

Elective Course Descriptions for Spring 2016

These are descriptions for courses that are either not in the Bulletin or have a new, permanent number.

Biblical Studies

BIB 790A Sisters, Wives, Daughters, and Mothers: Womanhood and Gender in the Hebrew Bible

Leann Pace

This course will engage critically with the constructions of gender, with a specific focus on womanhood, living in the pages of the Hebrew Bible. Close reading of the texts will be combined with historical and archaeological evidence to enrich our study. The overarching goal of the course will be to determine how constructions of womanhood in the Hebrew Bible converge with and diverge from modern notions, how these points of intersection affect our reading of the texts, and how the texts shape present-day cultural norms around the idea of womanhood.

Cross Disciplinary Studies

CDS 790A (LAW 507) Poverty Law

Steve Virgil

This course will broadly study American poverty, poverty programs, and constitutional, federal, state and municipal laws that directly affect people in poverty. Students will survey wealth disparities in the U.S. through demographic data relating to income, educational attainment, housing, access to medical care, and voting.

Denominational Studies

MIN 693 History and Polity of the Christian Church: Disciples of Christ

Bob Parvin

The course will explore the history, polity, theological foundation, and characteristic beliefs of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The course will include the following areas of study:

- Origins and development of the Stone/Campbell movement
- Divisions among the branches of the movement
- Restructure and the transformation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) from movement ("the brotherhood") to denomination
- Characteristic beliefs, practices, and theology of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Ecumenical involvement of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- The structure and polity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Historical Studies

HIS 630 Gender Studies in Black Religious and Culinary Experience

Derek Hicks

Weekend course: February 26-27, 2016

This one unit course will explore the historical, social, cultural, theological, ethnographic, and practical components of black women's experiences in relation to religious life and foodway culture. This will be a

seminar course. Accordingly, we will read and discuss texts that consider the convergence of faith, food, issues related to gender, community, and identity formation. Particular attention will be paid to the black faith tradition's role as both a source of transformation and tension for women seeking full expression in life. We will ultimately assess the ways in which food and religious faith have offered important cultural and spiritual tools to black women as they engage in a struggle for human dignity.

HIS 790A Gender, Sexuality, & Community: The Search for Religious Utopia

Thomas Frank

If you had some land, a few friends and followers, and a vision of a new society that lived up to all your highest religious ideals, what kind of community would you build? This course explores historical answers to basic questions that all societies face: How should men and women relate to each other? How should sexuality and sexual relations be organized and regulated? How should children be raised? What is the nature of work for men and women, and how should it be rewarded? How should buildings and landscapes be designed and arranged to reflect the community's ideals? What is the place of education, arts, and music in a good society? Who has the authority to interpret and defend a religious ideal, and what should be done when other disagree?

Ministerial Studies

MIN 512 Healthy Boundaries: Ministry, Ethics, and Leadership

Jill Crainshaw

Weekend course: February 5-6, 2016

This course explores relationships between ministry, professional ethics, and pastoral leadership. Topics include clergy confidentiality, healthy clergy relationships, clergy self-care, pastoral issues related to business and finances, healthy use of social media in ministry, and practices for ensuring the safety of children and youth in ministerial programs. This course is based on a similar course developed by the Faith Trust Institute and is designed to meet denominational healthy boundaries training requirements. This course is equivalent to Healthy Boundaries 101 and 201 offered by the Faith Trust Institute.

MIN 672 Interfaith in Winston-Salem

Neal Walls (permission of instructor)

In this semester's experiential project, students will work with Imam Khalid Griggs and the University Chaplain's Office on Muslim-Christian interfaith dialogue on campus and in engagement with the Community Mosque. Students will participate in selected events throughout the semester and reflect on them through course readings, journals, and class discussions.

MIN 790A *Tree of Life, River of Life*: Christianity, Climate Change, & Ecological Vocation

Fred Bahnson

We live in a new era dubbed the Anthropocene, a time in which no part of the world remains untouched by human intervention. In this era of climate disruption, human migrations and species extinctions, food insecurity, and dwindling resources like soil and water, how can the Christian imagination be renewed through adopting an ecological vocation? Guiding our discussion will be the two biblical metaphors used to describe the new heaven and new earth: the Tree of Life and the River of Life. As we discuss the

health of ecosystems on which human and non-human lives depend (and visit actual forests, rivers, and farms), these metaphors will serve as theological lodestars that might guide us toward the ecological.

***Please Note:** The course will meet most Tuesdays from 3:30-6pm throughout the semester, with the addition to two required weekend field trips: Saturday April 9th (day trip), and April 15-17. The second trip will be a camping trip in the Joyce Kilmer National Forest in western NC. Students will be expected to camp overnight as part of the experience. Attendance is required for both class meetings and field trips. For questions or special needs, contact instructor Fred Bahnson: bahnsoff@wfu.edu

MIN 790B Creativity, Arts, and Preaching

Sunggu Yang

This interdisciplinary course is designed to instruct students to be creative in their hermeneutical approach to the sacred text, develop homiletic skills of imagination, and utilize various art forms in their preaching practice. Art forms such as music, painting, poem, spoken word, theater, film, dancing, architecture, and fashion come in as homiletic dialogical partners. The course thus aims for a holistic aesthetical education and practice of preaching, going beyond introductory preaching courses oriented mostly toward the text or basic homiletic knowhow. Throughout the course, students will perform a 3-minute impromptu speech, perform/present/produce artistic interpretation of given texts twice, and deliver creative sermons twice. No prerequisite is required.

MIN 790C Worship: Multicultural & Emergent

Sunggu Yang

This course begins with the realization that in today's multicultural, multi-denominational, and even multi-religious ecclesial environment, a new type of Christian worship practice is inevitable; namely, multicultural and/or emergent worship. Utilizing the broadest concept of culture that includes, among others, race and ethnicity, religions, arts, "low and high" Christian denominations, children and differently-abled persons, and sub-cultures (e.g., hip-hop culture and feminist culture), the course is designed to learn and put into practice theoretical and historical grounds of multicultural and emergent worship. A special focus will go to contemporary emerging worship in the 21st century. Students will work in small groups for group discussion, a field visit, and a multicultural and/or emergent worship design project.

MIN 790D The Ethics of Service Missions

Alison Lutz

Weekend course: March 18-19, 2016

This course explores the power dynamics present in any short- or long-term mission to relieve global poverty. Womanist ethics and liberation theologies will serve as primary tools of analysis, and the provision of health care in communities bearing the dual burdens of poverty and disease will provide a concrete case to analyze. Students will be asked to question how specific formulations of certain values and practices, both named and unnamed (such as control, self-efficacy, participation, sustainability, agency, market logic, Gospel, imagination, conversion, spirituality, leadership and expertise), affect faith communities' or nonprofit organizations' service missions. Students will be asked to consider the effects missions have on real communities, interrogating whether service missions replicate the dynamics of oppression that create misery in the first place, and reflecting on possibilities to do otherwise.

MIN 790E Mental Health for Faith Leaders

Bryan Hatcher

Weekend course: January 29-30, 2016

This weekend course will introduce learners to common mental health issues that are likely to be encountered as a caring professional working in faith communities or related organizations. It will also provide a required 8 hours of training in Mental Health First Aid and allow participants to achieve certification in Mental Health First Aid by completing the curriculum and successfully completing a related quiz. Mental Health First Aid is an internationally recognized organization providing training in understanding, engaging, referral of mental health issues, while reducing stigma of mental health and encouraging compliance with appropriate professional services (see www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org).

MIN 790F Ministry Leadership and Coaching Skills

Beth Kennett

Coaching is defined as “partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.” (International Coach Federation) Ministry leaders can use the skills and practices of coaching to enrich the work and life of ministry. The coaching perspective can be used by the minister to develop accepting and affirming relationships with faith community participants and staff as well as to bring about a sense of inquiry that strengthens learning and creativity in the midst of work and life. This course will introduce students to the skills and practices of coaching with application to the life and work of ministry. Students will experience being coached and coaching others and will explore strengthening one’s leadership skills through the coaching process.

Spirituality

SPI 530 Liturgical Writing as Spiritual and Theological Act

Jill Crainshaw

Divinity students are often called upon to write or speak extemporaneously various elements for worship, such as prayers, litanies, confessions, invocations, and intercessions. This course provides students with diverse resources for worship leadership. The course encourages students to locate their own prayer styles, theologies, and rhythms within the shared narratives and prayer experiences of historic and contemporary worshipping communities. The course also challenges students to explore and name what theologies they are embodying through their choices of language, images, styles, and forms in public prayers. The course is part worship literature review and reflection and part workshop. Students will learn about elements of worship and explore historic and contemporary examples. Students will also share each week in a writers’ workshop format their own liturgical writing samples. A primary aim of the course is to invite students to explore relationships between their own unique voices and theologies and their roles as public prophets, theologians, and spiritual leaders.

SPI 611 Spirituality and the Art of Baseball

Thomas Frank

Weekend course: April 15-16, 2016

The purpose of this course is to provoke and pursue questions of spirituality that arise from encounter and engagement with the game of baseball. The course focuses on the place of baseball in American life, its role in cultural imagination, and its treatment by many authors as a source of discipline,

contemplation, peace, and mystery. The course explores how baseball players, managers, and fans articulate and express human questions in ways unique to the practice of the sport. As these questions evoke theological themes, the course follows a larger aim of enriching imaginative resources for deepened spirituality and practices of ministry, so that students are better prepared for creative and transformative leadership.

SPI 790A Centering Prayer & Beyond: Classical Texts & Contemporary Experience

Wendy Fraley

Weekend course: January 29-30, 2016, meeting in both room 117 (Davis Chapel) and room 201

This class will study classical texts that serve as a background to the practice of centering prayer. This practice is rooted in the theology of love and transformation characteristic of the desert fathers and mothers and the *Cloud of Unknowing*, Teresa of Avila, and John of the Cross. Christ-centered meditation and a deep desire to transform the mind so that unconditional love and compassion become more natural are distinctive elements of this Christian tradition of spiritual formation. Dialogue between contemplative theology and contemporary experience is intended to deepen students' knowledge of theological resources within Christianity as well as provide resources for their own constructive theology.

SPI 790B Spiritual & Visual Representation after the Holocaust

Karen Dresser

This course involves the study of spiritual and visual understandings of the Shoah through post-Holocaust art, poetic metaphor, film/theatre as informed by contemporary post-Holocaust Theology. Themes include absence/presence, authentic voice/questioning faith, *hester panim* (God hiding the Divine Face), Job's brothers, artist as secondary witness, and the gendering of Holocaust art.

Theological Studies

THS 530 Readings in Liturgical Theology: Denominations & Worship

Jill Crainshaw

This course explores how worship in various Christian traditions shapes and is shaped by those traditions' theologies. The focus is ecumenical, with texts selected from an array of Christian traditions and denominations. A primary aim of the course is to strengthen students' understanding of their own traditions in dialogue with others' traditions. The course will look at how different worshipping traditions express through their worship theological beliefs (for example, beliefs about God, Jesus, Spirit, and church) and theological values (for example, values related to social justice, gender and sexuality, and disabilities). Course texts will be chosen based on the denominational connections and/or interests of the students enrolled in the course with the aim of deepening each student's understanding of her or his own tradition's worship practices and related theological beliefs and values.

Christianity and Politics in American Life, I – III

This is a three-course sequence that can be taken in any combination. If you plan to take the Multicultural Contexts for Ministry: Washington, DC course in summer session I, then you enroll in THS 598a.

THS 596 Christianity and Politics in American Life I: Historical and Cultural Trajectories

John Senior

January 14-February 4, 2015, one evening a week for four weeks

The first module of this multi-part course series examines Christianity and American politics in historical and sociological perspectives, focusing on the development of Church-state relations in cultural and legal frames, “civil religion,” and the religious cast of the American political imagination.

THS 597 Christianity and Politics in American Life II: Contemporary Public and Political Theologies

John Senior

February 11 – March 3, 2016, one evening a week for four weeks

The second module of this multi-part course series considers contemporary public and political theologies, examining a range of Christian voices on the meaning of political community and the common good. Perspectives include neo-Augustinian, realist, Catholic, evangelical, feminist, womanist, and liberationist approaches.

THS 598a Christianity and Politics in American Life III: Contemporary Public Witness

John Senior and Frank Dew

March 17-April 21, 2016, one evening a week for six weeks

(This course is required for travel to Washington, DC in summer session I)

The third module of this multi-part course series analyzes the practice of Christian public witness in a variety of organizational forms (intentional community, local congregations, nonprofit agencies, denominational witness offices, faith-based and government partnerships, global mission, etc.) and community settings (local, national, and global), emphasizing the lived experience of public and political theologies. ***This course is required as a prerequisite for THS 598b***

THS 613 The Church

Frank Tupper

Weekend course: First meeting Friday, January 15 or 22, February 5-6, February 26-27, April 1-2, 2016

THS 630 The Problem of Evil

Kevin Jung

Many people, including religious believers, experience the existence of evil in the world. But how can this experience be reconciled with a theistic belief that the world is under the loving care of God who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and perfectly good? Can the experience of evil be evidence for challenging the existence of God or the common assumptions about the divine being? How should we make sense of various religious beliefs in light of the experience of evil?

THS 790A Theology and the Rule of Law

Jonathan Miller

Augustine of Hippo wrote of two cities, an “Earthly City” and a “City of God,” that were entangled with each other and yet destined for very different ends. For two hundred years, American lawyers and judges have followed Thomas Jefferson, framing the issue as one of the relationship between “church” and “state.” In the 1950s, theologian H. Richard Niebuhr reframed the issue from a much different perspective, as he investigated the relationship between “Christ” and “culture.” No matter how one frames the issue, the same questions keep recurring: What exactly is the relationship between law and faith? Are Christians obligated to obey the civil law? Is law created by God to achieve good purposes, or by humans to reinforce unjust social structures? Do Christians have a responsibility to change the law to conform to their moral vision, or is it better for Christians to remain morally pure by refusing to participate in civil government? While these questions are important for any Christian, they are all the more pressing for people whose vocation lies at the intersection of law and faith: the pastor who engages in community organizing or legislative advocacy; the lawyer who works to realize Christian values on earth; or the JD/MDiv student unsure of what comes next. Participants in this course will examine how various Christian thinkers and communities have answered these questions, and will also reflect on how to live out their own faith commitments and legal obligations.

THS 790B Contemporary Christian Theologies

Ruslan Elistratov

Permission of instructor

This course will explore influential ideas concerning the survival, relevance, and flourishing of Christianity in the intellectual-cultural climate of the 21st century. First we will examine Christian responses to **postmodernism** with its values of ambiguity, fragmentariness, and relativism. Second, we will look at how today’s theologians are wrestling with the challenge of **scientism**—the prevalent view that only the scientific method can provide knowledge about Reality. The third and truly unprecedented challenge comes from the **global environmental and economic problems**, and we will explore some of the most promising ideas that could energize Christian churches toward a greater sustainability and alleviation of economic injustices. Finally, we will look at an example of how recent developments in psychology and gender studies have galvanized Christian theology toward innovative spiritual practices for a deeper psychological liberation from the effects of **sexism and racism** on both individual and communal levels. The views of process theologians will be discussed extensively in relation to many of the above issues.

THS 790C The Politics of Holiness: Mary, Saints, and Martyrs in Latino Catholic Traditions

Elizabeth Gandolfo

Permission of instructor

This course explores the political dimensions of Catholic devotions to Mary, saints, and martyrs both in Latin America and amongst Latino/as in the United States. Particular attention will be paid to critically analyzing the roles that such devotions have played in social constructions of gender, sexuality, race, and class. The course will also highlight the roles of such devotions in political (and personal) struggles for liberation from intersecting networks of sexual, racial, and economic oppression.