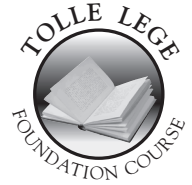




*There is no better way to pursue the truth than by questioning and answering.*  
— St. Augustine, *Soliloquies*



## Theology and Religious Studies 1000

Faith, Culture and Reason

### Foundation Question

What do I believe?

#### Theology and Religious

**Studies 1000** is one of a group of five courses that we call the foundation courses. The courses make a Villanova education distinctive and work together to answer a series of related questions:

#### **WHO AM I?**

Augustine and Culture Seminar 1000 (Ancients) and 1001 (Moderns)

#### **WHAT CAN I KNOW?**

Philosophy 1000:  
Knowledge, Reality, Self

#### **WHAT DO I BELIEVE?**

Theology and Religious Studies 1000:  
Faith, Reason, and Culture

#### **HOW SHOULD I LIVE?**

Ethics 2050:  
The Good Life—  
Ethics and Contemporary Moral Problems

By seeking answers to these questions, you will conduct an interdisciplinary inquiry that is informed by Augustinian and Catholic intellectual traditions, develop your skills in critical thinking and communication, deepen your understanding of yourself and the world, and engage with issues of personal responsibility and social justice.

Villanova University  
Department of Theology and Religious Studies  
Dr. Christy Lang Hearlson  
[Christy.langhearlson@villanova.edu](mailto:Christy.langhearlson@villanova.edu)  
SAC 218/ (610)-519-5257  
Office Hours: Mondays 1-3pm & by appointment

## Faith, Reason, and Culture

THL 1000\_018

Tu/Th 8:30-9:45am

Bartley 033

What Do I Believe?

## Course Description

**Hi there, student!** I know, I know. You have to take a theology course. A few of you are excited. Some of you are nervous. Many of you are just jumping through a hoop. Get ready. Theology isn't what you think. And this hoop is gonna be crazy. Let's get started.

**Why are we doing this?** We live in a diverse, interconnected global society, in which those who seek the common good are called to address enormous challenges, working alongside others who believe and practice differently from ourselves. The problems we face today include violence and war, an increasing divide between the wealthy and the poor, disease, racism, sexism, environmental degradation, polarized politics, interpersonal conflict, and ethical dilemmas raised by new technologies. Some have called these "wicked problems," because they are so urgent, so complex, and have such high stakes. When dealing with "wicked problems," we need more than information, intelligence, or good will. We need practical wisdom. Practical wisdom is "embodied, situated, knowing-in-action" (Dorothy C. Bass et al, 2016: 2). Such wisdom draws together our best ideas, our deepest convictions, and our bodily intuitions for the sake of responsible action in the world. Because belief and action are deeply intertwined, those who wish to act wisely must reflect again and again on what we believe, individually and collectively. We must consider how our beliefs relate to one another, how our beliefs cohere or conflict with our actions, how our practices inform our thinking, and how our beliefs and practices might address "wicked problems."

**What is our subject matter?** This course, THL 1000, is one of the five foundational courses of the Liberal Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum. It is meant to help us answer the question, “What do I believe?” in order that we might grow in practical wisdom. In order to ponder that question, and to consider how others have answered that question before us, we will explore the rich living tradition of Christianity, whose central way of knowing is practical wisdom. With a particular (but not exclusive) focus on Roman Catholicism, we will engage Christianity as a living tradition of beliefs and practices that have developed over time in many contexts. Seeking wisdom together, we will explore Christian themes, writings, values, and practices in relationship to specific contemporary challenges. To do this, we will read sections of the common text used in all sections of THL 1000, *Gaudium et spes*, the most important document that came out of the reforms of Vatican II (that’s a reform movement that happened in the Catholic Church in the mid-twentieth century), and that articulates the relationship between the church and culture.

**What is our approach?** In this section of THL 1000, we will use the approach of Practical Theology. Practical Theology is a way of doing theology that attends to lived reality and practice, engages in interdisciplinary dialogue, and seeks to cultivate practical wisdom for life. It aims to describe and interpret situations, evaluate situations and possible routes of action according to important standards and values, and strategize for wise decision making in the world. Practical theology often uses case studies to make abstract ideas concrete and to learn from ordinary experience.

**What will be our case study?** As an ongoing case study in practical theological reflection, this course will examine the challenge of consumerism, considering the ways in which Christian faith and practice buy into or challenge consumer culture. Engaging a real-life issue today can help us understand the process of practical theological reflection and equip us to act wisely. Consumerism is a helpful focal issue because it often functions as a religious system, presenting a competing set of core values, beliefs, and practices. Analyzing it can help us understand the distinctives of Christian faith and practice, as well as the way in which Christianity relates to a broader culture. Consumerism also relates to many pressing issues today, including human meaning-making and identity formation, environmental degradation, poverty, and human rights, so engaging it will help us consider other major challenges that call for practical wisdom.

## **Who is your professor?**

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My first name is Christiane, but I go by Christy. You can call me “Dr. Lang Hearlson” or “Professor Lang Hearlson,” or just “professor.” Yes, I have two last names. They’re not hyphenated, but they always go together.

I’m a human being. I’m not perfect, and I’m going to spell things wrong on the board, talk too fast, forget to explain something, take too long to grade your papers, or miss the fact that you did an extra credit assignment. At the same time, I love teaching, and I love teaching THL 1000 in particular.

I'm originally from Washington State, and I've lived along the eastern seaboard for 18 years. I did my doctoral work at Princeton Theological Seminary, where I was trained as a practical theologian and religious educator. I have specialties in pedagogy, literacy, attention, and adolescents. I'm an ordained Presbyterian minister, so I'm not Catholic, but I have deep respect for Catholic life and teaching.

I have a spouse who is also a scholar-minister, and we have two young sons. I love playing with my kids, pretending I can play the guitar, talking with friends, walking on foggy days, wearing red shoes, eating lemon meringue pie and chocolate mousse cake, collecting sea glass, riding ferry boats, hiking in the mountains, learning new words, reading beautifully written novels, watching fireflies, trying new foods, visiting thrift stores, gardening, making up kid science experiments, and watching binge-worthy shows with my husband. My favorite writer for the past 20 years has been Annie Dillard. As you'll find out, I'm into sustainability and connecting faith with ordinary life. I love music of almost any genre, and I'll start class with music most days. My sports knowledge is spotty because it's all second-hand through my husband's fandom.

I am an enthusiastically bad dancer and have a terrible sense of direction, and though I dream of perfectly clean spaces, my desk is usually a mess by the second week of the semester. My car is always a mess. I'm plagued by perfectionism and grateful when others show grace to me. I am annoyed by boring teaching, bad grammar, unproductive meetings, and my email inbox. I get angry about injustice that causes suffering and anything that harms kids. I delight in teaching college students, and I think I have the best job in the world. I can't wait to get to know you.

## **Learning Outcomes**

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After taking the course, you will be able to:

1. Articulate how theological concepts and religious practices and beliefs interact with cultural contexts, local and global, especially in the context of consumer culture and the global economy.
  2. Formulate theological/religious and cultural responses to life's big questions, especially to questions about happiness, human vocation, suffering, injustice, responsibility, and human and planetary interconnectedness.
  3. Evaluate the significance of particular Christian practices, beliefs, and traditions for personal, communal, societal, and global living.
  4. Practice and become adept at a basic process of practical theological reflection of describing, interpreting, evaluating, and strategizing around particular issues or situations.
  5. Interpret and evaluate the semester's focal issue of consumerism and its relationship to Christian faith, as well as to your own way of living in the world.
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## Course Structure

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This course is structured into five units:

- I. Introduction
  - a. Who are we in this class?
  - b. What is theology?
  - c. What is practical theological reflection?
- II. The Descriptive Task of Practical Theology:
  - a. Descriptive Question: What is happening?
  - b. Case Study: What is the impact of consumerism? How does theology help us notice what we might otherwise neglect?
- III. The Interpretive Task of Practical Theology:
  - a. Interpretive Question: Why is this happening?
  - b. Case Study: Why is consumer culture so powerful, persuasive, and subtle? How do different theoretical lenses, including the disciplines of theology and religious studies, help us make sense of consumerism?
- IV. The Normative Task of Practical Theology:
  - a. Normative Question: What ought to be happening?
  - b. Case Study: What values, norms, and sources—including from religious tradition, practices, and scripture—can guide us as we relate to consumer culture?
- V. The Strategic Task of Practical Theology:
  - a. Strategic Question: What might we do?
  - b. Case Study: What approaches might we take to facing consumerism? How can Christian tradition and religious practices provide possibilities for action?

## Required Texts

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Paul VI. *Gaudium et Spes*. December 7, 1965. Papal Archive. The Holy See. [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_cons\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html). Accessed November 26, 2016. (Will be provided on Blackboard in pdf.)

Beaudoin, Tom. *Consuming Faith: Integrating Who We Are with What We Buy*. Sheed & Ward, Second Edition, 2006. ISBN-13: 978-1580512084

Hicks, Douglas. *Money Enough: Everyday Practices for Living Faithfully in the Global Economy*. Jossey-Bass, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-0787997755

## Course Assignment Overview

Assignment	Value/ 1000	Description	Due Date
Participation/ Attendance	140 points	See details below.	
Reading Journal	200 points	An online journal in which students respond briefly to the reading. Ten entries are required at 20 points each. See details below.	For full credit, entries are due <i>before</i> the class in which we discuss the reading you're writing about.
Short Paper 1	120 points	2.5-3 pages. TOPIC: What's happening? Observation and description of your consuming behavior. See details below.	<b>Monday, February 11 at 9pm.</b> Turn in on Blackboard under Assignments.
Short Paper 2	140 points	2.5-3 pages. TOPIC: Why is it happening? Interpretation of your consuming behavior. See details below.	<b>Monday, March 4 by 9pm.</b> Turn in on Blackboard under Assignments.
Short Paper 3	150 points	2.5-3 pages. TOPIC: What ought to be happening? Identifying norms and sources for evaluating your consuming behaviors. See details below.	<b>Monday, April 1 by 9pm.</b> Turn in on Blackboard under Assignments.
Group Presentation	200 points	TOPIC: What might you do? Developing strategies for integrating your beliefs and values with your actions. See details below.	Group projects will be completed in class.
Final Letter or Environmental Footprint	50 points	Option 1: Write a 2-3 page letter explaining what you've learned in this course and what you plan to do next.  Option 2: Using an online tool, take a quiz to determine your environmental footprint. Write a 2-page reflection.	<b>Thursday, May 9 by 9pm.</b> Turn in on Blackboard under Assignments.
Extra Credit	20 points extra	When you watch <i>The True Cost</i> documentary, if you get someone who isn't in this class to watch it and send me an email saying something they learned from it, you get 20 extra points toward your final grade.	
Extra Credit/Writing Tutor Incentive	Up to 33 points	If you take a paper/project to a Villanova writing tutor, you automatically receive additional points equal to 5% of that assignment's value, with the assignment's grade capped at 100% of the possible value. Since your papers/projects are worth a total of 660 points, you may earn up to 33 extra credit points within the assignment category.	Example: If you take Short Paper 2, which is worth 140 points, to a tutor, you automatically receive an extra 7 points <i>on top of the points your assignments merits</i> , up to 140 points total.

## Course Schedule

**Note 1:** Readings are to be completed *before* the class date on which they are listed. We will discuss readings in class on the day they're listed.

**Note 2:** This list of readings may change slightly over the course of the term in response to cancelled classes or other events. Updates to readings will appear in the Readings page of Blackboard, and the professor will notify you of any changes.

<b>UNIT I: Introduction to Practical Theology</b>			
	<b>Date</b>	<b>Reading/Assignment</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Week 1	Tuesday, January 15	No assignment	Syllabus and intro to course
	Thursday, January 17	<p><b>Watch:</b> <i>Gaudium et spes</i>: Quick Overview (3 min) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSTCfac3mFI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSTCfac3mFI</a></p> <p><b>And the first 3 minutes</b> of: Vatican II: Inside the Council, Episode 7, "Gaudium et spes," <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQGU5xTZuqo&amp;t=238s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQGU5xTZuqo&amp;t=238s</a></p> <p><b>Read:</b> <i>Gaudium et spes</i>, "Preface," points 1-10 (Blackboard) Summary of <i>Gaudium et spes</i> (Blackboard)</p>	Who is in this class? How can we form a learning community? What is <i>Gaudium et spes</i> and why does it matter?
Week 2	Tuesday, January 22	Charles Wood & Ellen Blue, <i>Attentive to God</i> , Ch. I, "An Understanding of Theology." (Blackboard)	What is theology? What forms does it take? What is theology concerned with today?
	Thursday, January 24	Richard Osmer, <i>Practical Theology</i> , part of "Introduction," pp.1-11 (Blackboard)  <i>Mater et Magistra</i> , "Practical Suggestions," points 236-238	What does it mean to do practical theology?  What is practical theological reflection?

<b>UNIT II: The Descriptive Task: What Is Happening?</b>			
Week 3	Tuesday, January 29	<p><u>PART OF</u> Annie Leonard, <i>The Story of Stuff</i>, Ch. 4, "Consumption," pp. 144-172 (Blackboard)</p> <p>Pope Francis, <i>Laudato Si'</i>, points 43-47 and 203-204 (Blackboard)</p>	What is consumerism? What are its mechanisms? How does consumerism affect us, the consumers?
	Thursday, January 31	<p>Annie Leonard, <i>The Story of Stuff</i>, Ch. 2, "Production" (Blackboard)</p> <p>Pope Francis, <i>Laudato Si'</i>, points 1-9, 17-42 (Blackboard)</p>	How does consumerism affect the environment?
Week	Tuesday,	All: Pope Francis, <i>Laudato Si'</i> , points 48-52	How does consumerism

4	February 5	and 143-146 (Blackboard)  Ian Urbina, “Sea Slaves: The Human Misery That Feeds Pets and Livestock,” <i>New York Times</i> , July 27, 2015. (Blackboard)  Sarah Jacobs, “Stunning photos show what it’s like inside a Chinese factory that makes American toys,” <i>Business Insider</i> , Aug 5, 2017.	affect others?
	Thursday, February 7	All: Watch <i>The True Cost</i> documentary (watch with someone not in this class for extra credit)  All: Beaudoin, <i>Consuming Faith</i> , pp. 63-66  All: <i>Gaudium et spes</i> , “Some Aspects of Economic Life,” point 63 (Blackboard)	How does consumerism function as an interconnected system, affecting consumers, others around the world, and the planet?

**UNIT III: The Interpretive Task: Why Is This Happening?**

Week 5	Tuesday, February 12	<b>Paper #1 Due on February 11 by 9pm</b>  <i>Gaudium et spes</i> , “The Help the Church Receives from the Modern World,” point 44 and “The Proper Development of Culture,” points 53-62.  Pope Francis, <i>Laudato Si’</i> , points 62-63	How am I a consumer?  Theology as interdisciplinary conversation: Why does asking “why” matter? How do we go about interpreting complex situations responsibly? What are theoretical lenses?
	Thursday, February 14	PART OF Rodney Clapp, Part of “The Theology of Consumption and the Consumption of Theology, Ch. 10 of <i>The Consuming Passion</i> . Read <u>only</u> pp. 169-194 (Blackboard).	An Historical-Theological Perspective: How did we get here, and what role did religion play?
Week 6	Tuesday, February 19	<b>Last names A-I:</b> Dustin Penn, “The Evolutionary Roots of our Environmental Problems: Toward a Darwinian Ecology” (Blackboard)  <b>Last names J-M:</b> Damian Thompson, excerpt from <i>The Fix: How Addiction is Invading Our Lives and Taking Over the World</i> “What is consumer addiction?” Postconsumers.com (Blackboard)  <b>Last names O-Z:</b> John de Graff and David Wann, <i>Affluenza</i> , Introduction and Chs. 1-3 AND “How to Contain an Epidemic”	Evolutionary, Psychological, and Social Health Perspectives: What are the evolutionary roots of consumer behavior?  How is consumerism like an addiction?  How is consumerism like an epidemic?

		(Blackboard)	
	Thursday, February 21	<b>All:</b> <i>Gaudium et spes</i> , points 10, 12-13, 37 (Blackboard)  <b>A-Ma:</b> <i>Laudato Si'</i> , Pope Francis, points 101-123 (Blackboard)  <b>Mc-Z:</b> Martin Luther King Jr., "Keep Moving from This Mountain," 1960 Speech at Spelman College (Blackboard)	Theological Perspectives: Where and how have humans gone wrong? What is sin, and what forms does it take today?
Week 7	Tuesday, February 26	From Tom Beaudoin, <i>Consuming Faith</i> : 1) Ch 1, "Living in a Branded Culture" 2) pp. 53-58 of Ch 3, "Today's Spiritual Discipline" 3) pp. 68-76, Ch 4, "Bodies and Branding"	A Theological Perspective: How does branding construct, form, and advertise our identity? Why is this spiritually potent? What is economic Docetism?
	Thursday, February 28	<b>A-Ma:</b> Katherine Turpin, "A Golden Calf? Consumer Culture as an Inadequate Object of Adolescent Devotion," pp. 29-52, Ch. 2 of <i>Branded: Adolescents Converting from Consumer Faith</i> (Blackboard)  <b>Mc-Z:</b> William Cavanaugh, Parts I and II of "Detachment and Attachment," (only pp. 31-53) of <i>Being Consumed</i> (Blackboard)	Religious Studies and Theological Perspectives: How does consumer culture function as a faith system and religion? What kind of religion is it? How is it like Christianity? How is it different?
<b>***Paper #2 Due on March 4 by 9pm*** March 4-10 No Class – Semester Break</b>			

<b>UNIT IV: The Normative Task: What Ought to Be Happening?</b>			
Week 8	Tuesday, March 12	Pope Francis, <i>Laudato Si'</i> , points 199-201  Douglas Hicks, <i>Money Enough</i> , chapter 2, "Valuing."  <i>Gaudium et spes</i> , Ch. 3, points 63-65, 72	What are theological and ethical norms and normative visions?  What do we value most? How do we organize our values?
	Thursday, March 14	Pope Francis, <i>Laudato Si'</i> : points 65-95, 216-221  <i>Gaudium et spes</i> , points 64-6  <b>Denis Edwards, "The Community of Creation," Ch. 10 in <i>Partaking of God: Trinity, Evolution, and Ecology</i> (Blackboard)</b>	Creator and Creation: How might a Christian idea and practice of God as Creator affect how we regard ourselves, the created world, and others?
Week 9	Tuesday, March 19	Pope Francis, <i>Laudato Si'</i> : 238-240, 246	Trinity: How might a Christian idea and practice



		Denis Edwards, "Christian Ecological Conversion," Ch. 9 in <i>Partaking of God: Trinity, Evolution, and Ecology</i> (Blackboard)	of God as Trinity affect how we regard ourselves, the created world, and others?
	Thursday, March 21	Tom Beaudoin, <i>Consuming Faith</i> , Ch. 2, "A Divine Economy"  <i>Gaudium et spes</i> , points 32 and 38 (Blackboard)  <i>Laudato Si'</i> , points 96-100 (Blackboard)	Jesus: How does Jesus teach and embody a different way that might help us respond to consumerism?
Week 10	Tuesday, March 26	<i>Gaudium et spes</i> , points 12-17, 27-29 (Blackboard)  Hicks, <i>Money Enough</i> , Ch. 8, "Doing Justice"  <b>Watch:</b> The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hTlrSYbCbHE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hTlrSYbCbHE</a>	Dignity and Justice: How can the principles of human dignity and justice guide our economic behavior?
	Thursday, March 28	<b>All:</b> <i>Gaudium et spes</i> , points 24-26, 32 (Blackboard)  <b>A-Ma:</b> Martin Luther King, Jr., "On Being a Good Neighbor," Sermon. (Blackboard)  <b>Mc-Z:</b> Laura Hartman, <i>The Christian Consumer</i> , Ch. 4, "To Love the Neighbor" (Blackboard)	Neighbor Love: Who is my neighbor? How far should our concern extend?  ***Be prepared to discuss your plan for Paper 3 in class.

**Unit V: The Strategic Task: What Might We Do?**

Week 11	Tuesday, April 2	<b>Paper #3 Due on April 1 by 9pm</b>  "Ethical Consumerism," <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethical_consumerism">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethical_consumerism</a>  Kathleen Ebbitt, "How to be a Responsible Consumer," <a href="https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/how-to-be-a-responsible-consumer/">https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/how-to-be-a-responsible-consumer/</a>  Check out at least three of the following: <a href="https://rankabrand.org/">https://rankabrand.org/</a> <a href="https://donegood.co/chrome">https://donegood.co/chrome</a> <a href="https://goodonyou.eco/app/">https://goodonyou.eco/app/</a> <a href="https://orangeharp.com/">https://orangeharp.com/</a> <a href="https://www.thredup.com/">https://www.thredup.com/</a> <a href="https://www.swap.com/">https://www.swap.com/</a>	The Ethical Consumer Approach: How can we discover possibilities for consuming in more sustainable, responsible ways?
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	Thursday, April 4	<p><b>A-Ma:</b> Laura Hartman, <i>The Christian Consumer</i>, Ch. 3, “To Embrace Creation” (Blackboard)</p> <p><b>Mc-Z:</b> Katherine Turpin, Ch. 5 of <i>Branded</i>, “Repentance: Seeking self-knowledge and disrupting ‘old’ faith” (Blackboard)</p>	The Ascetic and Aesthetic Approaches: How can we undergo an interior conversion that gives us freedom to say no to inordinate desires? How can we embrace creation and savor what we own?
Week 12	Tuesday, April 9	<p><b>All:</b> <i>Gaudium et spes</i>, point 24</p> <p><b>A-Ma:</b> Douglas Hicks, <i>Money Enough</i>, Ch 9, “Sharing”</p> <p><b>Mc-Z:</b> Katherine Turpin, “Forming the Underground: The Power of Small Groups to Nurture Ongoing Conversion,” Ch. 8 of <i>Branded</i> (Blackboard)</p>	The Monastic-Communitarian Approach: How can community reshape us, hold us accountable, and help us consume less?
	Thursday, April 11	<p><b>A-Ma:</b> Douglas Hicks, “Laboring,” Ch. 5 of <i>Money Enough</i> (required text)</p> <p><b>Mc-Z:</b> Douglas Hicks, “Recreating,” Ch. 6 of <i>Money Enough</i> (required text)</p> <p><b>All:</b> <i>Gaudium et spes</i>, Ch. 3, “Man’s Activity Throughout the World,” points 34-35 (Blackboard)</p> <p><b>All:</b> Pope Francis, <i>Laudato Si’</i>: points 124-129, 219, 228-232</p>	<p>The Vocational and Sabbath Approaches: How can our work be responsible and meaningful? How can rest provide an alternative to consumer culture? How can our rest give the world a break?</p> <p><b>Group Presentations 1 &amp; 2</b></p>
Week 13	Tuesday, April 16	<p>Annie Leonard, “How to Be More Than a Mindful Consumer” (Blackboard) – Note that p. 5 is where the meat of her argument begins!</p> <p>Watch “Unpacking Civic Engagement,” (Blackboard)</p> <p>Watch: “How to Turn Protest into Powerful Change” (Blackboard)</p>	<p>The Citizen Approach: How do we act with others to create lasting change?</p> <p><b>Group Presentations 3 &amp; 4</b></p>
	<p><b>April 17-22 Easter Recess</b> (Consider watching your three documentaries.)</p>		
Week 14	Tuesday, April 23	<p>Sustainability tour with Liesel Schwartz</p> <p>For this week and the following, all should watch <b>any two</b> of the documentaries listed to the right OR read the young adult fiction novel <i>Feed</i>, by M.T. Anderson. Feel free to get together to watch the films.</p>	<p><b>Novel:</b> M.T. Anderson, <i>Feed</i> (2002)</p> <p><b>Films:</b> The Dark Side of Chocolate (2010) More Than Honey (2012) No Impact Man (2009)</p>

		If you are not finished with your journal, you may write journal entries on films or the novel.	Before the Flood (2016) Cowspiracy (2014) Plastic Paradise: The Great Pacific Garbage Patch (2013) Food, Inc. (2008) Chasing Ice (2012) This Changes Everything (2015) The Ivory Game (2016) Minimalism: A Documentary about Important Things (2015) Blood in the Mobile (2010)
	Thursday, April 25	Professor out of town Stay in and watch a documentary from the list above, or read <i>Feed</i> by M.T. Anderson.	
Week 15	Tuesday, April 30	(Deemed a Friday class, No class)	No class
	Thursday, May 2	Before class, watch a documentary from the list above, or read <i>Feed</i> by M.T. Anderson.	Final class: What did you watch or read? What did you learn? How do you plan to respond?

## Assignment Descriptions

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### I. In-Class Attendance and Participation (140 points)

This course involves large-group discussion, small-group discussion, partner conversation, solo reflection, and practical experimentation. Not everyone learns or participates in the same way, but all are expected to contribute to the building of a learning community. As such, your grade will reflect both the quantity and quality of your contributions to and involvement in our class time. Since participation depends on attendance, unexcused absences from class affect your participation grade at 30 points per unexcused absence after the first. See the attendance policy below under Course Policies.

Points	Categories	Desired Qualities
35	Preparedness	Demonstrates time spent with the readings or assigned videos, summarizing, analyzing, and referring to them in class and explaining them to others.
35	Collegiality	Seeks to enhance a learning community by getting to know others, being open to new people, experiences, and ideas, and showing respect.

35	Listening	Listens without cutting others off, invites others to share, incorporates and expands on others' comments.
35	Regularity and quality of contributions	Regularly makes significant contributions to class discussions, whether in small groups or the whole group, by referring to course readings, other courses, personal expertise, and personal experience.
=140 total possible points		
Minus number of unexcused absences: ____ x 30 points each =		

## II. Reading Journal (10 entries @ 20 points each = 200 points)

**Requirements:** 10 entries total

**Length:** 250-300 words

To prepare well for class discussion and to help me, your professor, understand you better, you are asked to respond to readings in an online reading journal on Blackboard. You can find the link to it, "Reading Journal," on the left-hand column of the course page on Blackboard. A total of ten entries are required over the term, at twenty points per entry.

Since this journal is intended to prepare you for class discussion, the reading you write about should be something we are about to discuss in the upcoming class sessions for the week. Do not put off writing entries until the end of the term. You will run out of time, and you will not receive full credit on entries that cover readings we have already discussed.

In your entry, respond briefly, in 250-300 words, to the three questions listed below.

Entries that respond to all three questions and demonstrate careful analysis or substantive engagement with the reading will receive full credit.

I, your professor, will keep these journals confidential, though I may ask your permission to share something you write, and you can always decline. I will try to respond to them at least once every two weeks.

Weekly journal questions:

- 1) One sentence: Which reading are you responding to, and what is the name of the author or source?
- 2) Three to five sentences: What is this author or reading trying to persuade the

reader of, big picture, and what are the key elements used to support the central argument? (Note: Do not give a point-by-point summary of the document. Get to the heart of what the author is trying to say.)

- 3) The rest of the entry: What is one quotation from the reading that especially struck you in this reading, what do you think it means, and why did it strike you? That is, what about the quotation is significant in the context of this course, or what resonates with you personally?

### III. Short Reflection Papers

#### **Paper 1: *The Descriptive Task: How Am I a Consumer?***

**Due:** Monday, February 11 by 9pm on Blackboard under Assignments. Please upload the paper; do not paste the text in.

**Length:** 2-3 pages

**Value:** 120 points (Remember that you receive an additional 6 points, up to 100%, if you take this to a Villanova writing tutor).

**Checklist:** 1) Compelling introduction and thesis statement, 2) Part I: Response to one option, 3) Part II: Generalizations and observations about emerging patterns, 4) Conclusion, 5) Bibliography, if you drew on any outside sources, 6) Final check for spelling, grammar, and errors.

**DIRECTIONS:** In this short paper, observe and generalize about your own consumer behavior.

**Introduction:** Introduce the paper in a compelling way that makes clear what is at stake and points to the central theme, task, or argument of your paper.

**Part I:** Choose one of the following three options:

**Option A: Track your consumption of one commodity for one week.** Choose one commodity you consume and track your consumption of it for one week. Your choices include but aren't limited to direct use of water, food, water bottles, electricity, gasoline, and paper. Do your best to estimate your use of this commodity if you cannot track it directly, drawing on online tools and local data if necessary. For example, if you are tracking your water usage, you will want to find out roughly how much water is used in flushing the toilet where you live.

**Option B: Track all your purchases for one week.** Keep track of every purchase you make in one week, explaining the purpose of each purchase. (You don't have to report anything that feels too personal). You may decide whether or not to count food

already purchased through a meal plan; just explain your decision.

**Option C: Trace the history of one mass-produced item you own.** Do your best to track down where, how, and by whom an item you own was produced. Share what you discover about this product, as well as how easy or difficult it was to discover its origins and manufacture.

**Part II:** Make some generalizations about what you observed in your own behavior, or about the experience you chose, or about what you learned. What patterns emerge? What do you notice about yourself or the world?

**Conclusion:** Close the paper by noting any further questions that arise for you or where this paper points you in your thinking or acting.

**Bibliography:** If you used any outside sources, be sure to cite them.

**Paper 2: *The Interpretive Task: Why Do I Consume as I Do?***

**Due:** Monday, March 4 by 9pm on Blackboard. Please upload the paper; do not paste the text in.

**Length:** 2.5-3 pages

**Value:** 140 points (Remember that you receive an additional 7 points, up to 100%, if you take it to a Villanova writing tutor.

**Checklist:** 1) Compelling introduction and thesis statement; 2) Response to one or two question prompts; 3) Substantive interpretation of your behavior through two different theoretical lenses, drawing on at least two course sources, including readings and lectures; 4) Conclusion; 5) Bibliography; 6) Final check for spelling, grammar, and errors.

**DIRECTIONS:** In this short paper, interpret your own consumer behavior using two different theoretical lenses.

**Introduction:** Introduce the paper in a compelling way that makes clear what is at stake and points to the central theme, task, or argument of your paper.

**Body:** Using one or two of the following question prompts, interpret your consuming behavior through *two different theoretical lenses* (e.g. historical, psychological, evolutionary, addiction, epidemiology, theological, religious/ritual studies). Draw substantively on course readings or lectures, explaining what the source you're drawing on means and how it helps you to interpret your behavior. Cite all sources appropriately, using MLA or Chicago style.

- When do you find yourself wanting to buy things?
- What is a childhood or adolescent memory you have that is related to consuming, and how do you think that experience formed you?
- What do you tend to consume a lot of?
- What brands do you purchase or identify with?
- What social groups of which you're a part affect your consuming?
- What feelings do you associate with buying things?
- What kinds of advertisements are effective at getting you to desire something?
- What rituals of consuming are an important part of your life?
- What needs or longings in yourself do you notice that you try to fill with stuff?
- When and how does your family consume?
- How do you notice Villanova students consume? How well do you fit the norm of Villanova consuming?
- How do you relate to other people around the things you consume?

**Conclusion:** Draw your essay to an interesting end, noting any questions it has raised for you or where it begins to point your thinking or acting.

**Bibliography:** Cite all sources, using either MLA or Chicago bibliographic style.

**Paper 3: *The Normative Task: What Do I Believe Ought to Be Happening?***

**Due:** Monday, April 1 at 9pm.

**Length:** 2.5-3 pages

**Value:** 150 points. (Remember that you receive an additional 7.5 points, up to 100%, if you take it to a Villanova writing tutor).

**Checklist:** 1) Compelling introduction and thesis statement; 2) Part 1: Reflect on your values; 3) Part 2: Explain and dialogue with an author or document from the normative unit; 4) Conclusion; 5) Bibliography; 6) Final check for spelling, grammar, and errors.

**DIRECTIONS:** In this short paper, articulate and reflect on some of your values, norms, and sources as you consider your responses to consumer culture, bringing them into substantive dialogue with a reading/author from the unit on the Normative Task. To do so, first respond to one of the following question prompts, and then complete Part II of the assignment.

**Introduction:** Introduce the paper in a compelling way that makes clear what is at stake and points to the central theme, task, or argument of your paper. (In this paper, you might incorporate Part I into your introduction if it provides a strong opening).

### **Part I: Reflect on your own values**

**Option A:** What is a *story* you grew up hearing (it could be a familial, cultural, religious, national, or folk story) or a *practice* you grew up doing that had a formative effect on you and the way you live now? Where does this story or practice come from? What is its message, and what core values does it suggest or promote? How does it affect how you behave as a consumer or respond to consumerism?

**Option B:** What is one belief or principle you hold dearly today? Where does this belief or principle come from? How did you come to believe it? What values does it relate to? How does it relate to your religious tradition or your moral system? How consistently do you live it out? How does this belief or principle affect how you behave as a consumer or respond to consumerism?

**Option C:** If you have been successful in ten years, what will your life look like? Where does this vision come from? How does it relate to your personal values or your religious tradition or your moral framework? How does this vision for yourself affect how you behave as a consumer or respond to consumerism?

### **Part II: Dialogue with an author or document from the normative unit**

Choose one author or document from the Normative Task unit to interact with about what you've already written. (You may also choose a theologian from the Interpretive Task unit if that person articulates a positive normative vision or values you think could guide you). Clearly explain the normative vision of the author or document. Then explain how this author or document would approve, question, or critique the norms and values you have named. How does this author or document push you to expand your normative vision or reevaluate what matters? Finally, note how you would respond to that author or document.

**Conclusion:** Draw your essay to an interesting end, noting any questions it has raised for you or where it begins to point your thinking or acting.

**Bibliography:** Cite all sources, using either MLA or Chicago bibliographic style.

## **IV. Group Presentation**

**Group Presentation:** *The Strategic Task: What Might We Do?*

**Value:** 200 points (Your group receives an additional 10 points, up to 100%, if you visit a Villanova writing tutor. The Writing Center can help with presentations, too!)

**Do Some Practical Theology!**



In a group of four to five students, create a group presentation in the dynamic style of a TED Talk (but with multiple presenters). Choose one practical, bounded issue that relates to our case study of consumerism. (Examples from previous semesters include fast food consumption by college students; dealing with the pressure to buy new clothes; how to throw a sustainable college party; breaking a plastic water bottle habit; and conserving water as a college student.)

In your 16-minute presentation, do the following:

**Show an opening slide** with a title that starts with “How to...” and includes your group members’ names.

**2 minutes:** Open with an engaging line that captures our attention and points to the larger problem; introduce yourselves, and then briefly describe or show the basics of the problem (the descriptive task).

**3 minutes:** Take at least two theoretical perspectives on this issue or problem, explaining why, from these perspectives, this problem has arisen or persists (the interpretive task). Theoretical perspectives include but aren’t limited to historical, economic, evolutionary, psychological, sociocultural, and religious or theological views.

**3 minutes:** Explain how a specific normative source can provide guidance in this situation (the normative task). You might use a scriptural story such as the Creation story or the Good Samaritan, a church teaching such as the Trinity or the incarnation, an exemplary figure such as Jesus or Martin Luther King, Jr., or a principle such as human dignity, justice, or neighbor love. Say clearly and succinctly how this source might critique our current way of operating and/or suggest a positive normative vision.

**8 minutes:** With enthusiasm, show us what we can do differently! Present practical, concrete ideas to respond to this problem or issue, making sure they 1) respond to the reasons for the issue you’ve named and 2) cohere with the norms you’ve laid out. Be sure at least one response moves past the “ethical consumer” approach.

After your presentation, you will be invited to respond to comments and questions.

**Assessment Rubric:** All members will receive the same grade unless you present a persuasive reason that it should be otherwise.

Excellent presentations will do the following:

\_\_\_ Stay within the time limit (you’ll have two minutes of leeway).

\_\_\_ Provide compelling visuals throughout. Consider taking your own photos, if applicable.

\_\_\_ Demonstrate that you are familiar with your content and enthusiastic or serious about the importance of the topic.

\_\_\_ Address a bounded, specific issue. For example, “How to disrupt the plastic water

bottle habit at Villanova” is much better than “How to stop using plastic.”

\_\_\_ Provide a clear title that begins with, “How to...”

\_\_\_ Start with an engaging opening line that catches our attention and begins to frame the problem or draw us in. (Do this before introducing yourselves).

\_\_\_ Use transition statements between sections. “We face a big problem; so why is this problem happening?” is better than, “Next we’re going to do the interpretive task.”

\_\_\_ Offer a clear description of the problem, supporting your claims with either images, statistics, case studies, or anecdotes.

\_\_\_ Interpret the problem through at least two theoretical lenses.

\_\_\_ Draw on a specific source of normative guidance that can either critique the way we’re doing things now or provide a positive normative vision, or both.

\_\_\_ Outline at least three concrete strategies for response that reflect both how you’ve interpreted the problem and the normative source you’ve described. Make sure at least one idea moves past the “ethical consumer” approach.

\_\_\_ Conclude with a clear ending that calls people to action.

## **V. Final Reflection Assignment**

**Due:** Thursday, May 9 by 9pm. Turn in on Blackboard.

**Value:** 50 points

### **Option 1: Write a 2-3 page letter**

Compose a letter to the professor or to another person in your life (roommate, classmate, parent, former teacher, friend) and explain what you've learned this semester and how it has impacted you, or how you have grown personally as a result of the course and why (or talk about both your learning and growth). You have creative license to write this letter in the way that best reflects who you are and what you've gained from the course.

Include at least three concepts from the course, briefly explaining what they mean and why they are important to you and saying where these concepts come from. (You don't need to use formal citations, but do name in the text authors and their works if you're citing a concept from something we read).

If particular assignments or course activities were especially influential, name them and explain why.

### **Option 2: Learn and reflect on your environmental footprint**

Using an online tool of your choosing, take an environmental footprint quiz to learn your footprint. Write a **2-page reflection** in which you summarize what you learned from this quiz and what you plan to do as a result of what you’ve learned. Refer to at least two course concepts in your reflection.

## Grading Rubric for Assignments (and Grade Scale for Course)

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<b>A:</b> <b>96-100%</b>	Excellent work. Begins with a compelling introduction; covers all the requirements of the assignment; shows extraordinarily thoughtful reflection; makes new connections or offers fresh insights; written in a creative, clear style; logic of the paper is completely clear; entirely or mostly free from spelling and style errors.
<b>A-:</b> <b>91-95%</b>	Very strong work. Begins with a compelling introduction; covers all the requirements of the assignment; shows thoughtful reflection; makes clear, compelling connections; written in a creative, clear style; logic of the paper is very clear; mostly free from spelling and style errors.
<b>B+</b> <b>88-90%</b>	Good work. Begins with a clear introduction; covers all the requirements of the assignment; engages substantively with the material; shows good effort; logic of the paper is usually clear; some spelling and style errors.
<b>B</b> <b>84-87%</b>	Good work. Begins with a clear introduction; covers all the requirements of the assignment; engages with the material; shows some effort; logic of the paper is usually clear; some spelling and style errors.
<b>B-</b> <b>81-83%</b>	Fair work. Begins with a clear introduction; covers all the requirements of the assignment; engages with the material; shows some effort; logic of the paper is usually clear; noticeable spelling and style errors.
<b>C+</b> <b>78-80%</b>	Satisfactory work. Covers the basic requirements of the assignment; observations are mostly superficial; logic of the paper is sometimes clear; noticeable spelling and style errors.
<b>C</b> <b>74-77%</b>	Satisfactory work. Covers the basic requirements of the assignment; observations are superficial; logic of the paper is sometimes clear; noticeable spelling and style errors.
<b>C-</b> <b>71-73%</b>	Minimally satisfactory work. Covers the basic requirements of the assignment; observations are superficial or weak; logic of the paper is unclear; noticeable spelling and style errors.
<b>D+</b> <b>68-70%</b>	Needs significant revision. Misses key portions of the assignment; observations are problematic or superficial; logic of the paper is unclear, significant spelling and style errors.
<b>D</b> <b>64-67%</b>	Poor. Completes only a portion of the assignment; observations are problematic or superficial; logic of the paper is unclear; significant spelling and style errors.
<b>D-</b> <b>60-63%</b>	Poor. Completes only a portion of the assignment; observations are problematic or superficial; logic of the paper is unclear; significant spelling and style errors.

## In-Class Policies and Culture

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*Attendance Policy:* This class will involve discussion and small-group work in which we learn from one another. Since we are one another's teachers, regular attendance is crucial. I will take attendance each class with a sign-in sheet. You may have **one unexcused absence** before your grade is affected. After the first unexcused absence, your point total for the course will be reduced by 30 points (out of 1000) per unexcused absence. Consistently late arrival will also reduce your grade.

Per University policies, class attendance for first-year students is mandatory. A first-year student will receive a grade of "Y" (failure) whenever the number of unexcused absences in a course exceeds twice the number of weekly class meetings for the course. Since this course meets twice per week, freshmen receive a failing grade if they have **five** unexcused absences. In addition, per course policy, all other students receive an automatic failing grade if they have **six** unexcused absences. You will receive notification when the attendance record shows you as having three unexcused absences.

Excused absences include the following: approved athletic participation or participation in approved academic events; official University business; approved field trips; certified serious illness; death in the immediate family; or approved placement activities. In order to receive an excused absence, the student must provide documentation to the Office of the Dean of the Students' College. This should be done before the absence, if possible, and no later than 4:30pm on the day the student returns to classes.

*Absences for Religious Holidays:* Villanova University makes every reasonable effort to allow members of the community to observe their religious holidays, consistent with the University's obligations, responsibilities, and policies. Students who expect to miss a class or assignment due to the observance of a religious holiday should discuss the matter with their professors as soon as possible, normally at least two weeks in advance. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the absence.

<https://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/provost/resources/student/policies/religiousholidays.html>

*Exercises and Practices:* In this course, we will practice what we're learning. In addition to lecture and discussion, we will engage in a variety of meditative, interpersonal, and experimental practices during class time. Please be prepared to try new things and consider different approaches to learning. It's going to be fun!

*Etiquette:* Let's be kind and courteous as we engage the material and one another. When you can, celebrate others' contributions and build on them. Ask each other to say more when you don't understand or agree, and share your own thoughts honestly. If you have a history of conflicted or angry discussions, or if others have told you they experience your communication style as overly harsh or passive, please consider consulting Marshall Rosenberg's book *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*.

*Electronics:* I believe that the attention we give to one another, and to course material, is a holy and precious thing. Research shows that the mere presence of a smart phone distracts us and lowers our problem-solving ability. Our phones also prevent us from seeing and interacting with those around us. For these reasons, **this classroom is a no-phone zone.** Before entering the classroom, even if class has not started yet, please put your phone away, and do not take it out again until you leave the class. If you need to use your phone before class, please go out into the hallway. In addition, note-taking on laptops has been shown to be less effective for learning than note-taking on paper, and off-task use of laptops distracts surrounding students. **Laptops should therefore stay put away** until you need them to access readings or to fulfill a class activity. Please take notes with a paper notebook.

*Office of Disabilities (ODS) and Learning Support Services (LSS):* It is the policy of Villanova to make reasonable academic accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. Go to the Learning Support Services website for registration guidelines and instructions. For physical access or temporarily disabling conditions, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 610-519-4095 or email [stephen.mcwilliams@villanova.edu](mailto:stephen.mcwilliams@villanova.edu). Registration is needed in order to receive accommodations.

## Writing Policies

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*Writing Center Incentive:* I love good writing, and I think it's important. The ability to write clearly, persuasively, and correctly allows you to participate in society, gain others' respect, communicate your vision, and ignite change. I therefore grade your papers not only on your ideas, but also on the quality of your writing. To incentivize you to become better writers, and to reassure those who struggle with writing, I reward you for taking your work to a Villanova writing tutor, either at the Writing Center or through a program you're enrolled in. For each assignment you take to a Villanova writing tutor, I will automatically add points to your final grade equal to 5% of the assignment's value, up to the level of 100%. For example, your second paper, which is worth 140 points, would automatically receive an additional 7 points if you took it to a writing tutor. (They send me notification that you went). The Villanova Writing Center is located in Dalton Room, Old Falvey 202 and can be contacted at 610-519-4604. Time slots there fill up fast, so make your appointment well in advance.

*Writing Format and Style:* All papers should be double-spaced, in 12-point font, with one-inch margins. Please follow either the Chicago Manual of Style or MLA Style, using your style consistently and correctly. Stylistic errors will affect your grade.

*Writing Voice:* Your papers can and should be interesting! As you write, think about yourself as a journalist or public figure and write for a larger audience than your professor. Open your papers in creative, engaging ways that don't bore the reader. Explain ideas clearly, as though for an audience that hasn't taken this course. If you refer to an author we read for class, introduce that author as though your reader doesn't know who the author is. *Bad* example: "Hicks says that we should think about work from a theological perspective." *Good* example: "Douglas Hicks, Presbyterian minister and author of *Money Enough: Everyday Practices for Living*

*Faithfully in the Global Economy*, argues that we should think about work from a theological perspective.”

*Academic Integrity*: All students are expected to uphold Villanova’s Academic Integrity Policy and Code. Any incident of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences for disciplinary action. For the College’s statement on Academic Integrity, you should consult the Enchiridion. You may view the university’s Academic Integrity Policy and Code, as well as other useful information related to writing papers, at the Academic Integrity Gateway web site.

*Late Assignments*: Assignments should be submitted by the due date. Upload assignments to Blackboard, under the Assignments portal. Contact the professor for extensions well in advance of the due date if you foresee difficulty with a deadline, or when circumstances beyond your control make on-time completion difficult. Unexcused delays will forfeit one-half a letter grade for every 24 hours of delay.

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## **Appendix: Undergraduate Learning Goals in Theology and Religious Studies (Revised 05/05/2017)**

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**Goal 1:** Gain an understanding of the purposes, central issues, and methods of inquiry standard in theological and religious studies as applied to faith engaging culture.

Objective A: Analyze fundamental issues that frame theological and religious inquiry using appropriate scholarly methods, with attention to diversity and inclusion within the issues.

Objective B: Use critical methods to read, analyze, and interpret diverse religious and theological texts (e.g., women, minorities, non-western) and related genres or media, art, and artifacts (e.g., prayer, mystical writings, autobiographies, film, music).

**Goal 2:** Engage Christianity, with attention to Roman Catholicism, as a living tradition of practices and beliefs that continues to be refined, developed, and extended through time in diverse cultural contexts.

Objective A: Demonstrate understanding of the unique vocabulary, foundational sources, theological beliefs, historical developments, and diverse thinkers in the Christian tradition, with attention to those that reflect on the experiences of power, privilege, and marginalization.

Objective B: Articulate how Christian practices and beliefs reciprocally interact with diverse cultural contexts, local and global.

**Goal 3:** Render theological concepts and religious practices and beliefs intelligible, meaningful, and relevant in contemporary cultural contexts as a basis for transformative action in the world, in dialogue with others.

Objective A: Recognize the complexity and diversity of religious practices and beliefs and seek to understand people whose values and senses of the sacred differ from their own.

Objective B: Evaluate the relevance of theology/religion for personal, communal, societal, and global living.