



TRS 127:
In the Face of Mystery:
Using Faith and Reason in the Search for God

Saint Mary's College of California
Fall 2013
Mon/Wed/ Fri
8:00 am and 9:15 am
Filippi Academic Hall 135
Version of 9.6.13

"Theology is Imaginative Construction in the Face of Mystery."
— Gordon Kaufman

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Required Texts: John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* (1998). Available in hard copy in the bookstore or online at:
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio_en.html

O'Collins, Gerald. *Rethinking Fundamental Theology*. Oxford University Press, 2011. Hardbound, softbound, or electronic versions acceptable.

Pieper, Josef. *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*. Ignatius Press, 1963. Only a softbound copy is currently available.

Course Description: "Theology", quite simply, means "thinking about God". Coming from two Greek roots, "theos", meaning "God", and "logos" meaning "a word about", theology is "a word [or words] about God", the attempt to think, logically and systematically, about who God is and how God relates to our world. In the Catholic tradition, following Saint Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109), we understand theology as *fides quarens intellectum*, or "faith seeking understanding". Thus, faith and reason

are, for the Catholic intellectual, integrally related as two sources for coming to know about God. As Blessed Pope John Paul II writes in his encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*, "Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth – in a word, to know Godself – so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves." So the journey of understanding God is also intrinsically related to the search for truth, the search to understand the mystery of the human person, and, ultimately, the search for self-understanding.

This course will explore these ideas in a thoughtful and systematic way using the methods and sources of the Catholic intellectual tradition. As such, this course is intentionally designed to meet the learning outcomes for an upper division course in the learning goal of the SMC goal curriculum for "Theological Understanding": 1) the course will consist of "focused study in a subfield of theology", namely, some of the questions surrounding method, the nature of revelation, God, and Trinity from within the broad field of Roman Catholic systematic theology, and 2) students will explore profound religious questions from both an "existential", or "believer's frame of reference" as well as one that fully employs the scholarly tools for criticism and analysis that a part of the academic discipline of Roman Catholic theology.

**Learning
Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. define the term "theology" as understood in the Roman Catholic context.
2. identify the key sources of theology in Roman Catholicism (the Bible, the Fathers of the Church, the teachings of ecumenical councils and popes, the writings of theologians), and describe the importance of each.
3. differentiate between "faith" and "reason", as understood in Catholic Thought, and explain why each is understood to be a valid "way of knowing", a way of approaching "Truth".
4. explain why philosophy is regarded as such an important source in Catholic theology.
5. explain the concept of "Revelation" as understood in Catholic thought.
6. compare and contrast "Scripture" and "Tradition" as sources of Revelation.
7. explain what is meant by the term "the Wisdom Literature" and expound on the notion of a *sapiential* approach to knowledge and learning.
8. explain what is meant by the Christian understanding of the human person
9. define all important philosophical and theological terms used in the course.

10. Compare and contrast philosophy of religion to dogmatic or systematic theology.
11. List and define three contemporary approaches to the "God Question"
12. distinguish among various classical ways of conceiving of God, e.g. Deism, Theism, Panentheism, and assess the strengths and limitations of each model.
13. explain what Christians mean when they refer to Christ as "the Word of God"

**Grading
Standards:**

1. The student comes to class on time and demonstrates that s/he is prepared for the work of the class session.
2. The student demonstrates a high level of engagement with the course content, in verbal and non-verbal ways, through attentiveness to lectures and lively participation in discussion.
3. The student demonstrates mastery of the learning outcomes in all assessment tools outlined in the syllabus, e.g., quizzes, exams, group projects, term papers, and other evidence of student learning required by the course.
4. The student's written work meticulously fulfills all of the criteria specified in the assignment.
5. The student completes all written work in a timely fashion and submits written work that demonstrates college-level writing skill (see grading rubrics for Collegiate Seminar and English Composition).
6. In class discussion and written work, the student shows increased mastery of critical thinking skills, evidenced by genuine openness to learning, a flexible mental attitude evidencing willingness to consider multiple points of view and to use diverse sources of evidence in forming an opinion about a given topic.
7. In class discussion and written work, the student can articulate ideas persuasively, through effective organization, logical use of relevant facts, and credible presentation of facts, sources and opinions in support of a particular idea.

**Course
Requirements
and Means of
Assessment:**

1. Faithful attendance at class, and lively engagement in class discussion (34 classes x 4 points each = 136 points).
2. Successful completion of bi-weekly quizzes on readings and classroom discussions (4 Quizzes x 20 points = 80 points)
3. Successful completion of 1 page bi-weekly reflection papers (4 reflections x 20 points = 80 points).
4. Mid-Term Conference with the Professor (10 points).

5. Successful completion of Book Report on Josef Pieper's *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*. 6-8 pages (75 points).
6. Successful completion of research paper of 8-10 pages. 125 points. Choose a 20th / 21st century theologian from an approved list. Research this theologian, placing her or him in the context of 20th and 21st century theological developments and movements, and appraise the contributions, strengths, and limitations of this theologian's thought.
7. Class Presentation on topic of final paper (10 points).
8. Final Self-Assessment (20 points).
8. Overall quality of engagement in the course (observance of all classroom policies, respectful and cooperative attitude, helpfulness to other participants in the course, etc.). 100 Points.

Total Possible Points: 636

Grading Scale:	A	= 604-636 points
	A-	= 579-603 points
	B+	= 553-578 points
	B	= 534-552 points
	B-	= 515-533 points
	C+	= 490-514 points
	C	= 471-489 points
	C-	= 452-470 points
	D	= 388-451 points
	F	= 000-387 points

Classroom Policies:

1. Class begins on time. Be present on time or expect to see your tardiness factored into your grade for the course.
2. There are no "excused absences" for this course. While it is understood that students will occasionally need to miss a class because of illness, family obligations, or other legitimate reasons, all absences are factored into your grade for the course. It would be grossly unfair to assign the same grade to a student with a perfect attendance record as to a student with numerous absences. Make up assignments will occasionally be offered that will give you the opportunity to earn points lost as a result of a few absences from class.
3. If you find that you must miss a class, I expect to receive an email or a voicemail from you in advance, informing me of your absence.
4. If you miss more than six (6) class sessions, you will automatically receive a failing (F) grade.
5. For quizzes and exams, you are responsible for all readings, discussions, and lectures. If you must miss a class, ask a friend to take good notes and to share

them with you after class.

6. If the professor becomes aware that students are not preparing adequately for class, he reserves the right to give pop quizzes which will be factored into your grade for the course.

7. There are to be *no side conversations* during our class time. If someone has the floor, whether it be the instructor or a fellow student, you should give the speaker your full and undivided attention.

8. All cell phones and PDAs are to be turned off or silenced and put away during class. If you use a cell phone or a PDA during class, you will automatically receive a failing (F) grade.

9. Use the restroom before coming to class. Coming and going during the class is extremely disruptive and will be factored into your participation grade for the course. Do not leave the classroom during our time together unless you are experiencing extreme distress.

10. Feel free to bring beverages or light snacks to class so long as your use of these items during class will not be disruptive.

11. Late work will be accepted, but is subject to a penalty of five (5) points per day, at the instructor’s discretion.

Make Up Opportunities: Attend up to 6 events. Sign in with the professor, or write a 1-2 reflection paper and submit it to the professor one week after the event, as directed (4 points each).

Thu Oct 10
7 pm, Soda
Center Presidential Symposium: *Catholic Liberal Arts Education in the 21st Century*

Fri Oct 11
10:30 am
Chapel Inaugural Mass. Most Reverend Michael Barber, SJ, presiding

Fri Oct 11
3 pm
Chapel Lawn Presidential Inaugural Ceremony

Other Events to be Announced as the Term Progresses

Daily Outline of Topics and Assignments:

Date:	Topic:
Wed Sep 4	Introduction to Course
Fri Sep 6	Faith and Reason – “Know Yourself” – The Diakonia of Truth – Wonder <i>Fides et Ratio</i> §1-4

Mon Sep 9	<p>Quiz 1 Reason and Philosophy – Agnosticism and Relativism – Revelation and Truth – Jesus as the Word of God <i>Fides et Ratio</i> §5-8</p>
Wed Sep 11	<p>Natural Reason and Divine Faith – Revelation in Time and History <i>Fides et Ratio</i> §9-12</p>
Fri Sep 13	<p>Reason Before the Mystery – Faith and Transcendence – The Sacramental Character of Revelation – The Relationship of Reason to Revelation <i>Fides et Ratio</i> §13-15</p>
Mon Sep 16	<p>Reflection 1 <i>Credo ut Intelligam</i>: “I believe so that I may understand” – The Wisdom Literature – Intelligence and Knowledge – Unity of Reason and Faith <i>Fides et Ratio</i> §16-20</p>
Wed Sep 18	<p>“Being in Relation” – Creation as a means whereby one can come to know God – Knowledge of Good and Evil – The Wisdom of the Cross <i>Fides et Ratio</i> §21-23</p>
Fri Sep 20	<p><i>Intelligo ut Credam</i>: “I think so that I may believe” – The Unknown God – The Desire to Understand Reality – Does Life Have a Meaning? <i>Fides et Ratio</i> §24-27</p>
Mon Sep 23	<p>Film Screening, “The Ineffability of God” by Father Robert Barron</p>
Wed Sep 25	<p>Quiz 2 The human being as the one who seeks the truth – Human beings as social creatures – The search for the Absolute – The truth revealed in Christ <i>Fides et Ratio</i> §28-35</p>
Fri Sep 27	<p>The relationship between faith and reason – The cultural world of paganism – the tension between philosophical inquiry and faith – Justin Martyr <i>Fides et Ratio</i> §36-38</p>
Mon Sep 30	<p>Reflection 2 Origen – Aristotelian Philosophy – Platonic and Neo-Platonic Thought – “What does Athens have in common with Jerusalem?” – <i>Intellectus Fidei</i>: “the understanding of faith” <i>Fides et Ratio</i> §39-42</p>
Wed Oct 2	<p>Thomas Aquinas: “Faith has no fear of reason” – The Holy Spirit as an agent by which knowledge matures into wisdom <i>Fides et Ratio</i> §43-44</p>
Fri Oct 4	<p>The rupture between faith and reason – Positivism, Rationalism, Nihilism – “Instrumental Reason” – The unity of faith and philosophy <i>Fides et Ratio</i> §45-48</p>
Mon Oct 7	<p>Quiz 3 Fideism and Biblicism – consonance between intellect and objective reality – biblical anthropology – <i>auditus fidei</i> and <i>intellectus fidei</i> – dogmatic theology and fundamental theology</p>

	<i>Fides et Ratio</i> §55, 60, 64-67
Wed Oct 9	Relationship of faith to culture – Greek philosophy – inculturation – interplay of philosophy and theology <i>Fides et Ratio</i> §70-74
Fri Oct 11	Inauguration of the New President of Saint Mary's College. No Class Meeting.
Mon Oct 14	Reflection 3 Christian philosophy – theology's use of philosophy – humans as <i>Imago Dei</i> – the sapiential dimension of philosophy <i>Fides et Ratio</i> §76-77, 80-81
Wed Oct 16	The historical background of fundamental theology – Christian apologetics O'Collins, 2-5
Fri Oct 18	Philosophy of religion – Philosophical theology – Dogmatic/Systematic Theology – Natural Theology – Themes – Bernard Lonergan O'Collins, 5-17
Mon Oct 21	Quiz 4 Faith in a personal God – The Divine Attributes O'Collins, 18-22
Wed Oct 30	Pieper Book Report Due Film Screening, "The Creed", by Tim Kelleher
Fri Nov 1	Special Divine Activity O'Collins, 22-29
Mon Nov 4	Reflection 4 The Existence of God – Approaches to the God Question O'Collins, 29-36
Wed Nov 6	The Human Condition – Four Visions: <i>homo dolens, homo interrogans, homo historicus, homo symbolicus</i> O'Collins, 37-42
Fri Nov 8	<i>Homo Experiens</i> – Religious Experience O'Collins, 42-55
Mon Nov 11	General Revelation and Faith O'Collins, 56-65
Wed Nov 13	Special Revelation – Models of Revelation – biblical witness – revelation and salvation O'Collins, 65-74
Fri Nov 15	Means of Revelation O'Collins, 74-79
Mon Nov 18	Word and Event O'Collins, 79-83
Wed Nov 20	Mediators of Special Revelation O'Collins, 83-87

Fri Nov 22	Discerning the Prophetic Experience O'Collins, 87-95
Mon Nov 25	AAR – No Class Meeting
Mon Dec 2	Term Papers Due Jesus: The Kingdom in Person O'Collins, 114-120
Wed Dec 4	The Trinity O'Collins, 120-128
Fri Dec 6	Revelation: Past, Present, and Future O'Collins, 128-135
Mon Dec 9- Wed Dec 11	Individual Oral Exams