

Moravian College
Rel/Phil 298: Contemporary Judeo-Christian Thought
Spring 2012
Dr. Falla

Class Period: MW 11:45-12:55

Office Hours: Comenius 205, MWF 9:30-11:00; R 2:00-3:00 and by appt.

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Course Description:

Hospitality or care for the other/outsider has been a central tenet in the Middle East since biblical times. Though it did fall on hard times in Judeo-Christian thought in subsequent period, it has re-emerged in response to the Holocaust and has taken new significance in our current age we are becoming more technologically connected and at the same time more personally disconnected. In this course we will explore the biblical roots of care for the other as well as its contemporary expression in the works of Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, Emmanuel Levinas and Martin Luther King.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To understand the biblical roots for hospitality tradition in the Judeo-Christian tradition.
- 2) To become more conversant with how this is expressed in contemporary thought.
- 3) To be able to critically analyze the positions being taken and the arguments made by these contemporary thinkers.
- 4) To examine how our contemporary society still raises these issues and makes this discussion relevant for us today..
- 5) To be able to express in both written and verbal form above enumerated objectives.

Required Texts:

Holy Bible, (Own copy or available on-line)

Buber, Martin, *I and Thou*, Touchstone, New York, 1996

Levinas, Emmanuel, *Outside the Subject*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1994

Sweetman, Brendan, *A Gabriel Marcel Reader*, St. Augustine Press, South Bend, 2011

Additional Readings & Movies:

They will be available on reserve in hard copy or electronically from Reeves Library.

Evaluations

This course will take the form of a Graduate Seminar therefore following tools will be used for evaluation in this course:

Papers (30%): There will be three (3) 3-5 page reflection papers on questions raised by the materials due on the dates indicated. All these papers will be evaluated on the basis of your understanding and analysis of the course materials and the quality of your argumentation and presentation. These will also serve as a basis for class discussion.

Discussion Leader (20%): Martin Heidegger wrote:” In all teaching the teacher learns the most.” Therefore, while you will not be asked to teach a session, you will be asked to lead the discussion for one portion of our assigned readings of the contemporary thinkers during its scheduled period. You will be allowed to make a selection from Buber, Marcel or Levinas. Selection and further parameters will follow.

Final Paper (25%): You will have a final paper due on the date indicated that can either be a discussion of a modern example of alienation and how one of our contemporary thinkers might approach it or a topic of your choosing that focuses on one of these thinkers. The paper should be 5-7 pages in length and will be evaluated on the quality of your research, argumentation and writing style.

Class Participation (25%): The format for this class will be that of a seminar where both attendance and active participation form an important component of the class. Active participation means the voluntary asking of questions and involvement in class discussions including those led by other students.

Grading Scale:

A: 92.5 +

A-: 89.5 – 92.4

B+: 87.5 - 89.4

B: 82.5 - 87.4

B-: 79.5 – 82.4

Honor Code and Attendance Policies

Students are expected to regularly attend class. Attendance contributes to your class participation grade and therefore is important. If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor and to insure that arrangements are made to make up all missed assignments or material. You are also expected to hand in all assignments on time. If you must be late with your work, you must make arrangements with the instructor prior to the due date. Failure to do so may result in the lowering of the grade for late submitted work.

Students have an obligation to exhibit honesty in all their work. You will be found to have violated this obligation if you plagiarize or cheat. Plagiarizing is

presenting the work of others as one's own; cheating is taking, giving, or accepting illicit advantage for any course work inside or outside the classroom. Any violation will result in the lowering of your grade.

Additional Aid/Consideration

Students with special situations that may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Learning Center as soon as possible.

Syllabus

Week of:

Jan. 16: Introduction and Biblical Roots

Bible: Old Testament Texts

Levinas: pp. 126-34

Jan. 23: Biblical Roots

Book of Ruth and New Testament

Jan. 30: Biblical Roots

New Testament

King (on reserve): "On Being a Good Neighbor"

Paper #1 Due 2/1

Feb. 6: Martin Buber I

Buber: pp. 9-48

Feb. 13: Martin Buber: Relationships

Buber: 51-86

Feb 20: Martin Buber: Alienation.

Buber: 87-122

Feb. 27: Martin Buber: God

Buber: 123-68

Paper #2 Due 2/29

Mar. 5: Spring Break

Mar. 12: Levinas on Buber, Marcel & Rosensweig

Levinas: pp. 4-39, 49-67

Mar. 19: Gabriel Marcel: The Human Person

Marcel: p. 1-8, 69-86

Mar. 26: Marcel: Religion

Marcel: pp. 87-112

Paper #3 Due: 3/28

Apr. 2: Levinas and Ethics

Levinas: pp. 116-25, 151-8

Apr. 9: Technology and the Other

Marcel: 113-124

Marcel, "The Sacred in a Technological Age", *Theology Today*, Vol. 19
#2 , April 1962, pp. 27-38 (electronic)

Apr. 16: Marcel on Others

Marcel; 125-31, 144-8, 149-55

Final Paper Due: 4/20

Apr. 23: Discussion of Final Papers