



BELLARMINE
UNIVERSITY
IN VERITATIS AMORE



THEO 320 (01) - Introduction to the Life and Thought of Thomas Merton
Monday/Wednesday (12:00-1:15)
Centro, McGowan Hall, 075
Spring 2018

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Catalog Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the life and thought of Thomas Merton, a figure intimately tied to Bellarmine University. Thomas Merton was an important 20th century American Catholic, whose autobiographical writings continue to inspire and whose writings on contemplation, dialogue, peace, and justice continue to influence people around the world. In this class students will read significant portions of Merton's writing, visit Bellarmine University's Thomas Merton Center, and visit the Abbey of Gethsemani where Merton lived.

| Bellarmine General Education Objectives | How the Objective will be Demonstrated |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of Christian theology and its ongoing dialogue with other religious and intellectual traditions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will demonstrate their knowledge of theology and its dialogue with other religious and intellectual traditions through the reading organizers, the papers, the final examination, and through participation in class discussion. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical thinking skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills through the reading organizers, the papers, the final examination, and through participation in class discussion. The questions given by the professor to prompt analysis of the texts will facilitate critical thinking and analysis of the texts. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facility in oral and written communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will demonstrate writing skills through their reading organizers, the papers, and the final examination. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will demonstrate their abilities to communicate orally through active participation in class as well as through the group audio project. |
| Theology Learning Objective | How the Objective will be Demonstrated |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A basic understanding of Christian faith as a viable and intellectually respectable commitment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will demonstrate their understanding through the reading organizers, the papers, the final examination, and through participation in class discussion. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarity with the variety of religious experiences and traditions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will demonstrate their understanding through the reading organizers, the papers, the final examination, and through participation in class discussion. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How religious morality and justice are integrated with faith. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will demonstrate their understanding through the reading organizers, the papers, the final examination, and through participation in class discussion. |

Course Methodology

This course is built on a seminar model. In each class we will discuss as a group the readings assigned for the day. Students should therefore be prepared to raise pertinent questions, engage in conversation, take notes on the discussion, etc.

This is a 3-credit course. Both Bellarmine University and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools understand **one credit** to entail one hour (50 minutes) of instruction time, plus two hours of student work outside the class per week. In this class, therefore, you can expect to devote approximately six hours of work outside the class per week. See https://catalog.bellarmino.edu/2017-2018/undergraduate-academic-policies#Credit_Hour_and_Academic_Calendar_Policy for Bellarmine University's credit hour policy.

Required Texts

These books can be purchased at the Bellarmine bookstore. I have also included the ISBN.

- Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (Image, 2009). ISBN: 9780385010184
- Thomas Merton, *The Nonviolent Alternative* (Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1981). ISBN: 9780374515751
- *Thomas Merton: Essential Writings* (Orbis Press, 2000). ISBN: 9781570753312
- *Thomas Merton: Spiritual Master* (Paulist Press, 1992). ISBN: 9780809133147

Course Schedule

(Please note that the following schedule is tentative and is subject to change)


Abbreviations:

TMSM = *Thomas Merton: Spiritual Master*

TMEW = *Thomas Merton: Essential Writings*

CGM = *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*

NVA = *The Nonviolent Alternative*

| Date | Topics | Reading (to be completed prior to class) |
|-------------|---|--|
| January 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions; Overview of syllabus; Q & A | |
| January 10 | <p style="text-align: center;">Part I: Introduction to Merton in Film</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Merton: A Film Biography</i> | |
| January 15 | No Class (MLK Day) | |
| January 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Many Storeys and Last Days of Thomas Merton</i> | |
| January 22 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Paul Pearson, Director of the Thomas Merton Center | |
| January 24 | <p style="text-align: center;">Part II: Autobiographical Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Merton's life and thought | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMEW: 21-49 • TMSM: 15-55 |
| January 29 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt from <i>The Seven Storey Mountain</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMSM: 63-106 |
| January 31 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt from Merton's journals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMSM: 165-213 |
| January 31 | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Thomas Merton's 103rd Birthday</i></p> <p>"On the last day of January 1915, under the sign of the Water Bearer, in a year of a great war, and down in the shadow of some French mountains on the border of Spain, I came into the world..." (<i>The Seven Storey Mountain</i>, 3)</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">(Painting by Owen Merton. Used with permission of the Thomas Merton Legacy Trust)</p> | |
| February 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Fire Watch, July 4, 1952" • "Day of a Stranger" • Excerpt from <i>The Asian Journal</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMSM: 107-120; 214-222; 223-237 |
| February 7 | <p style="text-align: center;">Part III: Merton the Contemplative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Call to Contemplation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMEW: 51-88 |
| February 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt from <i>Thoughts in Solitude</i> • "Herakleitos: A Study" • "Learning to Live" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMSM: 241-250; 280-293; 357-367; 388-398 |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Rain and the Rhinoceros” | |
| February 14 | <p style="text-align: center;">Part IV: Merton in Dialogue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Call to Unity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMEW: 140-186 |
| February 17 | <p>PAPER #1 DUE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be submitted to Moodle. • Must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. | |
| February 19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A Christian Looks at Zen” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMSM: 399-420 |
| February 21 | <p style="text-align: center;">Part V: Merton in Conversation with the World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGB: 5-55 |
| February 21 <i>Extra Credit</i> | <p>12th Annual Thomas Merton Black History Month Lecture Bishop Edward K. Braxton, Bishop of Belleville Hilary’s, Centro 7:00 p.m.</p> | |
| February 26 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander</i> (cont’d) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGB: 59-103 |
| February 28 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander</i> (cont’d) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGB: 103-153 |
| March 5 & 7 | No Classes (Spring Break) | |
| March 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander</i> (cont’d) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGB: 153-198 |
| March 13 <i>Extra Credit</i> | <p>“Reading Merton in the Rain” Scott Russell Sanders Hilary’s, Centro 7:00 p.m.</p> | |
| March 14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander</i> (cont’d) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGB: 198-251 |
| March 14 <i>Extra Credit</i> | <p>Fr. Vernon Robertson Theology Lecture Details TBA</p> | |
| March 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field Trip to Abbey of Gethsemani <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This trip is required ○ We will leave at 10:00 a.m. and be home by 4:00 p.m. ○ Car pool arrangements will be made in class | |
| March 19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander</i> (cont’d) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGB: 251-300 |
| March 21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander</i> (cont’d) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGB: 300-354 |
| March 25 | <p>PAPER #2 DUE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be submitted to Moodle. • Must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. | |
| March 26 | <p style="text-align: center;">Part VI: Merton on War & Race</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Nonviolent Alternative</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NVA: 3-19; 63-81 |
| March 28 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Nonviolent Alternative</i> (cont’d) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NVA: 82-106 |
| April 2 | No Class (Easter Monday) | |
| April 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Nonviolent Alternative</i> (cont’d) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NVA: 107-138 |
| April 9 | <p>Group Audio Project Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit in class via USB drive | |
| April 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Nonviolent Alternative</i> (cont’d) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NVA: 139-171 |
| April 10 <i>Extra Credit</i> | <p>Grawemeyer Award Lecture James Cone Caldwell Chapel</p> | |

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| | Louisville Seminary 1044 Alta Vista Road | |
| April 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Nonviolent Alternative</i> (cont'd) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NVA: 171-184; 208-230 |
| April 16 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The Black Revolution: Letters to a White Liberal" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On Moodle |
| April 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Nonviolent Alternative</i> (cont'd) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NVA: 185-207 |
| April 22 | PAPER #3 DUE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be submitted to Moodle. Must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. | |
| April 23 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catch-up | |
| April 25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catch-up | |
| May 2 | FINAL EXAMINATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11:30-1:30 | |

IMPORTANT DATES

January 10: Last day to Add and Drop classes.

February 14: Last day for a 50% tuition refund.

March 14: Last day to withdraw from a course or all courses ("W" grades)

GRADES & GRADING SCALE

The "D" Range: A "D" indicates work that is **below average** in quality. Typically, this will mean that the student has not demonstrated either a full understanding of the question or an adequate sense of how to use the course material to answer it.

The "C" Range: A "C" designates work that is of **average** quality. Usually such work demonstrates a good, if basic, understanding of the substance of the question, and a **satisfactory** sense of how to respond to it.

The "B" Range: A "B" paper is of **good** or **above-average** quality. This means it does everything required of a "C" paper in terms of comprehension, but also demonstrates a clarity and depth of insight that will set it apart. In short, a "B" will begin to combine obvious attentiveness to the lecture material with sound independent thinking.

The "A" Range: To receive an "A" your work must demonstrate **excellence** in its comprehension and articulation of the course material, and in addition must show clearly that you have taken the challenging thoughts encountered in the course and **made those thoughts your own**. Often this will mean that the instructor will be surprised by how you are able to apply the course concepts to ideas or contexts not yet referenced in the classroom.

Grading Scale:

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|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| A+: 97-100 | B+: 87-89 | C+: 77-79 | D+: 67-69 |
| A: 93-96 | B: 83-86 | C: 73-76 | D: 63-66 |
| A-: 90-92 | B-: 80-82 | C-: 70-72 | D-: 60-62 |

Evaluation

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|---------------------|-------------|
| Reading Organizers | 20% |
| Paper #1 | 20% |
| Paper #2 | 20% |
| Group Audio Project | 20% |
| Final Examination | 20% |
| Total | 100% |

READING ORGANIZERS:

Students will submit a brief (usually one paragraph) paper at the beginning of most classes, in response to that day's reading assignment. In each case, specific questions will be provided by the professor. These are read carefully, but graded quickly, without comment from the professor. They are designed both to keep you on track with the reading, but also to give you further practice in expressing your ideas about the reading in writing. These will be graded on a check-plus, check, check-minus basis, depending on the depth and clarity of the student's engagement with the reading material.

Students can not submit reading organizers late, even in the case of excused absences.

To receive credit, the reading organizer must be submitted to Moodle before the class begins. Students will be allowed to miss two reading organizers without penalty, but will receive a zero for any missed thereafter. For those who submit all of the reading organizers throughout the semester, the two lowest grades will be discounted. The grading system for reading organizers is as follows:

97 = Student demonstrated an obvious and deep familiarity with the assigned reading material that went above and beyond the requirements of the assignment.

93 = Student fulfilled the requirements of the assignment and demonstrated familiarity with the readings.

78 = Student completed the assignment but with minimal effort or little familiarity with the readings.

0 = Student failed to submit the assignment or the assignment was far below acceptable standards.

PAPERS

You are to submit two out of three assigned papers. The papers are designed to examine students' ability to engage with the readings and illuminate relationships between diverse theological concepts. A variety of prompts will be provided by the instructor. The papers are to be 4 double-spaced pages, not including the bibliography. You may only submit two out of the three assigned papers. You may not submit a paper for each assignment.

GROUP AUDIO PROJECT

In January 2019, a group of scholars will be travelling to Louisville to take part in the annual meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics. Unfortunately, many of these scholars

will not be able to travel down to the Abbey of Gethsemani or to Bellarmine University to visit the Thomas Merton Center. In order to provide some information about Thomas Merton to them, students will develop an audio presentation that will be available for these scholars. Students will work in groups of three-four to develop twenty minutes of audio on a specific topic. You should feel free to be creative in developing your audio. You can include radio drama, interviews, monologues, music, etc. You should not need anything other than your phones to collect this audio, and there is easily accessible software that will help you edit your presentation.

The assignment is worth 20%. 15% will be awarded on the basis of the audio as a whole and will be graded by me. 5% will be your individual grade and will be awarded on the basis of evaluations by your fellow group members of the contributions you made to the project. A rubric will be given for this evaluation.

Available topics include:

- An overview of Merton's life
- Merton and contemplation
- Merton at the corner of 4th & Walnut
- Merton's ecumenical and interreligious dialogue
- Merton on war and peace
- Merton on race
- The Thomas Merton Center and Merton's connection to Bellarmine University
- Merton as a hermit
- Merton as a novice master
- Merton's trip to Asia and his death
- An audio tour of the Abbey of Gethsemani

Groups will be assigned by me, and topics will be distributed randomly. Both will be assigned no later than January 31. The due date for the audio will be **April 9** in class. You will submit the audio via USB drive, which I will return to you. You will also need to provide a bibliography along with the USB drive.

Recording:

At the most basic level you can use the voice memo app on your phone to record your conversation. Just be sure you're in a relatively quiet space and sitting fairly close to the phone.

[Anchor](#) is a social network/podcast app that you can use to record conversations with people.

[Skype call recorder](#) will save your Skype conversation at an audio file.

If you have access to a field recorder like the [Zoom series](#) this would give you the best results.

Editing:

[Audacity](#)--this is a free software available for Mac and PC. There are many tutorials available for how to edit using Audacity and their help documentation is pretty good.

[Adobe Audition CC](#)--adobe quality tools, but requires a subscription.

[Garage Band](#)--Mac only

Final thoughts:

I will be grading content over audio quality. That said I'll be looking for good conversations and content and this requires at least a basic level of audio quality. Therefore, please check your tools and practice before you start interviewing people.

FINAL EXAMINATION

The final examination will be two hours in length, and will involve two essay questions.

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

As you can see from the course schedule, there are a number of extra credit opportunities available over the semester. To obtain extra credit, a student must a) attend the event and b) write and submit a half-page summary of the event. The extra credit summary must be submitted within one week of the event. For each summary submitted, the student will receive 0.5% to be added to the final grade. Students may receive credit for three extra credit events (i.e., a maximum of 1.5% added to the final grade).

Writing Requirements

All papers written for this course are to be word-processed, double-spaced, use 12-point Times New Roman font, and have one-inch margins. You are to include a title page that lists the title, your name, and the date. Proper documentation is expected and required. I accept [MLA](#) or [Chicago Manual of Style](#). APA is not acceptable for this class. It is your responsibility to make sure that your paper follows correct documentation throughout. Grades will be deducted for improper documentation.

For general information on how to cite sources properly (regardless of the style) as well as on how to prevent plagiarism, please go to www.plagiarism.org.

Please note that use of internet sites in your written assignments must be cleared with your professor prior to submitting those assignments for assessment. The internet is a wonderful tool for accessing many forms of information, but is a highly suspect resource for academic research. I can provide students with acceptable internet sites for

research purposes depending on the topic. Wikipedia is never to be used as a source in written assignments.

MOODLE REQUIREMENT:

All of your reading organizers as well as your papers must be submitted to Moodle. You do not need to submit a hard copy of these assignments.

LATE WORK POLICY:

Reading Organizers

Students can not submit a reading organizer after the beginning of the class on which it is due. There will be no exceptions.

Papers

Essays submitted after deadline will be penalized 5% (Moodle records the date and time at which assignments are submitted). A penalty of 5% will be deducted each day thereafter (weekends count as two days). This means that if you receive 85% (a 'B') on the paper, but you submitted it two days late, you receive 75% (a 'C'). A grade of 'zero' will be given for papers not submitted, or papers submitted more than 168 hours after the due date (more than seven days). Do not email assignments to your professor.

No extensions will be granted for any assignment except in cases of serious illness, death, or other unforeseen circumstances. Proof of such circumstances will be required (doctor's note, obituary, etc.). There will be no exceptions to this rule.

Make-up Examinations

No make-up examinations will be provided except in cases of serious illness, death, or other unforeseen circumstances. Proof of such circumstances will be required (doctor's note, obituary, etc.). There will be no exceptions to this rule.

Classroom Behaviour

CELL PHONES:

Cell phones must be turned off and out of sight during class. Students will be asked to give their phones to the professor for the duration of the class period should this policy be violated.

LAPTOPS:

Laptops are not allowed in the classroom. While I have allowed them in the past, I have decided that they offer too many opportunities for distraction for you and your fellow students. If you require the use of a laptop for extraordinary reasons, please see me in person.

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance and active participation in class is expected for this course. Unexcused absences will have a negative impact on a student's grade (**0.5% of the overall grade will be deducted for every unexcused absence over one absence**). If a student misses one third of the classes or more, a failing grade for the course will automatically be given. For an absence to be excused, a doctor's note or other documentation must be provided. Simply emailing the professor does not make an absence excused.

University-Sponsored Travel Notification

The University requires students who will be absent from class while representing the University to inform their instructors in two steps. During the first week of the course, students must meet with each instructor to discuss the attendance policy and arrangements for absences related to University-sponsored events. Then, a week prior to each absence, student athletes must pick up their Absentee Notification Forms from the Athletics Office in Knights Hall and have them signed by one of the Assistant Athletic Directors before providing them to the instructor. Students participating in university events not sponsored by the Athletics Department must provide the instructor with a signed Student Absentee Notification Form, available via the student portal on the University intranet, at the earliest possible opportunity, but not later than the week prior to the anticipated absence. The Student Absentee Notification Form does not serve as an excused absence from class. Your instructor has the final say about excused and unexcused absences and it is the student's responsibility to know and abide by the instructor's policy.

Academic Honesty Policy

Bellarmino University is an academic community. It exists for the sake of the advancement of knowledge; the pursuit of truth; the intellectual, ethical, and social development of students; and the general well being of society. All members of our community have an obligation to themselves, to their peers, and to the institution to uphold the integrity of Bellarmino University. In the area of academic honesty, this means that one's work should be one's own and that the instructor's evaluation should be based on the student's own efforts and understanding. When the standards of academic honesty are breached, mutual trust is undermined, the ideals of personal responsibility and autonomy are violated, teaching and learning are severely compromised, and other goals of the academic community cannot be realized. For a thorough description of the University's policy, including penalties for acts of academic dishonesty and breaches of integrity, please refer to the Course Catalog: https://catalog.bellarmino.edu/2017-2018/undergraduate-academic-policies#Academic_Honesty_and_Integrity_Policy

In this course, THEO 320, a zero will be given for any work evidencing academic dishonesty, and the offense will be reported to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

It will be up to the instructor to decide whether students will be allowed to make up the assignment for a reduced grade.

Field Trip Information

Field trips are an essential part of this course. Bellarmine University requires that all students sign a waiver and release form to participate in any field trip. The refusal to sign the waiver and/or release form will result in you not being allowed to participate in course field trip, which will adversely affect your grade. Students have the right to not sign, but not the right to be granted an exception to a policy developed to help protect the University and its community of students, faculty and staff.

A student driver who volunteers to drive other students in his or her private vehicle on a field trip must hold a current valid driver's license and private vehicle insurance coverage. The student driver's private vehicle insurance is primary coverage for any injuries to passengers and/or any vehicle damage.

Social Media

Please feel free to follow my Twitter account (@gregorykhillis).

Office Hours

I am more than happy to meet with students about the course or simply to chat about current events, theology, politics, or sports. My office door is always open during my office hours listed above, or you can make an appointment by phone or email (my phone number and email address are listed above).

Theta Alpha Kappa

Bellarmino University now has a chapter of Theta Alpha Kappa (TAK), The National Honor Society for Religious Studies and Theology. The purpose of this society is to honor outstanding students in Theology and to encourage those interested in theological study. TAK sponsors annual undergraduate scholarships and publishes student papers in the Society's refereed *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa*. Students are elected to permanent membership in our chapter on the basis of scholarly excellence. **You do not need to be a Theology major to be elected.** To be eligible students must be in the top 35% of their class, have a 3.5 GPA in their Theology courses (at least 12 credits) and an overall GPA of 3.0. For more information or to express your interest in being nominated please contact Dr. Deborah Prince (dcprince@bellarmine.edu).

Student Success Center

The Student Success Center provides programs and services available to all students at the university and is committed to supporting every student. Students are encouraged to access services early and often, as the most successful students are those who utilize the resources available to them. The Student Success Center is located on the B-Level of the W. L. Lyons Brown Library and is home to Academic Advising, Tutoring Center,

Writing Center, Testing Center, Pioneer Scholars Program, Learning Communities, and a variety of other programs and services. For more information, please visit www.bellarmino.edu/studentsuccess, email studentsuccess@bellarmine.edu, call 502.272.7400, or find us on social media.

Disability Services

Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Director of Disability Services, located in the Student Success Center (SSC), on the B-level of the W.L. Lyons Brown Library; office B05 A. Call 502-272-8490 or email rpurdy@bellarmine.edu to schedule an appointment. Students are encouraged to make these arrangements with Disability Services as early in the semester as possible so that a student and his/her course instructor can collaborate for a successful course experience. Documentation guidelines can be found at <http://www.bellarmino.edu/studentaffairs/disabilityservices/doc/>

Grading Rubric: **Papers**

'A' Papers (Exemplary)

Thesis/Logic/Organization: Easily identifiable, plausible, sophisticated, insightful, clear thesis or controlling purpose that is clearly outlined in the introduction and summarized in the conclusion. Controlling purpose governs development and organization of the text. Establishes clear pattern of development – clear and logical organizational plan – so the paper feels organized and orderly from beginning to end. Clearly identifiable introduction, body, and conclusion. Strong paragraphing. Paragraphs support solid topic sentences; the author provides unified paragraph structure (i.e., each paragraph develops only one central idea. The author provides coherent paragraph structure (i.e., cohesive devices such as transitional phrases within and between paragraphs).

Research/Use of Sources: Develops specific ideas in depth with strong and appropriate supporting examples. Source information used to buttress every point. Excellent integration of quoted material into sentences. Proper documentation used throughout.

Content: The analysis is fresh, exciting, posing new ways to think of the material. Work displays critical thinking and strong analysis/evaluation and avoids simplistic description or simple summary of information. Sophisticated handling of complex ideas. Demonstrates mastery of pertinent theological views, concepts, and arguments. Gives an accurate and charitable exposition and interpretation of the pertinent theological texts and views, providing textual support where appropriate. Fully explains key theological terms, concepts, and distinctions in an illuminating way, using the authors' own words, examples, and descriptions. Has a mastery of the material. All ideas in the paper flow logically.

Writing: Exhibits a sophisticated (but unpretentious) writing style as it presents its ideas clearly, concisely, and precisely. Contains almost no unnecessary words, imprecision, or irrelevant content. Employs good diction. Contains virtually no errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation, and documents sources properly. Free of typos.

'B' Papers (Good)

Thesis/Logic/Organization: Generally clear thesis or controlling purpose, though it lacks insight or originality. Reference is made to the thesis/controlling idea in the introduction and summarized in conclusion. Relatively identifiable introduction, body, and conclusion. Generally clear and logical organizational plan, but the paper may wander occasionally. Most paragraphs have topic sentences, though the author may not clearly and completely develop the central idea. Some paragraphs do not have strong topic sentences. Generally coherent paragraph structure, though there are a few unclear transitions.

Research/Use of Sources: Source information used to support most points. Some evidence does not support point, or may appear where inappropriate. Quotes are well integrated into sentences. Generally proper documentation used throughout.

Content: Author often relates evidence to topic sentences in each paragraph, though the links are not always clear. Less analysis than an 'A' paper, as well as more description and summary than in an 'A' paper. Demonstrates some critical thinking. Demonstrates a solid understanding of pertinent theological views, concepts, and arguments. Frequently integrates primary text material into essay, with some analysis. Provides good information. Has a good understanding of the material. Ideas generally flow well.

Writing: Sentence structure, grammar, and diction strong despite occasional lapses; punctuation and citation style often used correctly. Some (minor) spelling errors; may have one run-on sentence or comma splice. Conforms in every way to format requirements.

'C' Papers (Average/Needs Work)

Thesis/Logic/Organization: Thesis/controlling purpose may be unclear; provides little around which to structure the paper. Little reference is made to the thesis/controlling idea in the introduction or conclusion. Introduction and conclusion are weak. Organizational plan is generally unclear, and the paper often wanders or jumps around. Few or weak transitions between paragraphs. Many paragraphs without topic sentences. Generally unclear paragraph structure. Paper does not flow as well as it could.

Research/Use of Sources: Source information used to support some points. Points often lack supporting evidence, or evidence is used where inappropriate (often because there is no clear point. Quotes may be poorly integrated into sentences. A few problems with documentation.

Content: Author often does not relate evidence to topic sentences in each paragraph, and the links are not always clear. More description and summary than analysis. Little critical thinking, though there is some. Some understanding of the pertinent ideas. Some good information. Has a general, although not always clear, understanding of the material.

Writing: Problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction (usually not major). Some errors in punctuation, citation style, and spelling. May have some run-on sentences or comma splices.

'D' Paper (Needs Work)

Thesis/Logic/Organization: Thesis/controlling idea difficult to identify at all. Introduction and conclusion are very weak. Organizational plan is unclear, and the paper wanders or jumps around. Very weak transitions between paragraphs if they exist at all. Most paragraphs without topic sentences. Unclear paragraph structure.

Research/Use of Sources: Very few or very weak examples from source information used to support points. Generally do not support statements, or evidence seems to support no statement. Quotes not integrated into sentences. Many problems with documentation.

Content: Author very rarely relates evidence to topic sentences in each paragraph, as paragraphs usually lack topic sentences. Almost no critical thinking. Little understanding of the pertinent theological ideas. Information is poorly presented. Has poor understanding of the material.

Writing: Big problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction. Frequent major errors in citation style, punctuation, and spelling. May have many run-on sentences and comma splices. Does not conform to format requirements.

'F' Papers

Shows obviously minimal lack of effort or comprehension of the assignment. Very difficult to understand owing to major problems with mechanics, structure, and analysis. Has no identifiable thesis, or utterly incompetent thesis. Does not follow paper guidelines for length and format. Plagiarizes.

'F' is also given to papers that are handed in past the due date.