CORE CURRICULUM DESIGNATION PROPOSAL

1. Name of Proposer: Bro. Michael F. Meister, FSC
   1a. E-mail address: mmeister@stmarys-ca.edu

2. Name of Department/Program housing the course: Theology & Religious Studies

3. Course Acronym, Number, and Title: TRS-164 - Dante and the *Divine Comedy*

4. Name of Chair/Program Director: Prof. Michael Barram

5. How often is this course taught: Annually; usually in the Fall semesters

6. Course Prerequisites (if any): TRS-097

7. Unit Value of the Course: 1

8. Normal Class Size: 25-30

9. Number of Sections expected to be taught in Fall 2012: 1

10. Number of Sections expected to be taught in Spring 2013: 0

11. Is the course designed for and/or appropriate for first-year students? No

12. Proposed audience: Sophomores, Juniors, Seniors

13. The Learning Goals for which the course is being submitted: Theological Explorations

14. Teaching: A brief narrative that explains how the course will guide students to achieve the learning outcomes.

   As a practical experience in the disciplines of Theology and Literature, this course provides students with a guided reading of all three Canticles of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. Using the theme of pilgrimage, the course follows Dante’s journey to redemption by his deep acquaintance with sin (*Inferno*), his experience of repentance and forgiveness(*Purgatorio*), and his vision of eternal re-union (*Paradiso*). As Dante invites his readers to consider this journey, students join him in considering throughout the poem the problem of real and spiritual exile, the profound and eternal consequences of choice and free will as God’s greatest gift, and how our understanding and experience of love grows in clarity through the union of ourselves with the divine. Along the “route” of this allegorical pilgrimage, students consider the power of both the word and the Word as Dante the pilgrim struggles toward maturity while wrestling with the disguises and even the glamor of evil, the necessity of personal honesty and introspection, and the unexpected breadth of God’s mercy.
15. Learning: A brief explanation of how coursework (e.g., papers, exams, videotaped presentations) will be used to measure student learning of the outcomes.

By the end of the course, students will clearly understand the three-part structure of the Comedy, see the relationships among the parts, be able to converse intelligently about the poem’s symmetry, how it is organized, and explain how it operates simultaneously on literal, spiritual, and symbolic planes (among others). Students will be able to discuss the significant historical circumstances in the Church and the Empire (Roman and Holy Roman) that underlie the creation of the poem and recognize the numerous references to these circumstances (historical and literary) in the poem. They will demonstrate an understanding of how a poem (as a work of literature) can convey and open for deeper appreciation significant themes of morality, philosophy and theology as they are en-worded in real characters: the problem of choice and will, the nature of good and evil, of virtue, love, forgiveness, mercy, and salvation. Students will also explore and discuss how the text of Dante’s poem has been artistically represented through the centuries. Students’ progress will be measured by weekly quizzes and by their ability to write about, synthesize, and discuss key course themes in four short reflection papers and two longer formal papers.