

THEO 239 - SCRIPTURES AND SPIRITUALITIES
Spring Quarter 2024
Wednesdays, 6:00 – 9:00 pm

Course Description:

The author of 2 Timothy asserts, “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work” (3:16-17). It is for this reason that observant Jews and practicing Christians habitually attend to their sacred texts.

Through an overview of the biblical canon, this course explores the relationship between historically diverse communities of believers and their sacred texts, and introduces students to complex and diverse spiritualities which emerge from the sacred writings of Judaism and Christianity. To do this, this course must examine the relationship between Divine revelation and its transmission through written texts, which present and express the historical and cultural context of believers. As such, this course initially considers the watershed document that was formulated in the Second Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, and its articulation of the dynamic character of God’s self-disclosure and the transmission of Divine Revelation, as well as its treatment of the inspiration and authentic interpretation of God’s Word, and how this privileged experience of God is ultimately realized in the life of believers—as individuals and communities.

In attending to the scriptures, believers do not encounter a text merely as a product of past cultures and peoples. For the faith community, God’s Word summons its contemporary hearers to growth, change and newness of life. In their attending to God’s Word, God dynamically calls believers together and convokes *ekklesia*. As such, the scriptures challenge hearers—as individuals and as communities—to a continuous openness to God’s desire for communion with every generation.

- How do scriptures shape a community’s pattern of worship, its teaching and ethical discourse?
- How do scriptures call forth and support the identity of a believer as well as a believing community?

God’s Word is not disclosed in solitary fragments of text but is illuminated by texts in relationship with each other, text by text, each clarifying and interpreting the other. Consequently, a fragmentary or reductionistic reading of sacred texts risks an excising of God’s Word from the inner life and unity that is conveyed through the entirety of the scriptures. To understand how a faith community’s religious imagination and identity are enriched and shaped by through scriptures—as well as through liturgical seasons and religious celebrations, this course will continually draw its examples from the Lectionary that is used by the Roman Catholic Church.

THEO 239 is a mixed/blended graduate course where some students will meet on campus, while others will participate in this course online. As such, some course material will be presented in an asynchronistic format, at other times class material will be engaged in synchronistic mixed setting where on campus and online students will create a blended learning community. To create a genuine learning environment, **students who are taking this course as an online are asked to keep their cameras “on” during class time.**

Required Texts for THEO 239 – Scriptures and Spiritualities

Barbara E. Bowe, with contributions by Laurie Brink and John R. Barker, *Biblical Foundations of Spirituality: Touching a Finger to the Flame*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. ISBN 978-0-7425-5961-5

Thelma Hall, *Too Deep for Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina, with 500 Scriptural Texts for Prayer*, Mahwah, New York: Paulist Press, 1988. ISBN 0-8091-2959-0

These texts will be supplemented by further materials which have been selected and prepared by the instructor that will be made accessible by way of *CAMINO*.

Each student also needs to have access to a Bible. There are various translations of the scriptures; however, the *NRSV*, that is, the *New Revised Standard Version*, is highly recommended. On *CAMINO* you have also been provided with a very helpful online Biblical resource.

Recommended, but not Required Tests:

The Bible and Spirituality: Exploratory Essays in Reading Scripture Spiritually, edited by Andrew T. Lincoln, J. Gordon McConville and Lloyd K. Petersen, Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013. ISBN 978-1-4982-1631-9

Ruth Burrows, *Guideline for Mystical Prayer*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1976. ISBN 0-7220-7663-0

Course Goals and Objectives:

Goal 2: In THEO 239 students need to attend to 2A

Students will develop pastoral skills, ministry knowledge, and liturgical fluencies in at least one key field of study relevant to Christian ministry. (*pastoral proficiency*)

Objectives:

- A. Students will demonstrate a depth of practical and theoretical knowledge in their area of concentration.
- B. Students will understand the significance of liturgy for their ministry and in the life of faith.

Goal 3: In THEO 239 students need to attend particularly to 3A

Students will become competent leaders dedicated to serving the Church and to creating community in parish and other pastoral settings. (*leadership skill*)

Objectives:

- A. Students will employ historically informed knowledge of the tradition to assess theological positions and pastoral issues.
- B. Students will apply skills from their area of concentration for use in their faith community.

Important to Note:

Camino Course Management System: Students enrolled in the course are also enrolled in *Camino*. Given the mix of synchronistic and asynchronistic learning modalities, students need to regularly consult *Camino* for assignments, announcements, supplementary course material, readings, and so forth. *Camino* is an essential “virtual” meeting place for all of us!

**TENTATIVE READINGS AND POSSIBLE ASSIGNMENTS
THEO 239 – SCRIPTURES AND SPIRITUALITIES
SPRING QUARTER 2024**

WEEK ONE: “The Word of God”

Easter Wednesday, April 3

READ: The Dogmatic Constitutions on Divine Revelation: *DEI VERBUM*

READ: “Contemplation: A Long Loving Look at the Real,” by Walter J. Burghardt, S.J. This article is taken from *An Ignatian Spirituality Reader: Contemporary Writings on Ignatius Loyola, the Spiritual Exercises, Discernment and More*, edited by George W. Traub, SJ, (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008), pages 89-98.

WEEK TWO: “Nurturing the Interior Life”

Wednesday, April 10

READ: Barbara Bowe, *Biblical Foundations of Spirituality*, **Chapter 1, What Is Spirituality?**, pp. 9-21; and Chapter 2, *God beyond All Names*, pp. 23-31.

SUBMIT: Based on this week’s readings, submit a short reflective essay (~500-600 words) on what you have found to be most provocative: What are the two or three more significant takeaways which you derive from these pages, and what connections would you make either with your ministry or for your care of persons with whom you live or work?

WEEK THREE: “The God of Creation”

Wednesday, April 17

READ: Barbara Bowe, *Biblical Foundations of Spirituality*, **Chapter 3, The Riddle of the World**, pp. 33-42; and **Chapter 4, The God of Blessings and Salvation**, pp. 43-51.

SUBMIT: Based on this week's readings, submit a short reflective essay (~500-600 words) on what you have found to be most provocative: What are the two or three more significant takeaways which you derive from these pages, and what connections would you make either with your ministry or for your care of persons with whom you live or work?

WEEK FOUR: "Passing Over"

Wednesday, April 24

READ: Barbara Bowe, *Biblical Foundations of Spirituality*, **Chapter 5, I Have Had Their Cry**, pp. 53-65.

READ: Thelma Hall, *Too Deep for Words*, **Introduction**, pp. 1-3

Chapter One: The Recovery of Contemplation, pp. 7-16.

A Hidden Treasure; A Methodless Method; The Rediscovery of Contemplation; Contemplation in Jesus; The Ultimate Goal

Chapter Two: Dying to Live: Resolving the Paradox, pp. 17-25.

The True Self and the False Self; The Human Calamity; Self-Surrender; The Paradox Resolved

Chapter Three: The Deepening of the Interpersonal Relationship, pp. 26-35.

Being "in Love;" *Lectio Divina: A Continuum*; The Grace of Accepted Love; Some Prerequisites for *Lectio Divina*

SUBMIT: Based on this week's readings, submit a short reflective essay (~500-600 words) on what you have found to be most provocative: What are the two or three more significant takeaways which you derive from these pages, and what connections would you make either with your ministry or for your care of persons with whom you live or work?

WEEK FIVE: "Behold the King"

Wednesday, May 1

READ: Barbara Bowe, *Biblical Foundations of Spirituality*, **Chapter 6, Royal Power and the Covenant Dream**, pp. 67-78; and **Chapter 10, That Man Jesus**, pp. 145-167.

SUBMIT: Based on this week's readings, submit a short reflective essay (~500-600 words) on what you have found to be most provocative: What are the two or three more significant takeaways which you derive from these pages, and what connections would you make either with your ministry or for your care of persons with whom you live or work?

WEEK SIX: "The Prophetic Call"

Wednesday, May 8

READ: Barbara Bowe, *Biblical Foundations of Spirituality*, **Chapter 7, Prophetic Spirituality**, pp. 79-103.

SUBMIT: Based on this week's readings, submit a short reflective essay (~500-600 words) on what you have found to be most provocative: What are the two or three more significant takeaways which you derive from these pages, and what connections would you make either with your ministry or for your care of persons with whom you live or work?

WEEK SEVEN: "Interior Transformations"

Wednesday, May 15

READ: Barbara Bowe, *Biblical Foundations of Spirituality*, **Chapter 9, Crisis and Hope**, pp. 123-143.

READ: Thelma Hall, *Too Deep for Words*, **Chapter Four: Lectio Divina**

1. **Lectio:** Reading and Listening to the Word of God, pp. 36-38.
2. **Meditatio:** Reflecting on the Word, pp. 38-41.
3. **Oratio:** The Word Touches the Heart, pp. 41-49
The Transition to Contemplation; The Three "Signs" of John of the Cross; How to Proceed; The Three Signs; What to Do
4. **Contemplatio:** Entering the Silence "Too Deep for Words," pp. 49-56.

SUBMIT: Based on this week's readings, submit a short reflective essay (~500-600 words) on what you have found to be most provocative: What are the two or three more significant takeaways which you derive from these pages, and what connections would you make either with your ministry or for your care of persons with whom you live or work?

WEEK EIGHT: "Easter Proclamation"

Wednesday, May 22

READ: Barbara Bowe, *Biblical Foundations of Spirituality*, **Chapter 11, Pauline Spirituality**, pp. 169-180.

SUBMIT: Based on this week's readings, submit a short reflective essay (~500-600 words) on what you have found to be most provocative: What are the two or three more significant takeaways which you derive from these pages, and what connections would you make either with your ministry or for your care of persons with whom you live or work?

WEEK NINE: "Your Kingdom Come"

Wednesday, May 29

READ: Barbara Bowe, *Biblical Foundations of Spirituality*, **Chapter 12, A New Heaven and a New Earth**, pp. 181-191; and **Conclusion**, pp. 193-197.

SUBMIT: Based on this week's readings, submit a short reflective essay (~500-600 words) on what you have found to be most provocative: What are the two or three more significant takeaways which you derive from these pages, and what connections would you make either with your ministry or for your care of persons with whom you live or work?

FINAL PROJECTS

**WEEK TEN - Wednesday, June 5, and FINALS WEEK – Wednesday, June
12**