

2010-1 RGP 3270 HS: Discerning the Signs of the Times: Reading Spirituality using Contemporary Critical and Cultural Theory
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Course Syllabus

Course Description:

The aim of this course is threefold. 1. To expose the student to contemporary forms of critical and cultural analysis. 2. To use that analysis to look at spirituality. 3. To expose the student to contemporary manifestations of spirituality in a post-modern age.

The first part of this course will present an overview of the present state of critical and cultural analysis using the text, *The Theory Toolbox: Critical Concepts for the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences* by Jeffrey Nealon and Susan Searls Giroux (2003).

The second aspect of the course will apply the concepts learnt to an examination of spirituality.

The third aspect of the course will look at contemporary readings of spirituality.

Assessment:

Students in the course will be expected to produce 8 reflection papers, each 500 words in length and worth 10% of the total mark. The remaining 20% of the mark will be given for consistent, intelligent, active, class participation. The papers are expected to conform to a graduate standard of grammar and exposition for academic papers. Failure to do so will alter the mark significantly.

The course aims to develop in students a spiritual literacy which allows them 1. to read the signs of their times and 2. to facilitate the appropriation of their lives and the contexts they live in for 3. a more focused and transformative engagement of the world they live in.

Required Texts:

The Internet has an Excellent Range of Easily accessible Articles on each of the topics for the Thirteen Weeks. That resource is given in the Appendix Attached. It is strongly recommended that students avail themselves of this resource.

The Theory Toolbox: Critical Concepts for the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences by Jeffrey Nealon and Susan Searls Giroux. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. (2003).

Course Outline:

Week 1: An Introduction to the Course. Why theory. Constructs of spirituality. God; prayer; the body; society; community/tradition; self; nature; evil; “other-ness”; ritual; celebration.

Week 2: Developing a Vocabulary and a way of proceeding. “Rhetorical Spirituality”

Week 3: Examining these constructs using chapters 2-4 of The Theory Toolbox

Week 4: Examining these constructs using chapters 5-8 of The Theory Toolbox

Week 5: Examining these constructs using chapters 9-11 of The Theory Toolbox.

Week 6: Psychological readings of Spirituality

Week 7: Reading Week

Week 8: Sociological readings of Spirituality

Week 9: Formalist and Structural readings of Spirituality

Week 10: Post-structuralist readings of Spirituality

Week 11: Post-modern readings of Spirituality

Week 12: Contemporary Readings of Spirituality.

Week 13: Appropriation and challenge.

Week 14: The question of interpellation.