

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY
School of Theology and Ministry
STMM 500: Christian Anthropology
Summer 2009

Instructor: Prof. J. Rodriguez
Class Meetings: June 19–20; June 26–28; July 11, 2009
Classroom: Hunt 110

Office Hours: by appointment
Office: Casey 227/ 296-5324
E-mail: jrodrigu@seattleu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the mystery of the person from a Christian perspective. Specifically, it will flesh out the idea of the person as relational. Major themes include origin and destiny; sin and grace; embodiment; freedom and responsibility; and the individual in society. Of particular interest is the examination of these concepts in light of experiences from the margins.

COURSE GOALS

- To develop the ability to reflect theologically on the basic themes of the Christian faith in the areas of theological anthropology, grace, sin, and the Holy Spirit.
- To reflect theologically on one's own experience of human life.
- To develop the ability to reflect theologically on the basic themes of the Christian faith in the areas of theological anthropology, grace, sin, and the Holy Spirit.
- To reflect theologically on one's own experience of human life.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objective of the course is for students to:

1. Be familiar with key theological concepts for understanding the structure of human existence from a Christian perspective;
2. Become aware of the role of social location in articulating a theology;
3. Articulate some of the challenges presented by experiences from the margins to the dominant Christian vision of the human person and possible responses to these;
4. And understand the Christian vision of the human person as reflected in the person and life of Jesus.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The Bible (Any modern translation)
Diaz, Miguel, *On Being Human*
O'Hara Graff, Ann (ed). *In the Embrace of God*. Orbis, 1995.
Rahner, Karl. *Foundations of Christian Faith*. Crossroads, 1990.
Servan-Schreiber, *Healing Without Freud or Prozac*

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Bartel, Michelle J. *What It Means to Be Human*. Geneva Press, 2001.
Fernandez, Eleazar. *Reimagining the Human*. Chalice Press, 2004.
Haight, Roger. *The Experience and Language of Grace*.
Lewis, C.S. *Great Divorce*. Harper Collins, 2001.

Rahner, Karl. *Foundations of Christian Faith*. Seabury, 1978.
 Tillich, Paul, *Systematic Theology*, Volumes 1 and 2, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951, 1957.

OVERARCHING COURSE QUESTIONS

- What is the author’s assertion(s) in the readings?
- How does s/he substantiate this claim?
- What are the implications of this claim for understanding the human person? For understanding personal experience? For the way we approach our pastoral work?
- What claims are particularly problematic? What claims are especially insightful?

Students are to take note of their responses to these questions as they read the required texts.

COURSE OUTLINE

| | Date | Topic | Readings |
|------------|----------------------------|---|---|
| Session 1 | Friday June 19, 6-9 pm. | Introduction to theology and theological Anthropology | Rahner, 1-43 |
| Session 2 | Saturday June 20, 9-12 am. | Humanity before God | Rahner, 44-89; 44-115 |
| Session 3 | Saturday June 20, 1-4 pm. | Earliest tradition of Jesus | Article to be distributed |
| Session 4 | Friday June 26, 6-9 pm. | Jesus Christ within an Evolutionary Worldview | Rahner, 178-203 |
| Session 5 | Saturday June 27, 9-12 am. | Voices from the Margins | O’Hara Graff, Intro-ch. 2 |
| Session 6 | Saturday June 27, 1-4 pm. | Naming One’s Experience | Diaz, Intro-ch. 2 O’Hara Graff, Ch 3-5 |
| Session 7 | Sunday June 28, 9-12 am. | Theology of Grace, Person, and Community | Diaz, Ch. 4 O’Hara Graff, Ch 6-8 |
| Session 8 | Sunday June 28, 1-4 pm. | A Cosmic Vision of the Human Person | O’Hara Graff, Ch 9-10 |
| Session 9 | Saturday July 11, 9-12 am. | Of Last Things | Rahner, 431-47 O’Hara Graff, Ch 11-12 |
| Session 10 | Saturday July 11, 1-4 pm. | Healing Without Freud or Prozac | Entire book by Servan-Schreiber |

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All students are expected to come to class with a summary paragraph and basic outline of the readings assigned for the day. Students are to take note of questions and new concepts encountered in the readings. Questions should go beyond clarifications of the intent of the authors to include challenges to their claims, particularly in light of the student’s life experiences. Students should be prepared to hand these in upon the professor’s request. **(10%)**

Class Participation: Student participation is a critical element for the success of each individual student and the class as a whole. Participation includes regular class attendance, preparation of assigned readings, prepared responses to assigned questions, and active engagement in class discussions and group work. **(20%)**

2-page Paper: Reflect on your initial thoughts to the question “What does it mean to be human?” Please email essay to professor by 6/15, and bring a hardcopy to first day of class. **(10pts)**

Discussion Facilitation: During specific meetings, students will be required to come prepared to speak as “experts” about a particular section of the assigned text. The assigned student is to come prepared with a brief summary of the assigned texts and 2-3 thoughtful questions about the text and/or its implications for ministry to illicit discussion by the class. **(10%)**

4-page Paper I: Karl Rahner is among the most challenging theologians to read. In this first paper, you are to focus on a specific passage (statement, paragraph, section) taken from the assigned readings in Rahner that you deem a critical element of his understanding of the structure of human existence. Explain this element of his thought and why you deem it critical to understanding the human person. (Due 6/20) **(20%)**

5-page Paper II: The second sets of readings for the course challenge the students to become aware of the importance of social location for understanding the meaning of human existence. In particular, O’Hara Graff and Diaz both argue that the failure to see the impact of class, race, gender, sexual orientation, and the human being’s relationship to the non-human world can lead to a vision of the human person that excludes the experiences of those on the margins. In this paper, describe a theological concept whose meaning has expanded for you through the consideration of voices from the margins. Name the new insights gained about this concept and implications these present for your self-understanding and your understanding of the Christian vision of the human person. Provide examples of how these new insights might affect your approach to your ministry. (Due 6/28) **(30%)**

GRADING SYSTEM

| | | | |
|----|-----------|------------|----------------------|
| A | 3.89-4.00 | 93 – 100 | Superior Performance |
| A- | 3.65-3.88 | 90 – 92.99 | |
| B+ | 3.25-3.64 | 87 – 89.99 | |
| B | 2.95-3.24 | 83 – 86.99 | Good Performance |
| B- | 2.65-2.94 | 80 – 82.99 | |
| C+ | 2.25-2.64 | 77 – 79.99 | |
| C | 1.95-2.24 | 73 – 76.99 | Adequate Performance |
| C- | 1.65-1.94 | 70 – 72.99 | |
| D+ | 1.25-1.64 | 67 – 69.99 | |
| D | 0.95-1.24 | 63 – 66.99 | Poor Performance |
| D- | 0.65-0.94 | 60 – 62.99 | |
| F | <0.64 | < 60 | Failing |

REGARDING STYLE

- Papers must be typed, double-spaced.
- Use 1-inch margins all round. Use 10 or 12 pt type.
- Do not use right-hand justification as it leads to oddly spaced words.
- Follow the Chicago Manual of Style. Use footnotes, not endnotes. Diana Hacker, A Pocket Style Manual serves as a good guide for form and style.
- **Staple the paper in the top left-hand corner.** Do not use plastic covers or binders.
- Keep a copy other than the one you submit.