CORE CURRICULUM DESIGNATION PROPOSAL

1. Name of Proposer: Bro. Michael F. Meister, FSC
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2. Name of Department/Program housing the course: Theology & Religious Studies

3. Course Acronym, Number, and Title: TRS-163 - Saints Yesterday & Today

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

5. How often is this course taught: Annually; usually in the Spring 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: 0

10. Number of Sections expected to be taught in Spring 2013: 1

11. Is the course designed for and/or appropriate for first-year students? Yes

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.
   Saints of all kind were/are first of all flesh-and-blood humans like ourselves. They are found in every religious tradition – women and men who, beyond the ordinariness of life’s circumstances, lived or did extraordinary things. Within the framework of the Christian tradition, we will ask and explore a series of questions: what does it mean to be holy? Can one find holiness out of the/a community of (the Christian) faith? Why do we venerate the Saints? How do they model the ideals of the Gospel? How do they continue to speak to us today? How do they interact with God on our behalf? What elements of their lives do we see repeated in each of their stories, and what elements are unique to them only? How do we communicate/pray with/to Saints? How do people become Saints, what’s the process? What’s the difference between a living Saint and a dead one? Do you have to be canonized to be a Saint? Are only Catholics able to become Saints? What’s the connection between Saints and me (I’m a sinner, I’m not holy, I’m not pious, I’m not a hero, I’m definitely not a saint!)?
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 doing hagiography, students will encounter Saints – ancient, modern, hidden, popular, unknown, heroic, old and young – and explore their lives in history, devotion, literature, art, symbolism, and in the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Throughout the course, students will explore the nature of saintliness and personal holiness – both as these have been proclaimed publicly for imitation and as they have been lived privately in people’s relationship with God. Students will quickly discover that Saints – though held up as models of exceptional virtue – are first of all flesh-and-blood human beings like themselves. Students will compare and contrast the lives and experiences of scores of Saints, asking about the differences between martyrs and confessors and why these two designations are significant in hagiography. Students will study and become familiar with the history of canonization from early forms of public acclamation by the faithful to the complex modern process. They will read several modern texts on Saints – ancient and new – and their lives and discover the great variety of life-situations these individuals graced by their own struggles to find God and live lives of virtue. Students’ familiarity with the ideals of the Gospels and other texts of both the New and Old Testaments from TRS-097 will interface nicely with this course and provide a foundation for their deeper understanding of Saints’ motivation to let the light of God shine through them. By the end of the course, students will understand and be able to differentiate among the ways the ideals of the Gospel have been manifested within the historical/spiritual frameworks of martyrdom, monasticism, mysticism, pious living, and social activism. Students’ progress will be measured by weekly quizzes and by their ability to write about, synthesize, and discuss key course themes in short reflection papers and longer formal papers.