

## **Moravian College**

### **Rel: 121: Intro. to Roman Catholic Thought**

**Spring 2016**

**Instructor:** Dr. William Falla

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**Office Hours:** Comenius 108B, MWF 9:30-11:00; R: 2:00-3:00; by appt.

#### **Course Description:**

It is an introduction to the Roman Catholic expression of Christianity. We will use historical, sociological, theological and ethical methods to explore the development of the Roman Catholic Church, its social structures (e.g. Magisterium), ecclesiology, doctrines, rituals and body of social teachings. Special focus will be on the concerns, experiences and practices of contemporary U.S. Catholics.

#### **Course Objectives:**

1. To examine from diverse perspectives and methods of analyses the institutions, social forces, ideas and personalities that were part of the development of the contemporary Roman Catholic Church
2. To see this in the context of the Western Christian Church as a whole.
3. To understand how Roman Catholic theology is manifested in practice.
4. To examine some of the experiences and concerns of the U. S. Roman Catholic in relation to the worldwide Church.
5. To be able to express your understanding of this material coherently, cogently and clearly in both written and oral form.

#### **Required Texts:**

Cunningham, Lawrence, *An Introduction to Catholicism*, Cambridge Univ. Press, UK, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 2014

Hellwig, Monika, *Understanding Catholicism*, Paulist Press, New York, 2<sup>nd</sup>. ed., 2002

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si* (electronic)

Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (electronic)

**Additional Materials:**

Additional written and video materials will be made available on Blackboard, electronically or in hard copy at Reeves Library.

**Course Evaluation:**

Reflection Papers (50%): You will be asked to write five (5) 3-4 page papers based on the material being studied. The papers will be evaluated on your understanding and use of the course material as well as the quality of your argumentation and writing. They will be due on the dates indicated in the syllabus.

Final Research Paper (20%): This will be a 6-8 pages research paper with bibliography on a figure, practice, doctrine or ministry that you feel is particularly important to the contemporary Roman Catholic Church. You will be evaluated on the quality and utilization of your source material, the substantive quality of your presentation and the quality of your writing. There will be further rubrics and discussion of the requirements in the class.

Vocabulary Exercises (10%) The vocabulary used by scholars who study the church is often not part of the everyday vocabulary. Therefore, you will be given words for which you are to find their definitions. From this list, there will be two in-class closed book vocabulary exercises. These will be announced. You will be evaluated on the adequacy of your definitions within the context Roman Catholic Thought and Practice.

Class Participation (20%): This refers to active participation in the class. Active participation means the voluntary participation in class discussions as well as the asking of pertinent questions.

Extra Credit: There will be several events of religious significance held during the semester. You may earn extra credit by attending them and turning in a one page summary of the event. You will receive up to one (1) point for each event attended up to three (3) points. These points will be added to your final grade.

**Grading Scale:**

**A: 92.5+**

**A-: 89.5-92.4**

**B+: 87.5-89.4**

**B: 82.5-87.4**

**Etc.**

All grades during the semester will be numerical.

**Honor Code and Attendance Policies:**

Students are expected to regularly attend class. Attendance is considered in the calculation of 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. You are also expected to turn in all assignments on time. If you must be late with your work, you must make arrangements with the instructor prior to its due date to set a new one. 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 the presenting the work of another's as one's own. Cheating is taking, giving or accepting illicit advantage for any course work inside or outside the classroom. Any violation of this policy will result in the lowering of one's grade.

**Additional Aid/Consideration:**

Students who wish to request accommodations for this class for a disability should contact the Academic Support Center located on first floor of Monocacy Hall, or by calling 610-861-1401. Accommodation cannot be provided until formal authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

**Course Syllabus**

**Jan. 18:** Introduction to Roman Catholicism

Cunningham: pp. 1-22

Hellwig: pp. 1-12

**Jan. 25:** Introduction to Roman Catholicism

Cunningham: pp. 23-48

Hellwig: pp. 15-42

**Feb. 1:** Being Catholic

**Paper #1 Due: 2/8**

Cunningham: pp. 49-74

Hellwig: pp. 43-58

**Feb.8:** Catholicism in time and Place

Cunningham: pp. 75-99

Hellwig: pp. 113-137

**Feb. 15:** The Rule of Faith                      **Paper #2 Due: 2/22**

Cunningham: pp. 100-123

Hellwig: pp. 138-159

**Feb. 22:** Catholic Spirituality

Cunningham: pp. 147-171

Hellwig: pp. 160-170

**Feb. 29:** Catholic Mission

**Paper #3 Due: 3/16**

Cunningham: pp. 172-194

**Mar. 7:** Spring Break

**Mar. 14:** Catholic Mission

Movie *Mother Theresa*

**Mar. 21:** The Moral Life

Cunningham: pp. 219-240

**Mar. 28:** The Moral Life

**Paper #4 Due 3/30**

Pope John Paul II: *The Gospel of life* (electronic)

Pope Francis: *Laudato Si* (electronic)

**Apr. 4:** The Moral Life

Pope Francis: *Laudato Si* (electronic)

**Apr. 11:** The Contemporary Catholic Church

**Paper #5 Due 4/11**

Cunningham: pp. 241-268

**Apr. 18:** The Contemporary Catholic Church

Pope John XXIII (video)

**Apr. 25:** Wrap-up

**Research Paper Due 4/27**