

**S4027/S5027: “Spirituality of Thomas Merton for Today:
On Racism, Violence, and Justice”**
Fall 2018

Professor: Daniel P. Horan, OFM
Office Hours: Rm. 415, *By Appointment*
Class Location: TBA

Email: DHoran@CTU.edu
Course Site: <https://d2l.ctu.edu>
Class Time: Tues. 1–3:45pm

CTU Mission Statement

The mission of Catholic Theological Union is to prepare effective leaders for the Church, ready to witness to Christ’s good news of justice, love, and peace.

Student Handbook

Located in the “Helpful Links” section of the course website (d2l.ctu.edu). Additionally, here you can find information regarding CTU’s

- Copyright policy (Handbook pp. 38 and 107);
- Grading scale (Handbook p. 41);
- Bias-free language (Handbook p. 36);
- “Netiquette” and “Nethics” (Handbook p. 43);
- Among other resources.

Course Description

This course explores the still-relevant contributions of the Trappist monk and best-selling author Thomas Merton, who was one of the most influential voices in Christian spirituality during the twentieth century. In returning to both his well known and lesser-known works, we will study how Merton’s prophetic writings on subjects such as violence and racism, among other timely themes, continue to speak to our contemporary church and world. Special attention will also be given to the pastoral and ministerial implications of Merton’s insights and contributions. [*n.b.*, This course will incorporate both lecture and seminar formats throughout the term].

Required Texts

These texts will be placed on reserve in CTU’s *Paul Bechtold Library*. Current required and recommended booklist is available on the D2L home page. Please login to D2L and near the top of the D2L home page click the Course Book List tab.

- David W. Givney, *The Social Thought of Thomas Merton: The Way of Nonviolence and Peace for the Future* (Anselm Academic, 2009) [ISBN 978-1599820170]

- Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (Image, 1968) [ISBN 978-0385010184]
- Thomas Merton, *Faith and Violence: Christian Teaching and Christian Practice* (Notre Dame Press, 1968) [ISBN 978-0268000943]
- Thomas Merton, *In the Dark Before Dawn: New Selected Poems of Thomas Merton*, ed. Lynn R. Szabo (New Directions, 2005) [ISBN 978-0811216135]
- Thomas Merton, *Isbi Means Man: Essays on Native Americans* (Paulist Press, 2015) [ISBN 978-0809149117]
- Thomas Merton, *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* (Orbis Books, 2004) [ISBN 978-1570755590]
- Thomas Merton, *Raids on the Unspeakable* (New Directions, 1966) [ISBN 978-0811201018]
- Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Destruction* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1980) [ISBN 978-0374515867]

Course Objectives

1. To become acquainted with the life, thought, and writings of Thomas Merton (d. 1968), particularly those less-well-known texts and genres (e.g., literary and experimental essays, poetry, social and cultural criticism, etc.).
2. To develop a familiarity with several of Merton's writings on social-justice themes including war, violence, racism, and civil rights.
3. To identify and explore the contemporary relevance of and pastoral resources in Merton's thought and writings on social-justice themes and liturgy.
4. To create a pastoral and ministerial resource for use and adaptation in the particular institutions and ministry sites of each student.

Library Hours:

<http://www.ctu.lib.il.us/> For information, contact: Kristine Veldheer, Library Director, kveldheer@ctu.edu or 773-371-5460

English for Theological Education:

contact Christina Zaker: czaker@ctu.edu

Writing & Resource Center:

There are a number of writing resources available to all CTU students. The Writing and Resource Center is located in room 338 for drop in help with writing and presentation skills. Contact: Kathleen Martin, kmartin@ctu.edu, room 370B.

Technology Help:

D2L and Educational Technology, Rick Mauney, rmauney@ctu.edu; Information Technology help desk, support@ctu.edu

Assignments and Expectations

All students are expected to attend all of the classes, read the assigned materials in advance of the scheduled

class, and participate in class discussions. The respective requirements for students taking this course for credit are as follows:

- **Class Attendance and Participation [200 pts]**
 - It is expected that all students will come to our weekly class sessions having prepared the assigned readings and ready to participate in class discussions. Due to the limited time and smaller size of the class, a fair amount of the course will be run in a seminar format in addition to professorial lectures. This means that class participation is expected of *all students* in being engaged, responsive, and contributors to discussions.

- **Short Reading Responses [300 pts]**
 - 200-250 word *personal response* to the readings for each class.

 - The purpose of these short responses is to provide an opportunity for students to engage and reflect on the material in a personal way. This is **NOT a summary** of the readings. Reference to ministerial experiences and/or contemporary events is encouraged.

 - At minimum, students are expected to:
 - Identify what about the material was most *attractive* (e.g., what confirmed previous assumptions; opened your eyes in a positive or constructive way, etc.) to them and why;
 - Name what they most *resisted* (e.g., found most challenging; things with which you disagree, etc.) in the readings and why; and
 - Highlight what further *questions* the material raises for them (e.g., not merely further clarification, that's what class is for. What questions or associations did this material evoke in you, etc.).

 - Each student is expected to submit an electronic copy of the response **No Later than MONDAY at Midnight** prior to the class meeting day. Upload to the appropriate folder in the "Assignments" section of D2L. Format: *Single-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman Font*. Late submissions will automatically receive a 50% point reduction regardless of submission time (i.e., one minute late or three days late, etc.).

- **Conference Paper [100 pts]**
 - Be sure to mark your calendars for **Friday December 7** and **Saturday December 8, 2018** for the CTU Conference commemoration the 50th Anniversary of Thomas Merton's death. The event will open with a public lecture by Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM on Friday evening and an all-day event on Saturday featuring a variety of speakers and workshops about Merton's life, work, and legacy.
 - If you are taking this course for credit, it is expected that you will attend this conference (at no additional cost for the conference registration) and participate throughout the event. [If you cannot attend for some serious reason, please speak with the professor ASAP].
 - This conference paper assignment is a **2-3 page paper** in which you will provide your *personal* experience of the conference; highlight the what was particularly striking to you that you heard or experienced in the workshops, keynotes, and liturgies; and draw connections to the material and texts from this course.

- **Final Pastoral Project (MDiv)/Final Paper (MA, DMin, PhD) [400 pts]**

- *Pastoral Project* | MDiv and non-research MA Students | Drawing on the course texts and additional outside sources, students are to **design a one-hour long presentation** on one of the themes examined in this course (and approved by the professor no later than October 30th — it is the student’s responsibility to schedule an appointment with the professor to discuss this theme). The presentation should be aimed at an audience comprised of your local parishioners *or* high-school students. Therefore imagine that you have been invited to give a presentation on Thomas Merton’s contributions to or writings on one of the themes examined in this course.

Students are expected to prepare *and turn in* (a) a PowerPoint slide presentation of approximately twenty slides; (b) a substantive outline from which you would speak when giving this presentation; and (c) a prepared “handout” that includes at least three discussion questions and would be distributed to those attending your Merton presentation.

This assignment is Due by **Midnight (CT) on Monday December 10, 2018** — all three files should be uploaded to the “Assignment” Folder labeled “Final Pastoral Project/Final Paper” on D2L.

- *Final Paper* | Research MA, DMin, and PhD students | The final paper takes the form of a 20-25-page theological research paper on a topic related to the central themes of the course. The methodology is open (e.g., could be a comparative project examining Merton and another figure on subject X; could be an historical project situating Merton’s thought or a particular text within its context; could be an applied project that draws on Merton’s work and thought to address a contemporary theme, event, or context; etc.). The topic must be approved by the professor in advance (it is the student’s responsibility to schedule an appointment with the professor to discuss the research trajectory—this meeting should take place no later than October 30th).

This assignment is also Due by **Midnight (CT) on Monday December 10, 2018** — the file should be uploaded to the “Assignment” Folder labeled “Final Pastoral Project/Final Paper” on D2L.

For those taking this course for credit, a simple point system is used to determine grades. A student can earn a maximum of 1000 points for the entire course. At the end of the course the student’s total point count will be calculated from which a letter grade will be computed.

A = 930-1000	B = 830-869	C = 730-769
A- = 900-929	B- = 800-829	C- = 700-729
B+ = 870-899	C+ = 770-799	F = 0-699

Course Calendar (*subject to revision*) – Texts: On D2L site = [D2L]; Available on Library database or freely accessible on Internet = [O].

Class 1	Tue 9/4	Introduction to the Course (and to Merton)
Readings:		(1) Christine Bochen, “Introduction: Awakening the Heart,” in <i>Thomas Merton: Essential Writings</i> (Orbis Books, 2000), 21-50 [D2L]. (2) James Thomas Baker, “The World & Thomas Merton,” in <i>Thomas Merton: Social Critic</i> (University Press of Kentucky, 1971), 27-43 [D2L]. (3) Robert Inchausti, “A Merton Dictionary,” in <i>Thomas Merton’s American Prophecy</i> (State University of New York Press, 1998), 165-179 [D2L].
Class 2	Tue 9/11	Foundations: Life and Lifelong Conversion
Readings:		(1) Merton, “Day of a Stranger,” in <i>Thomas Merton: Selected Essays</i> , ed. Patrick O’Connell (Orbis Books, 2013) 232-239 [D2L]. (2) Merton, “Christianity and Totalitarianism,” in <i>Disputed Questions</i> (Harcourt Brace, 1960), 127-148 [D2L]. (3) Rowan Williams, “‘A Person that Nobody Knows’: A Paradoxical Tribute to Thomas Merton,” in <i>A Silent Action: Engagements with Thomas Merton</i> (Vons Vitae, 2011), 15-20 [D2L]. (4) Givey, <i>The Social Thought of Thomas Merton</i> , Chapter One, 1-27.
Class 3	Tue 9/18	Speaking about the <i>Unspeakable</i>: Part I
Readings		(1) Merton, <i>Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander</i> , Part Two (57-124) & Part Three (125-213) . <i>n.b., keep notes of passages, themes, references that strike you throughout the text. Pay particular attention to those aspects of this book that continue to resonate with our contemporary settings and contexts. Be prepared for a substantive seminar discussion about this text in class that can begin with reference to your reading response papers.</i>

Class 4	Tue 9/25	Speaking about the <i>Unspeakable</i>: Part II
	Readings	(2) Merton, <i>Raids on the Unspeakable</i> , whole book . <i>n.b., again, keep notes of passages, themes, references that strike you throughout the text. Pay particular attention to those aspects of this book that continue to resonate with our contemporary settings and contexts. Be prepared for a substantive seminar discussion about this text in class that can begin with reference to your reading response papers.</i>
Class 5	Tue 10/2	War and (Non)Violence: Part I
	Readings	(1) Merton, “The Root of War is Fear,” in <i>New Seeds of Contemplation</i> (New Directions, 1960), 112-222 [D2L]. (2) Merton, “The Christian in World Crisis,” in <i>Seeds of Destruction</i> , 93-183. (3) Givney, <i>The Social Thought of Thomas Merton</i> , Chapter Three, 47-71.
Class 6	Tue 10/9	War and (Non)Violence: Part II
	Readings	(1) Merton, <i>Faith and Violence</i> , 3-46. (2) Gordon Zahn, “Thomas Merton: Reluctant Pacifist,” in <i>Thomas Merton: Prophet in the Belly of a Paradox</i> , ed. Gerald Twomey (Paulist Press, 1978), 55-79 [D2L].
READING WEEK 10/15—10/19		NO CLASS
Class 7	Tue 10/23	War and (Non)Violence: Part III
	Readings	(1) Merton, <i>Peace in the Post-Christian Era</i> , 3-162. (2) Daniel Berrigan, “The Peacemaker,” in <i>Thomas Merton/Monk: A Monastic Tribute</i> , ed. Patrick Hart (Collegeville: Cistercian Publications, 1983), 219-228 [D2L]. (3) James Thomas Baker, “The Grim Reaper of Violence,” in <i>Thomas Merton: Social Critic</i> (University Press of Kentucky, 1971), 98-124 [D2L].
Class 8	Tue 10/30	Race and Civil Rights: Part I

	Readings	<p>(1) Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (1963) [D2L].</p> <p>(2) Merton, “Letters to a White Liberal,” in <i>Seeds of Destruction</i>, 3-71.</p> <p>(3) M. Shawn Copeland, “The Watchmen and the Witnesses: Thomas Merton, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Exercise of the Prophetic,” <i>The Merton Annual</i> 30 (2017): 156-170 [D2L].</p> <p>(4) Martin Marty, “To: Thomas Merton; Re: Your Prophecy,” <i>National Catholic Reporter</i> 3.34 (August 30, 1967), p. 6 [D2L].</p>
Class 9	Tue 11/6	<p>Race and Civil Rights: Part II</p> <p>(1) Merton, “From Non-Violence to Black Power,” “Religion and Race in the United States,” “Events and Pseudo Events,” and “The Hot Summer of Sixty-Seven,” in <i>Faith and Violence</i>, 121-181.</p> <p>(3) Givey, <i>The Social Thought of Thomas Merton</i>, 89-105.</p>
Class 10	Tue 11/13	<p>Race and Civil Rights: Part III</p> <p>Readings</p> <p>(1) Merton, <i>Isbi Means Man</i>, whole book.</p> <p>(2) Merton, “The Meaning of Malcolm X,” in <i>Faith and Violence</i>, 182-190.</p> <p>(3) Daniel P. Horan, “Martin, Malcolm, and Merton: The Work for Racial Justice and the Responsibility of Catholic Spirituality,” <i>The Merton Seasonal</i> (2018) [D2L].</p> <p>(4) William Apel, “Mystic as Prophet: The Deep Freedom of Thomas Merton and Howard Thurman,” <i>The Merton Annual</i> 16 (2003): 172-187 [D2L].</p>
<p><i>n.b., Class Does Not Meet on Tue 11/20</i></p>		

Class 11	Tue 11/27	Poetry of Justice: Part I
Readings	<p>(1) Lynn Szabo, “Introduction,” in <i>In the Dark Before Dawn</i>, xxi-xxxiv.</p> <p>(2) Thérèse Lentfoehr, “Social Concern in the Poetry of Thomas Merton,” in <i>Thomas Merton: Prophet in the Belly of a Paradox</i>, ed. Gerald Twomey (Paulist Press, 1978), 111-137 [D2L].</p> <p>(3) Merton, “Figures for an Apocalypse, In the Ruins of New York” (1947), <i>In the Dark Before Dawn</i>, 9-14.</p> <p>(4) Letter to Pablo Anonio Cuadra Concerning Giants” (1963) [D2L]</p>	
Class 12	Tue 12/4	Poetry of Justice: Part II
Readings	<p>(1) Merton, “Original Child Bomb” (1962), <i>In the Dark Before Dawn</i>, 111-118</p> <p>(2) Merton, “Chants to Be Used in Processions Around a Site with Furnaces” (1963), <i>In the Dark Before Dawn</i>, 119-122.</p> <p>(3) Merton, “Epitaph for a Public Servant” (pub. 1977), <i>In the Dark Before Dawn</i>, 123-130.</p> <p>(4) Merton, “And the Children of Birmingham” (1963), <i>In the Dark Before Dawn</i>, 133-135.</p> <p>(5) Merton, “Picture of a Black Child with a White Doll” (pub. 1977), <i>In the Dark Before Dawn</i>, 135-136.</p> <p>(6) Merton, “April 4th 1968” (pub. 1977), <i>In the Dark Before Dawn</i>, 136-137.</p> <p>(* <i>Read around the volume at some of Merton’s other poetry and note what strikes you. We’ll have an opportunity, time permitting, to discuss some of the other poems.</i></p>	
CTU Merton Conference:	Fri 12/7 & Sat 12/8	
All Final Pastoral Projects & Final Papers Due:	**Mon 12/10**	

[Aug 21, 2018]

APPENDIX I: SAMPLE READING RESPONSE OUTLINE

[Please note: the content here references another course. This is provided to give a visual illustration of the format]

[Student Name]

[Week 1]

[September 11, 2017]

I. ATTRACTIONS/AFFIRMATIONS

Andre Duval's analysis of the Council of Trent and the sacrament of order is one of the more attractive ideas in these pages. His understanding that the theology of priesthood and ordination will always be grander than any one doctrinal or dogmatic statement can capture, and that the Council of Trent initiated a beginning, rather than the culmination, of theological thought on the priesthood is especially appealing. His reminder to keep an open mind and to consider the fullness of the Church's teaching is valuable.

II. RESISTANCES/CHALLENGES

What was most distressing was to read how the ministry of the priesthood slowly became divorced from viewing Jesus as the model of ministry. While there is obvious value in the emphasis the Council of Trent and the writings of Bellarmine placed on the Eucharist, it is regrettable that Jesus's actual ministry during his time on earth had to be deemphasized in the process.

III. FURTHER QUESTIONS

During the long Counter-Reformation era, there was clearly a higher value placed on priestly piety and holiness than on priestly ministry in seminaries. Osborne lays out the benefits of this kind of formation (priests tended to have a higher level of spiritual development) while also pointing to its weaknesses (they were disconnected from the larger world). I hear echoes of this debate in current discussions surrounding our Franciscan novitiate: should it be remote and "separate from the world" so the novices can focus on prayer, or should it be in a more urban setting where they can be shaped by meaningful ministry? Osborne's even-handed approach reminds us that there are clear benefits to both approaches, and suggests a way in which the two can be brought together.

APPENDIX II: SELECTED ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Mario I. Aguilar, *Thomas Merton: Contemplation and Political Action* (SPCK, 2011).
- Daniel P. Horan, *The Franciscan Heart of Thomas Merton: A New Look at the Spiritual Inspiration of His Life, Thought, and Writing* (Ave Maria Press, 2014).
- Thomas Merton, ed., *Gandhi on NonViolence* (New Directions, 1965).
- Thomas Merton, *The Nonviolent Alternative*, ed. Gordon Zahn (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1971).
- Thomas Merton, "Some Points from the Birmingham Non-Violence Movement," *The Merton Annual* 25 (2012): 13-22.
- Thomas Merton, "Terror and the Absurd: Violence and Nonviolence in Albert Camus," in *Thomas Merton: Selected Essays*, ed. Patrick O'Connell (Orbis Books, 2013), 361-381.
- Patrick O'Connell, "Sacrament and Sacramentality in Thomas Merton's *Thirty Poems*," in *The Vision of Thomas Merton*, ed. Patrick O'Connell (Ave Maria Press, 2003), 155-186
- Gordon Oyer, *Pursuing the Spiritual Roots of Protest: Merton, Berrigan, Yoder, and Muste at the Gethsemani Abbey Peacemakers Retreat* (Wipf and Stock, 2014).
- Malgorzata Poks, *Thomas Merton and Latin America: A Consonance of Voices* (Katowice, 2007).
- Christopher Pramuk, "'The Street is for Celebration': Racial Consciousness and the Eclipse of Childhood in America's Cities," *The Merton Annual* 25 (2012): 91-103.
- Gerald Twomey, "The Struggle for Racial Justice," in *Thomas Merton: Prophet in the Belly of a Paradox*, ed. Gerald Twomey (Paulist Press, 1978), 92-110.

This is just a sampling. More specific recommendations available from the professor.