UEPC Proposal for TRS: The Virgin Mary: history, Culture, Literature

1/ SOLA: The Virgin Mary: History, Culture, Literature

A: Upper Division for reasons:

1/ Prerequisite TRS 97 or 189 (lower and upper division versions of “The Bible and Its Interpretation,” respectively)

2/ Builds on biblical skills and knowledge, especially in the first third of the course, with focus on Marian passages in the New Testament, Old Testament prophetic passages, and some apocryphal gospels.

3/ Reading is advanced and emphasizes, in the first half, the historical development of Marian doctrine and devotion. (*In Search of Mary*, Sally Cuneen)

4/ The second half of the course emphasizes modern Marian fiction (*Our Lady of the Lost and Found*, Diane Schemperlen; *Our Lady of the Forest*, David Guterson; *Looking for Mary, or, The Blessed Mother and Me*, Beverly Donofrio).

B: Justification

A: Grounds- The course is an elective with stress on Scripture, currently the area of strongest academic and popular interest in Catholicism. Additionally, there is a widespread renewal of interest in Marian doctrine and devotion in Catholicism in particular and Christianity in general.

B: Objectives – At the end of the course, students will:

a/ know about and understand the importance of Mary as a major figure in Christian history, thought, and devotion.

b/ have read early Christian literature (parts of Gospels and some apocryphal gospels) to discover the roots and early development of Marian devotion.

c/ have analyzed works of literature, art, and music with Marian themes in order to recognize and appreciate the profound influence of Marian devotion in the rise of Christian Europe.
recognize the wide diffusion, continuing importance, and impact of Marian devotion in the contemporary world by studying reports of modern apparitions of Mary.

e/ appreciate modern literature with Marian themes which will be analyzed for its religious and cultural significance.

C. Relation of objectives to Department: This course directly addresses the content learning outcome of the TRS major (as described in the catalogue) that students will “demonstrate an understanding of theological, historical, and ethical components of the Christian tradition,” as well as the two skills learning outcomes of the TRS major: students “will demonstrate an ability to employ contemporary theories and methods of biblical exegesis, systematic theology, and religious studies” and “demonstrate an ability to explain, analyze, and evaluate multiple informed perspectives in debated about theological and ethical issues.” The course also addresses SMC’s goals related to the school’s Catholic Mission and Inclusive Excellence.

D. Assignments used to evaluate performance – Students are evaluated in four primary ways:

a/ two essay exams: a midterm and a final

b/ a fifteen to twenty minute presentation on a Marian doctrine (e.g., Immaculate Conception), devotion (e.g., rosary), or apparition (e.g., Guadalupe, Lourdes, others) in the Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant or Muslim tradition.

c/ regular weekly quizzes on required reading

d/ participation in class discussions on reading and evaluations of student presentations

e/ Pass Fail allowed? – no

3. Student population: This course will meet the Theological Explorations goal of the Core Curriculum. All students who have completed the prerequisite class (TRS 97 or 189) may enroll. Most students will take the course to fulfill core requirement. I expect that the course will enroll to the maximum of twenty-five.

4. Relationship to the College curriculum – The course is an elective, offered usually in Spring semester. There is no competition with other courses or programs. The course contributes to the pool of electives for WaGS.
5. No extra costs are associated with the offering of this course.

6. Library resources: the Library’s resources are more than adequate for this undergraduate introduction to Mariology.

7. Course credit grading options
   a/ Value -- 1.0 unit
   b/ Hours in class – 190 minutes / week x 13 weeks
   c/ Preparation hours – 380 minutes / week x 13 weeks
   d/ format: lecture, discussion, presentations

8. Prerequisites: TRS 97 or 189

9. Course description: This course examines the origins and development of Marian doctrine, devotion, and apparitions in Christianity, especially Catholicism. The biblical roots in the New and Old Testaments as well the popular development of Marian theology and devotion as found in the ancient apocryphal gospels will be studied. The growth of Marian devotion in Christianity—both Western and Eastern—in terms of dogmatic Church teaching and popular understanding will be researched. Devotions such as the rosary and scapular, as well as important apparitions such as Guadalupe, Lourdes, and Fatima (more than twenty-thousand have been reported!) will also be considered. The religious, social, and spiritual roles of these doctrines and devotions will be investigated.

10. Course content – syllabus attached

11. The course has been offered several times in the last several years as a topics course (TRS 160). It seems to have been well received and the readings and assignments were appropriate for the course level. It seems to have been well received the times it has been offered. The presentations on doctrine, devotion, and apparitions were generally very well done. This is one of the strong components of the course. More emphasis on modern reception of Marian devotion and thought will be part of the next offering.
A brief sampling of sources available in the Saint Mary’s College Library collections on subjects relevant to study in TRS 173--The Virgin Mary reveals that our collections, although not extensive, are minimally adequate for undergraduate study in this topic. Assuming the course is to be taught repeatedly, collections in this area should be strengthened. Depending on the specific focus of a given course term, or the interests which particular students may want to pursue, students may need to supplement Library holdings and subscriptions by Link+ or other sources and should be encouraged to seek help from Reference librarians to find appropriate sources in the journal literature.

Books (Numbers in parentheses following each subject category indicate how many titles are cataloged in the Saint Mary’s College Library collections)

Mary, Blessed Virgin, Saint--Theology (41)
Mary, Blessed Virgin, Saint--Symbolism (3)
Mary, Blessed Virgin, Saint--Virginity (1)
Mary, Blessed Virgin, Saint--Songs and Music (8)
Mary, Blessed Virgin, Saint--History of Doctrines (11)

Reference Works

*The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*

*Acta Sanctorum*

*New Catholic Encyclopedia*

*HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*

Journals
Harvard Theological Review (in Cambridge Journals Online) - a search under “mariology” returns 380 citations to articles

Also see Modern Theology and Journal of Religious History for articles on Mary and mariology.

Databases

Catholic Periodical and Literature Index

ATLA
# The Virgin Mary:

**History, Culture, Literature**

*Br. Mark McVann, F.S.C., Ph.D.*

Professor of Theology and Religious Studies

*Spring Semester, 2014*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK OF (Monday):</th>
<th>MATERIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>Introduction: Mary in Christian Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>Mary in the Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 24</td>
<td>Mary in the Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 3</td>
<td>Mary in the Apocryphal Gospels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 10</td>
<td>Marian Devotion in the Middle Ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 17</td>
<td>Marian Devotion in the Renaissance &amp; After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 24</td>
<td>Mary into the Modern Era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 31</td>
<td>Mary into the Modern Era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 7</td>
<td>Mary in the Americas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LEARNING OUTCOMES:

+ Students will come to know about the importance of Mary as a major figure in Christian history and religious thought.
+ Students will read early Christian literature (parts of Gospels and some apocryphal gospels) to discover the roots and early development of Marian devotion.
+ Students will analyze works of literature, art, and music with Marian themes in order to recognize and appreciate the profound influence of Marian devotion in the rise of Christian Europe.
+ Students will recognize the wide diffusion, continuing importance, and impact of Marian devotion in the contemporary world by studying reports of apparitions of Mary today.
+ Modern literature with Marian themes will be read and analyzed for its religious and cultural significance.
THE SCHEDULE on the first page is tentative. I imagine that we will follow a schedule more or less like the one laid out above, or at least that we will cover topics related to those listed here more or less at the times scheduled.

A LARGE PART of the course will consist of student reports on various Marian topics. Each student must present a report of about fifteen to twenty minutes (presentation followed by class questions and discussion) on a Marian topic. This may take the form of a presentation on a particular Marian ethnic or national devotion (e.g., Guadalupe); or a presentation and analysis of music--popular, classical, ethnic--dedicated to Mary; or Marian art--popular, classical, ethnic; or a report on Marian apparitions and/or shrines either ancient or modern; or Mary and feminism; or Mary as model woman; or Mary and groups men and/or women devoted to her (religious orders, confraternities, brotherhoods/sisterhoods in Europe and elsewhere), or Mary in colonial Mexico, Brazil, the Philippines (and elsewhere); Mary and Liberation Theology; Mary and the Popes; Mary in Protestantism; Mary in the Koran; the Rosary; the Scapular; Mary at Saint Mary’s College. There are three basic areas here: Doctrine, Devotion (including liturgy); Apparitions.

The reports should be carefully planned and executed with supporting documentation turned in the day it is given. Projects may be presented by an individual or by (no more than) two people working together. All presentations must be on topics approved by the instructor well before the due date. It is to be understood that the presentation represents serious academic research and is to be formal in nature: repeated “ums”, “likes”, “you knows”, “whatevers” will result in a lowered grade. PRACTICE your presentation before it is given so you know how long it is and to assure that it is delivered in an appropriate manner.

READING: the titles taken in this course are as follows: Selections from the Bible; selected apocryphal gospels; In Search of Mary: The Woman and the Symbol by Sally Cunneen; Our Lady of the Lost and Found by Diane Schoemperlen; Looking for Mary, or, The Blessed Mother and Me by Beverly Donofrio; Our Lady of the Forest by David Guterson. There will be additional handouts during the semester: some from me, some from students in the class who may want reading done before their presentations. The schedule of reading of works (both theological and fictional) will be announced in class. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out the assignment and complete it for the next class. Please make sure you have another student’s phone number or e-mail so you can contact that person to get an assignment if you miss a class. Do not call or e-mail me to ask for the reading assignment.
Reading assignments should be read carefully at least twice before they are taken in class. The reading we are undertaking in this course is challenging but also highly rewarding. Therefore, the point about reading assignments twice should be taken seriously. You will find that nothing is better than attentive reading of assignments for improving comprehension and appreciation than carefully reading them twice.

TESTS & QUIZZES: There will be a quiz at least once a week; always come prepared for a quiz. The quizzes are announced, although pop quizzes may rarely be given. The quizzes are short, easy, and objective, and are designed only to check your reading of the assignments. The quizzes must be taken using scantron forms which will be provided. You must always have in your possession a #2 pencil for use on the scantron forms. There will be two exams (midterm and a final), they may be a combination of objective and essay questions or a straight essay exam. You may be given a study guide before the exam. The essay tests may be partially take-home exams. Tests and quizzes cannot be made up if they are missed.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS: Such assignments, apart from the presentations, are not often given. If assigned, no such paper will ever be more than three pages in length. All papers must be typed and all papers must be well written, reflecting college level work. Because writing assignments are rare, and because they will be announced with plenty of time for students to complete them, they will be graded with a sharp eye. Papers are weighted as two quizzes and will be not accepted late.

GRADE: The semester grade is determined by combining the quiz, (papers), presentation, and exam grades. Your two lowest quiz grades will be dropped and therefore do not count in determining the final grade. The quizzes count for 33.3% percent of the semester grade and the two tests also 33.3% percent; the final 33.3% is the in-class presentation. The quiz grades are averaged into a single grade; the exam grades are also so averaged. The averaged grades of quizzes and the averaged grades of the exams are then averaged together with the presentation grade to compute the semester final grade. The grading system used in this class is simple and straightforward: A=4; A-=3.7; B+=3.5; B=3; B-=2.7; C+=2.5; C=2.0; C-=1.7; D+=1.5; D=1; F=0.

ATTENDANCE is required and will be taken. Mounting absences will have a sharply negative impact on your grade. If you miss seven class sessions, i.e., more than two weeks, you will fail the course; miss five and your grade will go down a full letter; two and you lose at least half a letter. Students make a commitment to attend the course when they register for it. Drop the course if you cannot or will not meet the attendance requirement, which applies to all students: without or without job and/or children, athletes, and so forth. I will be here, so will you. If you will not or cannot commit to regular attendance, drop the course now.
CLASSROOM DECORUM: Make every effort to come to class on time and do not leave the room while class is in session: both late arrivals and early departures are most unwelcome distractions. There are times, of course when you may have to leave for some good reason; but if you must leave, do not come back that same class hour. Basic courtesy means that you will never allow the door to slam behind you entering or leaving. Make sure that cell phones, beepers, pagers, signal-watches and any other noisemakers, electronic or otherwise, are turned off during class. The wearing of baseball caps is permitted if the bill is worn facing back. The point here is that I must be able to see your face: hoods pulled over the face and so forth are not to be worn in class. You are also here informed that behavior unbecoming of adults in a college classroom will result in dismissal from the class.

THE METHOD: The method will be lecture, discussion, student presentations, and student evaluation of those presentations. Videos are sometimes used as there is some very good material available. The title of this course indicates the immense proportions of the topic we are addressing. The Virgin Mary has been a central figure of Christianity for almost as long Jesus himself and Christianity (especially Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy) is unimaginable without her. The approaches taken here are therefore mixed: historical, thematic, artistic, anthropological, social, religious, and theological considerations are all in the offing. There are some central issues which will need definition at the outset: for example, the difference between the virginal conception (of Jesus) and the Immaculate Conception (of Mary); the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary; the dogma of the Assumption, and some other fundamental concepts upon which the entire mariological enterprise rests.

OFFICE HOURS: My office is on the third floor of Dante, room 324. You can also stop by my residence in Augustine Hall, room 120. My phone numbers is 925/631-6128 (residence). My office hours are M-W-F 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. Appointments to see me outside my office hours can be made easily and you should not hesitate to do so. You may call me at either my residence; leave a message if I do not answer.
Dear Zach and Kathy,

I have circulated these to the SOLA chairs. No concerns or questions have been raised, and I am happy to support this proposal.

Steve

On 4/13/2015 9:23 AM, Zach Flanagin wrote:

Dear Steve,

Here is the info about the TRS courses going to the UEPC.

- TRS 118 – Women and the Bible
  - This course explores the current status of feminist biblical interpretation, focusing on the hematograph of female characters in the Old and New Testaments and on their modern feminist interpreters. We will use the tools of academic criticism (historical, literary, rhetorical, etc.) in an attempt to understand the places, roles, and agency of women in the biblical text, in the ancient world that lies behind the text, and in the worlds formed on the belief that these biblical texts are sacred scripture. **P prerequisite: TRS 97 or 189.**
- TRS 128 – The Trinity
  - This course explores the Christian doctrine of God through its most significant controversies, both ancient and modern. Students will acquire a more thorough context for the Christian understanding of God, as well as a more robust sense of this understanding. It continues in the present. **P prerequisite: TRS 97 or 189.**
- TRS 135 – Christian Liturgy and Sacrament
  - This course examines the roots and rise of Christian, especially Catholic, devotion to the Virgin Mary. It explores the writings of the Church Fathers as well as the growth of traditional popular Marian piety will be addressed. Both doctrine (official teaching) as well as devotional practices (rosary, scapular, etc.) and theological aspects such as apparitions (Guadalupe, Lourdes) will be examined. Contemporary fiction and autobiography are also included as evidence of the continuing relevance of the Virgin Mary to modern life and living. **P prerequisite: TRS 97 or 189.**
- TRS 189 – The Bible & Its Interpretation: Great Themes
  - Intended for junior transfers (16.0 credits), this course focuses on the Bible, the sacred scriptures of the Jewish and Christian peoples, texts that have had a profound influence on religion, art, politics, and culture for over two thousand years. This course will introduce students to the most important biblical texts and themes, focusing especially on the Torah and the Gospels, and will teach students to employ critical scholarly tools for reading and interpretation. In addition, each section of this course will focus on a special issue, theme, or question that appears in a diversity of biblical texts and that move beyond the Bible to modern relevance or implications (e.g., justice, politics, liturgy, theodicy, art). Co-curricular lectures are an integral part of this class. **P prerequisite: None. May not be taken by students who have completed TRS 97.**

Zach Flanagin, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Theology & Religious Studies
Saint Mary's College of California
dflanagi@stmarys-ca.edu