

THEOLOGY

Theological Foundations (Theology 111)
Christian Doctrine Today (Theology 290)

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THE ROLE OF EXPERIENCE & MODELS OF MINISTRY

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS (THEO 111)

Course Description (Spring 2005)

This course introduces students to theology as an academic discipline by exploring the various ways individuals and communities articulate their experience of the divine. Working primarily from a Christian perspective—in dialogue with other views—we will study four related areas: (1) the Hebrew Bible, (2) selected world religions, (3) the Christian understanding of Jesus, and (4) the relationship of theology to current social and ethical issues.

Mission-Driven Components

The Ignatian Mentoring Program enhanced my ability to articulate the relationship of the Jesuit tradition to two components of my THEO 111 course:

1) Human Experience as the Starting Point for Theology

I introduced a new reading at the beginning of the course: William A. Barry, S.J., “Grounded in God: The Principle and Foundation,” chapter two of *Finding God in All Things: A Companion to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (Ave Maria Press, 1991). My THEO 111 course begins with reflection on human experience as a starting point for theological reflection, understood as “faith seeking understanding.” This new reading offers specific descriptions of “peak” or “limit” experiences that I used to begin discussion on the human encounter with the sacred. The reading allowed the opportunity to relate this reflection on human experience to Ignatius’ own methodology in the *Spiritual Exercises*, providing an introduction to the discipline of theology within the context of a Jesuit University.

2) Experience-Based Learning

In collaboration with Peace and Justice Programs, I encourage students to engage in a service learning project and write a paper that brings Theology into dialogue with a contemporary social or ethical issue. This project serves the E/RS focus of the course and invites reflection on the call of Jesuit education to serve the promotion of social justice.

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE TODAY (THEO 290)

Course Description (Spring 2005)

Ecclesiology is the theological study of the church in an effort to understand its nature and mission. This seminar explores the developments in Roman Catholic ecclesiology that have taken place over the past half century. The themes treated represent those movements that flowed into and out of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965): the renewal of biblical studies, the liturgical movement, ecumenism, questions of authority, changes in ministry, and the church's presence in the world. This survey of recent Catholic thought will also offer the opportunity to reflect on common Christian origins and the diverse ecclesiologies of other Christian traditions.

Mission-Driven Component

This course includes a component on structures of ministry within the Roman Catholic Church. In treating this topic historically, I included an essay by John O'Malley, S.J.: "One Priesthood: Two Traditions" (in *A Concert of Charisms: Ordained Ministry and Religious Life*, ed. Paul Hennessy). In this essay, O'Malley critiques the tendency of contemporary Catholic theology to assume a patristic, parochial model as paradigmatic for all priestly ministry. His historical research reveals that the rise of religious order priests—such as the Franciscans, the Dominicans, and, especially, the Jesuits—presents an alternative, complementary model. This model is focused more on mission than on pastoral (in the sense of parish-based) care. O'Malley's presentation of early Jesuit ministry (particularly in his book *The First Jesuits*) has been helpful to me and will continue to influence the way in which I teach about structures of ministry in the Catholic Church.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

In addition to the direct revision of the courses described above, the IMP has had an impact on my current and future research in the following ways:

1) Memory in the Thought of Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J.

Studying the *Spiritual Exercises* as part of IMP deepened my appreciation for the role of memory in the work of the American Jesuit liturgical theologian Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J. The *Exercises* played an important role in Kilmartin's understanding of how worshippers relate to Christ during liturgy. My essay: "The Ministerial Priesthood and Liturgical Anamnesis in the Thought of Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J." will appear in the June 2005 issue of *Theological Studies*.

2) Priesthood and Ministry

O'Malley's recognition of a historical diversity of models of priesthood has begun to shape my own research on lay ministry in the Roman Catholic Church. I will explore the connections between ordained and lay ministry in two papers this summer (an address to the National Association for Lay Ministry and a presentation at a Boston College conference on the Priesthood in the 21st Century).

3) Vocation

IMP has fed my interest in the theology of call, election, and vocation. I hope to explore Ignatian discernment as one historical model within a larger future project on the theology of vocation.