STMA 593
Spirituality of Thomas Merton
Fall, 2005 –Wednesday Afternoon
1:30-4:20 pm

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Course Description

The goal of the course is to give participants an opportunity to read and reflect on a wide variety of Merton's writings, including his spiritual writings, social critiques, letters, journals and poetry. To this end, this seminar type course will explore Merton's writings through several means that will run consecutively throughout the quarter. First, we will follow Merton's life chronologically as presented in a summary of his journals. Second, we will read selections of Merton's writing that correspond to the time period under consideration. Third, we will read *New Seeds of Contemplation*, one of Merton's books on spiritual practice in small segments. Four, we will read selections of Merton's poetry each week of the course. Finally, the participants will have an opportunity to make presentations on a topic of their choice.

Required Texts

Cunningham, Lawrence S., editor, *Thomas Merton: Spiritual Master* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992).

Merton, Thomas, *Faith and Violence: Christian Teaching and Christian Practice* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968).

Merton, Thomas, *In the Dark Before Dawn: New Selected Poems of Thomas Merton,* ed. Lynn R. Szabo (New York: New Directions, 2005).

Merton, Thomas, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions, 1961).

Merton, Thomas, *The Intimate Merton: His Life from His Journals,* ed. Patrick Hart and Jonathan Montaldo (San Francisco: Harper, 2001).

A selection of pertinent articles will also be distributed during the quarter upon the discretion of the instructor according to the interests of the class participants.

Accountability

1. Attending class and participating in discussions and class processes.

2. Doing the readings listed for each class; readings are due on the day they are listed.

3. Merton found two spiritual practices to be essential in his life; that of prayer and journaling. Participants will practice both of these during the course. Students can journal their own responses to each week's selection of readings. Or the students may journal after each class session in response to what seemed pertinent to them. Or the student may just journal, like Merton, about what is on their mind. Students are encouraged to use in their own prayer practice any illuminations that they receive from the readings and class discussions. On **October 12 and November 8,** students will hand in a ***selection*** of these journal entries, **no longer than three pages in length, and double spaced.** Further explanation of this assignment will happen in class.

4. Making one presentation in class. Depending on peoples' interests, this may be done either individually or in a small group. Dates: November 16 and 30.

5. Students will hand in a **short précis/outline** of their presentation by November 30.

Tentative Schedule

September 21: Introduction, Background, overview; early life

September 28: The Story of a Vocation- 1939-1941
Readings: Hart and Montaldo, 1-44;
Cunningham, 63-106;
New Seeds, 14-51,
Szabo, (Hymn of Not Much Praise for New York City) 6-8 (Sacred Heart 2) 51-2; (Dirge for the World Joyce Died in) 105: (The Philosophers, Tower of Babel) 145-146.

October 5: Becoming a Monk and Writer-1941-1952
Readings: Hart and Montaldo, 45-102;
Cunningham, 241-250;

New Seeds, 52-79,
Szabo,9-18, 25-40, 58-63, 77-83, 100-101,147-148, 181-183.
*"Notes For a Philosophy of Solitude," in *Disputed Questions,* 1960,177-207.

October 12: Pursuing a Monk's True Life- 1952-1960
Readings: Hart and Montaldo, 103-154,
Cunningham, 107-164,
New Seeds, 80-103,
Szabo, 18-19, 40-41, 63-64, 84-92, 183-184.

October 19: The Pivotal Years -1960-1963
Readings: Hart and Montaldo, 155-210,
Cunningham, 265-293,
New Seeds, 104-125,
Szabo, 42, 65-71, 106-108, 111-136.
Faith and Violence, 3-86

October 26: Seeking Peace in the Hermitage 1963-1965
Readings: Hart and Montaldo, 211-268,
Cunningham, 294-356,
New Seeds, 126-179,
Szabo, 43-48, 72-73, 92-99,101-102, 131-136
Faith and Violence, 87-120

November 2: Exploring Solitude and Freedom: 1966-1967
Readings: Hart and Montaldo, 269-312,
Cunningham, 165-213, 214-222, 357-367,
New Seeds, 180-238,
Faith and Violence, 121-190,
Szabo, 184-219, 136-141,

November 9: The End of the Journey: 1967-1968
Readings: Hart and Montaldo, 313-363,
Cunningham, 223-237, 399-420,
New Seeds, 239-297
Faith and Violence, 191-288.
Szabo, 19-22,173-178, 149-172,

November 16: Participants Presentations

November 30: Participants Presentations