

REL. 370 RELIGION SEMINAR.
THOMAS MERTON & THE 1960S

Fall, 2008

Dr. St. John

READING AND REFLECTION NOTEBOOK (20%)

Please buy a thick, large-sized notebook and use it frequently and extensively. For essays by Merton, after you have read the article, write an overview of the article summarizing the main points or arguments. Then list and state what ideas, passages, arguments, and points you found important or compelling. State where you disagree with Merton, what questions you have about the article or what points you feel need clarified or amplified.

Notebooks will be collected periodically and graded.

PRESENTATIONS/PARTICIPATION (20%)

Given the nature of the entries in your notebooks, you should be prepared to lead the seminar discussion on any of the readings assigned for that week from Merton's writings (not the Merton encyclopedia or other sources).

RESEARCH: PROCESS AND PRODUCTS (60%)

Each student will do research on an aspect of Merton's thought that will issue into a paper of at least twenty pages in length. I encourage you to meet with me any time during the process of researching and writing your paper. Below is the suggested sequence of actions that move the writing process along.

Stage One

What should drive your research is a significant idea, question or problem addressed by Merton and/or of interest to you. You then, develop a tentative statement setting forth your research agenda. This will guide your gathering of further information regarding sources, etc. You are encouraged to meet with the seminar leader to discuss your thesis and receive some preliminary guidance.

October 07. THESIS OR PROPOSAL STATEMENT. (5%)

This statement must be approved by the seminar leader. Obviously you must do a preliminary literature search to get an idea of the scope of the topic, of possibilities for the theme, and the sources available, primary and secondary.

Stage Two

October 21. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (5%)

After you have received approval, you may plunge into the research section of the process. Work up a **bibliography** germane to your project. Out of these sources, select and annotate the sources you find most helpful. These are to be handed in to the seminar leader. As you conduct your research you will reach a point where you are ready to make an **outline** of your paper. Outlines will be shared with members of the seminar for comment and a more-or-less final outline will precede your presentation in December.

Stage Three

November 18. FIRST DRAFT (10%)

Following the initial tentative outline, you will do a rough draft (or two) of your paper. Your paper should begin with an introductory paragraph that 1) sets forth the problem or question that you want to explore in the paper; 2) a statement of what you propose or what your thesis is (e.g. "I propose to show that . . ." "My thesis is that. . ." and 3) an overview or preview of the flow of your argument: (I will first show that the term consumer must replace citizen of the state or member of the earth community...and then I will demonstrate that.. " or, "In part one I will explain.....and in part two I will ...). A concluding paragraph or two will review your thesis or proposed approach and summarize what has been developed. You will also want to draw some conclusions and/or point the direction for further research.

MLA and APA styles acceptable. Please refer questions to the Bedford Handbook before seeking help elsewhere.

November 25. CRITIQUE/RESPONSE DUE (10%)

A draft of each paper is to be read and critiqued by at least one member of the seminar who will make comments both on the paper copy itself and verbally. A copy of the edited draft must be provided the seminar leader who will grade and comment on the draft.

December 09. SEMINAR PRESENTATION (10%)

You will make a 15-20 minute class presentation on your paper, providing an outline of your paper to the other members of the seminar.

FINAL PAPER. 25% (20+ pages)

Summary

Notebook. 20%
Participation 20%
Thesis Statement 5%
Annotated Biblio. 5%
Draft. 10%
Draft Response 10%
Presentation 10%
Final Paper 20%

SCHEDULE

AUGUST 24

INTRODUCTION

Read: Online Assignments
"Merton: A Film Biography"

FROM MAVERICK TO MONK

SEPTEMBER 02

The Search for a Place: 1915-1951

Read: *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia*. (SEVEN STOREY MOUNTAIN; MERTON, OWEN; MERTON, RUTH; MERTON, JOHN PAUL; OAKHAM; OAKHAMIAN; OAKHAM SCHOOL; CLARE COLLEGE; COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY; CONVERSION; ST. BONAVENTURE; GETHSEMANI, ABBEY OF; SIGN OF JONAS); 14 pp.

Read: *The Intimate Merton* pp. 25-89 (1941-1952) 64pp

The Search for Identity: False and True Selves

Read: *Seeds of Contemplation*, Chs. 1-3. 25pp (Written 1947)

Optional: "Deep Geography: Gethsemani, the First Decade" Don St. John (22pp)

Poems

SEPTEMBER 09

Struggles with Place and Freedom (1952-1959)

Read: *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia* (MONASTICISM; CARTHUSIANS;
CAMALDOLESE)

The Intimate Merton, pp. 89-102 (or *The Sign of Jonas*, "Epilogue") 13p
Part III. Pursuing the Monk's Life (1952-1959) 52p.

Deepening the Concept of the Two Selves

Read: *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia* (Self)

Read: *The Inner Experience*, Chs.2 & 3 28pp

Optional: "Solitude or Solidarity?" by D. St. John, 20pp

THE 1960S: FROM AUSCHWITZ TO VIETNAM

SEPTEMBER 16 (1961-1964)

Moral Corruption: Auschwitz, Dresden, and Hiroshima

Read: *The Nonviolent Alternative*:

"Auschwitz: A Family Camp" 10p

"A Devout Meditation in Memory of Adolph Eichmann" 5p

"Danish Nonviolent Resistance to Hitler" 3p.

"Chant to be used in Processions around a site with Furnaces" 3p.

"Target Equals City" 10p.

"Original Child Bomb" 10p.

Read: *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia* (Hiroshima; Holocaust
Just War, Theory of)

Read: *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, Part Two "Truth and
Violence: An Interesting Era" pp. 62-101. 39pp

SEPTEMBER 23

Christians, War and Moral Passivity

Read: *The Nonviolent Alternative*

"Passivity and Abuse of Authority" 5p.

"An Enemy of the State" 5p.

"A Martyr for Peace and Unity" 5p.

Read: *Faith and Violence*, "The Prison Meditations of Father Delp" 22p

Read: *The Nonviolent Alternative* "Toward a Theology of Resistance"
186-192 6p

Read: *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, Part Two "Truth and
Violence: An Interesting Era" pp.102-128. 26pp

September 30

Cold War and Hot Weapons (1961-1962)

Read: *The Nonviolent Alternative*:

"The Christian in World Crisis" 43p.

"Peace: A Religious Responsibility" 22p.

"Peace: Christian Duties and Perspectives" 8p.

"Christian Ethics and Nuclear War" 6p.

Read: *Passion for Peace*: "Red or Dead: the Anatomy of a Cliché;
"The Root of War is Fear"

Read: *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia* (WAR)

C.G.B. Part One. "Barth's Dream" (11-61) 50p.

October 14

Vietnam and the Myths of Nations (1967-68)

Read: *The Nonviolent Alternative*

"Vietnam, an Overwhelming Atrocity" 6pp

"War and the Crisis of Language" 14pp

"Nhat Hanh is my Brother" 2pp

"Ishi: A Meditation" 9pp

"Man is a Gorilla with a Gun" 5pp

Read: *Faith and Violence*, "A Note on *The Psychological Causes of War*
by Erich Fromm" 10pp

Read: *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia* (VIETNAM; NHAT, HANH; AMERICAN
MYTH; LANGUAGE AND PROPAGANDA; FROMM, ERICH)

Read: *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, pp. 217-243 26pp

NONVIOLENCE

October 21

Nonviolence: Gandhian and Christian (1965-6)

Read: *The Nonviolent Alternative*

"A Tribute to Gandhi" (Gandhi the Gentle Revolutionary) 7p.

RESERVED READINGS:

"Gandhi and the One-Eyed Giant"

"Nonviolence and the Christian Conscience" 10pp (F&V)

Read: *The Nonviolent Alternative*

"Saint Maximus the Confessor on Nonviolence" 6p

"Blessed are the Meek: Christian Nonviolence" 11p

Read: *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia* (GANDHI ON NONVIOLENCE)

Read: *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* Part Two. "Truth
and Violence: An Interesting Era" 63p

"Schema 13: An Open Letter to the American Hierarchy"

October 28

Civil Rights Movement and Nonviolence (1963-67)

Read: *Seeds of Destruction (On Reserve)*

"Letters to a White Liberal" 68pp.

"The Legend of Tucker Caliban" 18 pp.

Read: *The Nonviolent Alternative*

"Preface" and "Toward a Theology of Resistance" pp. 185-192; 7p.
"From Nonviolence to Black Power" pp.198-207 9 pp.
"Notes on Civil Disobedience and Nonviolent Revolution" 227-230 4p

Read: *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, pp. 111-113;
Read: "The Hot Summer of Sixty-Seven" 17pp (F&V)

CONTEMPLATION AND SPIRITUALITY

November 04

Solitude and the Hermitage

"Hermitage: Nature and Solitude" St. John
"Notes on a Philosophy of Solitude" in *Disputed Questions*
"Rain and the Rhinoceros" *Raids on the Unspeakable*
"Day of a Stranger" *Raids on the Unspeakable*

Read: *The Intimate Merton* "Part V. Seeking Peace in the Hermitage (1963-1965)"

November 18

Contemplation, Cosmos and Christology

Read: The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia (Contemplation; *Lectio Divina*; Christology; Apophaticism; *Le Point Vierge*; Wisdom; Proverb)

Read: *New Seeds of Contemplation*, Chs. 1, 2 and 39 (Handouts)

Read: "Merton, Contemplation and the Cosmic Christ," St. John

Read: *The Intimate Merton*, pp.122 (bottom) to 126 (top)
Conjectures, pp. 156-158; 11-12

Read: *Hagia Sophia* (Handout)

DIALOGUE WITH BUDDHISM

November 25

Encounter with Buddhism

Read: *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia*, (Interreligious Dialogue; Buddhism; Zen; Encounter: Thomas Merton & D.T. Suzuki)

Read: *Zen and the Birds of Appetite* (Selections)

Read: "Mystics and Zen Masters" from *Mystics and Zen Masters*

Read and Critique. Turn in Critiqued Drafts to Instructor

OF LOVE AND FAREWELL

December 02

Read: *Conjectures...* "Barth's Dream"

Read: *The Intimate Merton*, "Part VI. Exploring Solitude and Freedom"

Read: *The Intimate Merton* "Part VII. The End of the Journey"

Instructor' Returns Drafts.

December 09

Final Paper Presentations

