The Catholic World

"Any attempt to speak without speaking any particular language is not more hopeless than the attempt to have a religion that shall be no religion in particular... Thus every living and healthy religion has a marked idiosyncrasy. Its power consists in its special and surprising message and in the bias which that revelation gives to life. The vistas it opens and the mysteries it propounds are another world to live in; and another world to live in -- whether we expect ever to pass wholly over into it or no -- is what we mean by having a religion."   - Santayana

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RST 322, Section 101: T/R12:30-1:45, Harris Hall 445

Class Electronic Discussion List: **rst322-9901-list@marshall.edu**

Class Electronic Discussion List Archive: **http://bailey9.marshall.edu/~altany/rst322-9901-list/**

Office hours: MW   10-11, 12-2   Office Email: Student email will be responded to within
                   T/Thr 11-12:30   24 hours of reception
                    F   10-11

Text/Web Resources: **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, Doubleday, 1995

> **Catechism of the Catholic Church** (text)
> **Vatican Web Site**
> **Theology Library** (A Catholic collection)
> **New Advent Catholic Website** (Catholic Encyclopedia, Church
>   Fathers, **Summa Theologica,** Q&A, etc.)
> **Catholic Resources on the Net**
> **Catholic Information Center on the Internet**
> **Catholic Resources**
> **Catholic Mega Sites**
> **Christus Rex et Redemptor**
> **Catholic Homepages**
> **My Catholic Start Page**
> **Abbey of Gethsemani**
> **Anti-Catholicism** (Views of Chick Publications)

Religious Studies is an academic discipline in which the phenomenon of religion in human experience is studied in a nonsectarian, unbiased manner using various kinds of historical-critical, analytical, comparative, phenomenological, interdisciplinary methodologies. Discussion should be conducted with honesty, enthusiasm, kindness, critical thought and respect for the worldviews and beliefs of others. This course is not only for learning, but is itself to be a model for how to learn, why to learn, and to learn to love to learn.

The following course explanation, in its totality, is a syllabus that is dynamic and flexible according to the needs of the learners and of the learning process. It is not presented as complete at the beginning of the study, but as an initial trajectory for the study. More specific guidance will be available as needed along the way. You, the learner, have a voice in the directions our study of world religions takes so that our work is most significant for you and for the class as a whole.

Course Description

This course is an exploration of the orgin and development of the Roman Catholic world in all its multiple expressions: theology, politics, liturgy, morality, arts, spirituality, monasticism. We will seek to gain an understanding of the Catholic worldview and how that worldview originated, developed and what interpretation it gives to human life, society, salvation and to the sacred or "God." We will examine Catholic self-identity, what it means to be Catholic, and what are the unique characteristics of Catholicism in the contemporary world. We will critically analyze the structures, intentions, meanings, beliefs, rituals, stories, ethical teachings, role of community and the role of mystical or religious experience in Roman Catholicism. We will try to "see" what being Catholic means according to Catholics themselves. Thus, this study has a course project where the learner is to observe Catholic events and speak with Catholics. Also, we will look at the nature of anti-Catholicism.

Course Objectives

By the end of this study it is hoped and expected that each learner will be have a basic knowledge of the main questions which Catholicism asks and seeks answers to within the context of its tradition. Further objectives: To develop critical thinking skills by means of trying to become aware of one's perspective and why it is as it is and any needed changes in order to have a more accurate, perceptive view of Catholicism; To understand the nature and problems of understanding a religion or way of life, whether it is one's own or one is not a member of it; To interpret Catholicism in an historical, educational, social and religious context.

Computing in this Course

Each student needs to have the basic ability to use email that is web-sensitive such as Netscape Messenger or Microsoft Outlook and to be able to find and utilize world-wide-web resources that are available for the study of religion and religions through use of a web browser such as Navigator (2.0 or higher) or Internet Explorer. The course will include sending and receiving email, web site readings and research, an electronic discussion list (with web archive) and electronic publication of student writings, both individual and collaborative.

The educational use of telecomputing will facilitate ongoing asynchronous discussion, submission and revision of student writings, peer review of student writings, collaborative group writings and projects, individual communication with the professor, or among students, and publication of an electronic course journal with student contributions. **Telecomputing tutorials** are available as is guidance on **how to communicate kindly and with respect** on the Internet (**netiquette**).

The purposes of the using of computer technology in this study are as follows:

* Participation in the archived, asynchronous class discussion list (mailserv)
* Communication with international, intercultural guests on the class list
* Individual email contact with students from other parts of the world

* Anytime communication of questions, comments, problems, etc. with the professor via individual email
* Engage in a semester-long discussion with other learners in the course via the class discussion list
* Submit individual & collaborative writings electronically to the class list or professor
* Investigate relevant World-Wide Web sites
* Collaborate with other students in the course on projects/writings via email
* Expand opportunities for reflective participation in the study, beyond the limitations of a classroom place and classroom time
* Encourage learners/students to become more central to the learning process and more responsible for their own, and others, learning
* Develop computer skills
* Allow learning to become more enjoyable, valuable, enduring, self-directed and expansive beyond just a transfer of information from professor to student

Writing Across the Curriculum

This study is a **Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)**, writing-intensive, course where writing is fully integrated into all aspects of the learning and reflection process. In this process one's writing skills are further developed in the context of both learning to write and writing to learn. There are no exams in this course, but there are in- and out-of-class writings, formal, revised essay, group writings, oral presentations or debates with written components. **On-line writing resources** are available. All writings are to be completely the work of the individual or the group doing the writing, thus avoiding all **plagiarism**.

Attendance Policy

Attendance at every class is expected and necessary to best benefit the act and art of learning through the discussion and writing orientation of this course on a complex subject. Any one planning on having unexcused absences is advised to not take this course of study.

Drop Policy

The official withdrawal policy is observed where the withdrawal ("W") period for an individual course begins August 31st and ends October 30th. From November 2nd to November 8th only complete withdrawals from the university are allowed.

Course Evaluation

Electronic Discussion List	- 25 %
Individual Course Project	- 25 %
Self-directed Group Study & Presentation	- 25 %
Rough Draft & Revised Formal Essay	- 25 %

All writings, presentations, discussion list postings need to be done on time to receive full evaluation.

Semester Schedule

"Truth is so obscure in these times, and falsehood so established,

that, unless we love the truth, we canot know it." -Pascal