



SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY

**Human Journey Seminar:  
Great Books in the  
Catholic Intellectual Tradition  
Seminar Two: Encountering the World**

**Course Information:**

- Course designation: CIT 202-E
- Class meeting: Monday & Thursday, 12:30-1:45
- Location: UC114

**Instructor Information:**

- Cynthia Cameron, PhD Cand.
- Email: [cameronc6@sacredheart.edu](mailto:cameronc6@sacredheart.edu)
- Office hours: Monday & Thursday, 11:00-12:15
- Office: HC221T

**Course Overview and Objectives:**

*The Human Journey Seminars:* Great Books in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition seminars are the University's Academic Signature Common Core for all students. The aim of these two seminars is to provide students with an interdisciplinary understanding of the roots and development of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition as a 2000-year ongoing conversation between the Catholic community of thinkers, writers, and artists and the cultures in which they have lived, asking fundamental questions about God, humanity, society, and nature.

Based upon the common required readings as well as selections from the menu of readings, students will be able to:

1. Explain perspectives of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition on fundamental questions about God, humanity, society, and nature, specifically:
  - a. What does it mean to be human?
  - b. What does it mean to live a life of meaning and purpose?
  - c. What does it mean to appreciate the natural world?
  - d. What does it mean to form a more just society for the common good?
2. Explain how various texts of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition represent the four fundamental claims of this Tradition:
  - a. Human beings exist in relation to a Triune God.
  - b. God's presence in the world is mediated through nature and reality.
  - c. Faith and reason are compatible.
  - d. The dignity of every human being is inviolable and the commitment to justice for the common good is necessary.
3. Develop critical reading, writing, and seminar participation skills.

In CIT 201, we read some early classical texts of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition; in CIT 202, we read works that take us right up to the contemporary world to think about how the claims and essential questions of the tradition speak to today's most pressing cultural, political, and economic issues. You do not have to be a Catholic, or even a believer, to appreciate that, for 2000 years, Western culture has been shaped by foundational texts of the Tradition, composed by some of the greatest minds of their time. At its best, the Catholic Intellectual Tradition challenges us to think hard about the deepest questions of the human heart; these are the enduring questions that every serious person wrestles with in the course of his or her life. This is your opportunity to begin to shape your own principles, values, and philosophy of life, forged in dialogue with the great thinkers of the past and present and with the community of scholars in this particular classroom.

This class will be conducted as a seminar, which means that your participation is perhaps the most important element of the course. Your direct engagement with the texts, your engagement with others' opinions, and your willingness to read closely and deeply – always seeking understanding – are the cornerstones of the class.

#### **Required Texts:**

- Human Journey Seminar II – Course Reader
- All other readings will be posted on the Blackboard site and you will be required to print them.

#### **Requirements for the Class:**

1. Attendance and Participation: 20%
2. Reading Reflections: 20%
3. Two Colloquia Reflections: 10%
4. Two Essays: 30%
5. Final Common Assessment Essay: 20%

#### **Course Policies:**

- Bring the assigned reading to class EVERYDAY and be certain you have completed the reading and reflection BEFORE class.
- Electronic devices:
  - DO NOT bring laptops or tablets to class unless I ask you to do so or you have express permission from the JLC for note-taking.
  - Phones are not to be used during class. Please silence them and keep them put away for the entirety of class. Student use of a phone (for any reason) during class will result in deductions to the class participation grade. No warnings will be given.
- Attendance: Because attendance is important not only for your own participation in the class, but also to establish the kind of dialogue that leads to seminar learning, I will begin to deduct from student's participation grade after two absences.
- Professionalism: Mere attendance in class is not sufficient; rather, as a student, it is your job to be fully engaged in the learning that happens in this class. Professionalism, therefore, is expected; this refers to your attitude to and level of engagement with the workings, procedures, and policies of the class. Professional students arrive on time, are

fully prepared, meet deadlines, are focused and attentive to other students and the instructor, refrain from technology use in class, respect others, take pride in their work, and collaborate well with classmates. In short, professional students take responsibility for their own learning.

- Late assignments:
  - Due to their volume, no credit will be given to reading reflections that are submitted late. Note that these are due by 10am on the day the reading is due.
  - Essays that are turned in late will lose 1/3 of a letter grade for every calendar day they are late. So, an A paper becomes an A- when it is one day late, a B+ when it is two days late, and so on.
  - Colloquia reflections are due two weeks after the event. Because your ability to write about the colloquium is significantly impaired the longer you wait to write the reflection, late essays will not be accepted. If you cannot get the essay written within two weeks, you will need to attend and write on a different colloquium.
  - Extensions for the essays and colloquia reflections will be granted on a case-by-case basis, only in cases of extreme need, and at my discretion. Your failure to plan your schedule is not a sufficient need.
- Communication:
  - With the instructor: The best way to reach me is via my email address. I do my best to respond to emails promptly. I generally check email periodically during the day, but I do not check email after 5:00pm. So, if you email me after 5:00pm, do not expect a response until the next day.
  - From the instructor: Occasionally, I will need to email the class as a whole about issues affecting everyone, such as changes to assignments or links to readings; this is especially true during the early parts of the spring semester when there is the potential for schedule disruptions due to inclement weather. I will also reach out to individual students as needed. All of these communications will use students' University email address; therefore, it is your responsibility to check this email regularly.
- University policies: It is the student's responsibility to familiarize him or herself with all of the relevant institutional policies. I draw your attention particularly to the Academic Integrity policy. Plagiarism is defined as using someone else's ideas or words without attribution. It is a serious ethical transgression, as well as a violation of University policy. Students are expected to abide by the University's policy on Academic Integrity fully in every piece of work you submit for credit in the course. Violations of academic integrity will result in immediate failure on the assignment or, at the discretion of the instructor, of the course. All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Students.

**Grading:**

A (4.0) = 93-100; A- (3.67) = 90-92; B+ (3.33) = 87-89; B (3.0) = 83-86; B- (2.67) = 80-82; C+ (2.33) = 77-79; C (2.0) = 73-76; C- (1.67) = 70-72; D+ (1.33) = 67-69; D (1.0) = 60-66; F (0.0) = 0-59.

## Course Requirements

The following common assessments will be used to determine final grades.

### 1. Attendance and Participation (20%)

- Attendance is the minimum requirement for this class. You are permitted two absences, with or without a reason or excuse. Use these two absences wisely. After two absences, your participation grade will be penalized.
- As a seminar, your participation is essential. You should be participating in some way in every single class. Participation means that, having prepared for class ahead of time (by doing the reading and reading reflection), you are engaged actively in the discussion and other learning activities, paying attention and listening attentively, and avoiding distractions (electronic or otherwise).

### 2. Reading Reflections (20%) – In order to be most fully prepared to participate in the seminar discussions, you will write a reading reflection for every reading assignment (there are three exceptions noted on the course schedule). Reading reflections are to be posted on the Blackboard site by 10am on the day the reading is due (under content, click on “Reading Reflections” and then on new journal entry). Because there are so many reading reflections over the course of the semester, late assignments will receive no credit.

#### a. Format: For every reading reflection, please follow this format.

- Choose a short quote (about a sentence or two) that stands out to you because it *resonates* with you. By resonate, I mean that the author is affirming something you already think OR that the author is saying something new that you find interesting or compelling OR that the author has found a new way of expressing something you consider true. Copy out the quote and cite it (in parentheses, just the page number is sufficient). Then, in a short paragraph of at least 150 words, explain why you chose the quote. How did it resonate with you? Why did it jump out at you? Why is it important or interesting?
- Choose a second short quote (about a sentence or two) that stands out to you because it *challenges* you. By challenge, I mean that the author says something that you disagree with OR that you find difficult to understand OR that you would say in a different way. Copy out the quote and cite it. Then, in a short paragraph of at least 150 words, explain why you chose the quote. How does it challenge you? Would it be challenging for others? Why did it jump out at you?

#### b. Grading: Reading reflections will be graded on a three-point scale.

- 3 points: Exceeds expectations – you demonstrate superior grasp of the reading through your choice of quotes and your discussion of the quotes is nuanced and thoughtful.
- 2 points: Meets expectations – you demonstrate that you read the reading and your discussion of the quotes adequately demonstrates that you understood the reading as a whole.
- 1 point: Does not meet expectations – you turned something in, but it does not suggest that you read the entire reading and/or your discussion of the quotes reveals a lack of understanding of the reading as a whole.
- 0 points: No credit – you did not turn in a reading reflection or did not turn it in by the deadline or you did not follow the directions (including the length requirement).

#### c. Use in class: In each class, a few students will be chosen at random to share the quotations that they chose for their reading reflections. Be sure to mark them in your copy of the

reading. If called on, you will be asked to read the quote and say a few words about why you chose the quote. You need not read your reading reflection.

3. Two Colloquia Reflections (10%) – Over the course of the semester, Sacred Heart offers a number of colloquia. These explore topics of interest to students in the course and engage the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. You are required to attend two colloquia and to submit a reflection essay in response to each. Each essay should be at least 500 words long; it should follow MLA format, use 12-point Times New Roman font, and be double-spaced. At the top of the page, identify the event (title, presenter(s), date). After briefly describing the content of the colloquium, you should suggest how the topic either responds to one of the four fundamental questions of the CIT or addresses one of the four claims of the CIT. Colloquia Reflection essays must be submitted in Blackboard within two weeks of attending the event. Extra credit will be given to students who attend more than two colloquia; to receive the extra credit, reflection essays must be submitted to me via email. Extra credit colloquia essays are limited to two (beyond the two required essays) and the extra credit will be factored into the participation grade.
4. Two Essays (30%) – There are two essays due during the course of the semester. These essays will ask you to think further about the readings, going into more depth, and exploring your reactions to them. No outside research is required. Essay questions will be distributed at least a week before their due dates and posted on Blackboard. Essays should follow MLA format, use 12-point Times New Roman font, and be double-spaced; they should be 3-5 pages (1000-1500 words) and must be submitted in Blackboard by midnight on the day they are due.
5. Final Common Assessment Essay (20%) – In lieu of a final exam, all students in the CIT seminars respond to the following question in an essay of 5-7 pages (1500-2000 words). The essay should follow MLA format, use 12-point Times New Roman font, and be double-spaced. The essay is due by midnight on the day of our scheduled exam.

Question for the Final Common Assessment Essay: Using at least three authors from the common readings (from the Reader), write a paper explaining how these readings represent perspectives of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition on ONE of the questions below:

1. What is our relationship with God?
2. How does one live a life of meaning and purpose?
3. What is our relationship with the natural world?
4. How can we form a more just society for the common good?

In their essays, students are expected to:

- a. Identify a clear thesis statement.
- b. Use appropriate content to illustrate the thesis statement.
- c. Evaluate/interpret the textual evidence that is presented.
- d. Organize and synthesize evidence to present a coherent explanation.
- e. Produce a clear, well-organized essay in which sources are cited properly and which conforms to conventions of standard written English.

## Course Schedule

(Please note that this schedule is subject to change and revision as needs arise. Changes will be made at the discretion of the instructor and updates will be posted on Blackboard.

Thursday, January 19: Introduction to the course and the people

Monday, January 23: The Seminar Format

Reading: Course Reader, "The Human Journey Seminars," p. v-x.

NO READING REFLECTION.

### Unit One: Faith and Reason

Thursday, January 26: John Henry Newman

Reading: Course Reader, p. 30-32.

Monday, January 30: John Henry Newman

Reading: Course Reader, p. 32-44.

Thursday, February 2: John Henry Newman

Reading: Course Reader, p. 44-59.

Monday, February 6: John Paul II

Reading: John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, § 1-6.

### Unit Two: Living in Modernity and Postmodernity

Thursday, February 9: Charles Taylor

Reading: Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, p. 23-30.

Monday, February 13: Charles Taylor

Reading: Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p. 1-4.

Thursday, February 16: Richard Dawkins

Reading: Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 31-73.

Monday, February 20: *Nostra Aetate*

Reading: Course Reader, p. 1-3.

Thursday, February 23: *Caritas in Veritate*

Reading: Course Reader, p. 5-29.

### Unit Three: Finding Meaning in Religious Commitment

Monday, February 27: Thomas Merton  
Reading: Course Reader, p. 64-76.  
NO READING REFLECTION  
**Assignment Due: Essay One**

Thursday, March 2: Thomas Merton  
Reading: Course Reader, p. 76-98

Monday, March 13: Dorothy Day  
Reading: Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness*, 17-22 & 93-109.

Thursday, March 16: Dorothy Day  
Reading: Day, *The Long Loneliness*, 132-151.

Monday, March 20: Dorothy Day  
Reading: Day, *The Long Loneliness*, 169-204.

Thursday, March 23: Dorothy Day  
Reading: Course Reader, p. 99-110.

### Unit Four: Finding Meaning in the Pursuit of Justice

Monday, March 27: Gustavo Gutierrez  
Reading: Course Reader, p. 111-119.

Thursday, March 30: Elizabeth Johnson  
Reading: Elizabeth Johnson, *Abounding in Kindness*, p. 56-72.

Monday, April 3: Jean Vanier  
Reading: Jean Vanier, *Essential Writings*, p. 82-88 & 103-109.

Thursday, April 6: Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Reading: Course Reader, p. 120-134.

### Unit Five: Finding Meaning in Creation

Monday, April 10: Gerald Manley Hopkins  
Reading: Course Reader, p. 62-63.  
NO READING REFLECTION  
**Assignment due: Essay Two**

Thursday, April 13: Francis

Reading: Francis, *Laudato Si'*, § 17-100.

Thursday, April 20: Elizabeth Johnson

Reading: Elizabeth Johnson, *Ask the Beasts*, p. 1-18.

Unit Six: The Catholic Intellectual Tradition in Contemporary Literature
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Monday, April 24: Flannery O'Connor

Reading: Flannery O'Connor, *Collected Works*, p. TBD.

Thursday, April 27: Graham Green

Reading: Graham Green, *The Last Word*, p. TBD.

Monday, May 1: Walker Percy

Reading: Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer*, p. TBD.

Wednesday, May 3: Conclusion and Discussion of the Final Paper.

**The Final Paper is due by midnight on the day of our exam, Monday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. It must be submitted through the Blackboard site.**