

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY
SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

STMA 506. SIN AND GRACE

SPRING QUARTER 2010

FRIDAY, 9:00 – 11:50 A.M.

HUNTHAUSEN 100

FIRST CLASS SESSION: APRIL 9, 2010

LAST CLASS SESSION: JUNE 4, 2010

(NO CLASS SESSION ON APRIL 2, 2010 – GOOD FRIDAY)

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SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A systematic and historical exploration of the themes of sin and grace; how human life is affected by each, and the various ways grace and sin have taken shape in human history.

II. S.T.M. LEARNING OUTCOMES ADDRESSED IN THIS COURSE

This course primarily addresses the theological competencies put forward for the M.Div. degree, especially the following:

- 1) An ability to reflect theologically on the central themes of the Christian tradition.
- 2) Knowledge of the interaction of religion/spiritual experience and culture in their ecumenical and multicultural dimensions.

Secondarily, the following pastoral and liturgical competencies will be addressed:

- 3) Ability to inform ecclesial leadership with theology.
- 4) Knowledge of the tradition in relation to sacramental theology, liturgical method, worship elements and structure, and the ability to engage them in an ecumenical diversity of praxis.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this course are for each student:

- 1) to listen deeply and attentively to the wisdom of the historic Christian tradition concerning sin and grace, thereby gaining a solid and use-full understanding of the views of the following theologians: Augustine, Evagrius Ponticus, John Cassian, Gregory the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Søren Kierkegaard, and Karl Barth;
- 2) to gain or strengthen familiarity with the most crucial expressions of sin and grace in one's own theological tradition and/or ecclesial community, as well as in the theological traditions and/or ecclesial communities of the other members of the class (special attention will be paid to the distinctive engagements of sin and grace in Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant ecclesial communities);
- 3) to engage actively and openly the approach of several contemporary theologians/religious writers (Daniel Migliore, Mary Louise Bringle, and Anne Lamott) and their revisionary ways of imaging and thinking about sin and grace, thereby arriving at a solid and use-full understanding of problematic aspects of traditional Christian accounts of sin and grace, as well as alternatives to these views;
- 4) to develop greater facility in oral and written communication, in theological reflection, and in the integration of theology, spirituality, and ministerial practice;
- 5) to reflect upon self, society, nature, and God more appropriately and to live out one's own life more responsibly as a result of this encounter with the Christian theological tradition;
- 6) to develop a heightened sensitivity to the difference gender makes (and does not make) in human experience and to the ways race, class, and culture deepen and complicate accounts of human experience;
- 7) to appreciate experiences of sin and grace in one's own life and ministry, including
 - a sense of how the themes of sin and grace are enacted in worship, preaching, and other pastoral activities
 - an assessment of the relevance of sin and grace as theological categories to the practice of pastoral care and social justice.

IV. TEXTBOOKS

St. Augustine. *The Confessions*. Translated by Maria Bounding, O.S.B.
Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1997. ISBN 1-56548-084-8

Bringle, Mary Louise. *Despair: Sickness or Sin? Hopelessness and Healing in the Christian Life*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990. ISBN 0-687-10493-9

Lamott, Anne. *Travelling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith*.
New York: Random House, 1999. ISBN 0-385-49609-5

Migliore, Daniel L. *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Second edition. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2004.
ISBN 0-8028-2787-X

V. PROCEDURES AND ASSIGNMENTS

A. Attendance. Class sessions are the primary means by which the instructor and students can share the material introduced in the assigned texts and other activities. Therefore, attendance at all sessions of the course is essential. Students are responsible for getting information from other participants about what went on in any class session they might happen to miss. Punctuality is encouraged as a gift to exchange with other class members.

B. Reading, Preparation for Class Sessions, and In-Class Participation. Each student is responsible for having read the material assigned for each session of the course and should be prepared to discuss their reading in class. Each student is also responsible for being an active participant in class sessions through attentiveness, by interacting with the instructor during his presentations, as well as with other students in large group discussions and small group work.

C. Papers. Each student will write three papers over the course of the quarter. Paper #1 (a theological analysis of how sin and grace are “ritualized” in her/his ecclesial community) is due on Friday, April 16, 2010. Paper #2 (a theological reflection upon the student’s own life-story in light of Augustine’s intellectual and spiritual autobiography) is due on Friday, May 7, 2010. Paper #3 (a theological synthesis in which the student articulates her/his own understanding of sin and grace) is due on Friday, June 4, 2010. Specific written guidelines for all three papers will be provided on the first day of class, if not before.

VI. COMPUTATION OF FINAL GRADE

Paper #1	20%
Paper #2	20%
Paper #3	50%
Class Preparation and Participation	10%

VII. SCHEDULE OF CLASS SESSIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

No Class Session: April 2, 2010 (Good Friday)

Class Session 1: April 9, 2010

Getting Acquainted with Getting Oriented to Sin and Grace

Introductions and Course Organization

Presentation on Creation, Sin, and Grace

Read and be prepared to discuss: Migliore, pp. 92-162

Class Session 2: April 16, 2010

Ritualizing Sin and Grace

Case Study: Gathered in God's Name and into Christian Community
(Baptism and Conversion)

Be prepared to discuss your response to Paper #1

Paper #1 Due

Class Session 3: April 23, 2010

Sin and Grace in Augustine's Life-Story

Read and be prepared to discuss: *Confessions*, Books I-V (pp. 39-133)

Class Session 4: April 30, 2010

Sin and Grace in Augustine's Life-Story

Read and be prepared to discuss: *Confessions*, Books VI-IX
(pp. 134-236)

Case Study: Sin Confessed and Grace Proclaimed (Reconciling Word)

Class Session 5: May 7, 2010

Despair and the Seven "Deadly" Sins from the Early Church to the Reformation

Read and be prepared to discuss: Bringle, pp. 17-81

Paper #2 Due

Class Session 6: May 14, 2010

Despair as the Sickness unto Death in Kierkegaard

Read and be prepared to discuss: Bringle, pp. 83-142

Class Session 7: May 21, 2010

Hope and Healing in the Christian Life: Roman Catholic and Protestant Emphases

Read and be prepared to discuss: Bringle, pp. 143-175

Case Study: Thanksgiving for God's Grace (Eucharist)

VII. SCHEDULE OF CLASS SESSIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS (CONTINUED)

Class Session 8: May 28, 2010

Grace and Sin in Ordinary Life

Read and be prepared to discuss: Lamott, pp. 3-144

Class Session 9: June 4, 2010

Grace and Sin in Ordinary Life

Read and be prepared to discuss: Lamott, pp. 145-272

Case Study: Sent Out in Mission and Service

Course Evaluation

Paper #3 Due