

Religion 393
Spirituality of Merton
Marting 315
M-W-F 10:10-11:00

Alan Kolp
Fall, 2013
826-2172 = s
919-995-4993 = c

TEXTS:

<i>Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander</i> (1966)	CGB
<i>Contemplative Prayer</i> (1969)	CP
<i>No Man is an Island</i> (1955)	NMI
<i>The New Man</i> (1961)	NM
<i>The Seven Story Mountain</i> (1948)	SSM
<i>Interfaith Documents</i>	IFD

REQUIREMENTS:

GRADING:

Annotated Bibliography	(Sept. 9)	5%
Outline	(Oct. 4)	10%
Ten Page Draft	(Oct. 25)	10%
Preliminary Draft	(Nov. 11)	10%
Major Research Paper	(Dec. 2)	50%
Critiques (2)		10%
Class Participation		5%
	Total	<hr/> 100%

PURPOSE:

Thomas Merton is arguably the most important American spiritual figure of the 20th century. Ironically, his intensely inward spiritual journey was lived out very publically through copious books, articles, poetry, interviews, travels, and photography. Paradoxically, his counterculture journey to and entry in the Trappist monastery at Gethsemani, located in the rolling hills of Kentucky, reflected an engagement with and critique of contemporary American culture.

Merton's spiritual journey is multifaceted, thus enabling Merton scholars a variety of research angles. For example, Merton can be studied for his biblical, historical, monastic, theological, spiritual, psychological, ecumenical, pluralistic, pacifistic, poetic, literary, and social justice perspectives. Hence, Merton is a wonderful focal resource for an upper-level Religion research seminar.

The goals of the seminar are threefold. The initial goal of the seminar is to establish a foundational base of knowledge about the spirituality of Merton. This will be done through the regular class meetings grounded in a common body of readings from and about Merton. Class attendance and regular participation is expected. If in the opinion of Alan, either class attendance or regular performance is inadequate, the student will be asked to drop the class and, failing that, will be given a failing grade. If any student feels that he or she has been dealt with unfairly, he or she may appeal to the entire

membership of the seminar (including Alan), and the decision of the entire membership will be final.

The most important goal of the class is a major research paper of 35 pages (double spaced, 12 font, one inch margins). This major paper will focus on some aspect of Merton's spirituality. The focus is ultimately the student's choice, but should be chosen in consultation with Alan. Guidelines for bibliography, footnoting, etc. can be found in the *St. Martin's Pocket Guide to Research and Documentation*. Each major paper will be reproduced with copies to each member of the seminar. Each major paper will be presented at a specified class meeting. Two students will be appointed as responders to the paper at its presentation and these responses (critiques) will then be the basis of class discussion. The day of the student's presentation of her or his major paper will be chosen early in the semester and will then be inviolate. Copies of the major research paper must be made available by 5:00pm two days before the paper is due to be presented in class. Failure to do so automatically results in a failing grade. **NO EXCUSES, NO EXCEPTIONS!**

The third goal of the seminar is to learn how to be an effective responder (offering a critique) to a major research paper. Each student will be a critic of two research papers at their presentation in class. Each critique should be no more than five minutes. Each critique should be summarized in a one-page paper, which will be handed in the same day it is offered orally in class. Again, failure to do so will result in a failing grade for that critique. **NO EXCUSES, NO EXCEPTIONS!**

To facilitate these goals some steps will be taken. First, a one page prospectus and an annotated bibliography of at least seven books and/or articles focused on the student's chosen topic for the major research paper will be due no later than **Sept. 9**. Secondly, a tentative outline of the major research paper is due no later than **Oct. 4**. Thirdly, a ten-page draft is due **Oct. 25**. Finally, a preliminary draft of the paper (at least 22 pages) is due no later than **Nov. 11**. Once again, with respect to these three steps there will be **NO EXCUSES, NO EXCEPTIONS!**

In order to help make the class participation more manageable and effective, there will be 3 teams of two/three students who will be explicitly responsible for guiding and enhancing class discussion. This means each team/student is "on" one day each week. The teams will be chosen by lottery each week.

Some days during the semester the syllabus indicates "Special Offerings." This means there is no specific assigned text for that day. Instead, each student will bring to the class a brief summary of a section of a book or article which we collectively are not reading, i.e. nothing from the five assigned books. Hopefully, each will be bringing some material from the area of research for each person's major paper. Some books to consider: Pennington, *Thomas Merton: Brother Monk; New Seeds of Contemplation; The Asian Journal; The Sign of Jonas; Selected Poems; Zen and the Birds of Appetite*.

One thing Alan cannot expect, but can hope for (!), is that a substantial sense of community will develop among all seminar participants. Our seminar is not a competitive endeavor, but hopefully will be a supportive venture in making Merton scholars. For this to happen each one of us necessarily has a role to play. And in the process, let's have fun doing it!

SCHEDULE:

Aug.	26	Introduction; SSM, 3-32
	28	SSM, 33-144
	30	SSM, 145-246
Sept.	2	Labor Day Holiday NO CLASS
	4	SSM, 247-368
	6	SSM, 369-462
	9	CGB, 5-39
	11	NM, 3-48
	13	Special Offerings
	16	CGB, 39-61
	18	CP, 9-41
	20	NMI, ix-13
	23	CGB, 65-96
	25	Interfaith Document
	37	Special Offerings
	30	NMI, 14-61
Oct.	2	CGB, 96-128
	4	NM, 51-98
	7	NMI, 61-95
	9	CGB, 131-161
	11	NM, 101-161
	14	NMI, 96-130

16 CP, 42-88

18 Fall Holiday No Class

21 CGB, 162-193

23 Interfaith Document

25 NMI, 131-163

28 CGB, 193-238

30 NM, 165-195

Nov. 1 Interfaith Document

4 CGB, 238-273

6 Special Offerings

8 Interfaith Document

11 NMI, 164-187

13 CGB, 277-318

15 CP, 89-116

18 NMI, 188-229

20 Special Offerings

22 CGB, 318-350

25 NM, 200-248

27-29 Thanksgiving Break No Class

Dec. 2 NMI, 230-264

4 Presentation

6 Presentation

11 Presentation