Hard to Find*, *Parker’s Back*

[11] Weds., June 18: Flannery O’Conner Continued:

Reading:

Good Country People, Revelation

[12] Fri., June 26: Joseph Pieper on Art, Beauty and Contemplation

Reading:

Pieper, Joseph. *Only the Lover Sings: Art and Contemplation* (PDF)

Listening:

Francis Poulenc: selections from his earlier work, *Litanies à Vierge Noire de Rocamadour, Stabat Mater* (1950)

Benedictines of Christ in the Desert, *Stabat Mater* (Plainchant)

[13] Sunday, June 28: Subiaco (1 hour class at Subiaco)

Reading:

Pope Benedict XVI, *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures* (chs. 1-3) (The Subiaco Address)

[14] Mon., June 29: Benedict XVI on Faith and Culture

“What Does it Mean to Believe?” in *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures* (This is Part III of the book)

[15] Tues., June 30: The Poetry of Richard Wilbur

Reading:

Wilbur, Richard. Selected Poems (PDF)

[16] Wed., July 1: *Deus Caritas Est*

Reading:

Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* (available on the Vatican website)

[17] Tues., July 7: Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei*

Reading:

Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei* (available on the Vatican website)

[18] Weds., July 8: St. John Paul II

Reading:

St. John Paul II. *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*.

[19] Thurs., July 9: Catholicism

Reading:

Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism* (Selections, PDF)

Listening:

Sacred Music: Pärt and Tavener

Arvo Pärt: *Magnificat, Tabula Rasa (Ludus, Silentium), Fratres*

John Tavener, *The Veil of the Temple*

[20] Fri., July 10: The City, The Church

Reading:

Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), “Hell, Purgatory, Heaven,” in *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life* (PDF).

Augustine, *City of God* (selections, PDF)