

## **STMM 569 The Human Person and Meaning Making**

**Fall 2010 Wednesdays 5:45-8:35**

**MICHAEL B. RASCHKO**

**Hunthausen 213**

**296-5311**

**mraschko@seattleu.edu**

**Office Hours:** By appointment.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Students explore what it is to be human in this course. Identifying how various philosophies, theologies, and cultures create systems of meaning-making. Students name their own values and the impact of those values on their lives, their relationships, and their world. Further, students explore how symbols, metaphors, and rituals shape them and others in processes of creating collective understanding.

### **GOALS OF THE COURSE**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the role and dynamics of human “meaningmaking” in framing worldviews, and in impacting individual and collective human values formation, ethical and other forms of decision-making, and leadership ideals, goals and methodologies.
- Demonstrate a *reflective* capacity for analyzing and articulating the student’s personal spirituality and “meaning-making” influences and structure, and its impact on the student’s leadership ideals, goals, and methodologies.
- Demonstrate an ability to think critically about the impact and role of religious organizations, spiritual movements, and spiritually-inspired insights and worldviews in public discourse, particularly in the articulation of public values in the United States, as well as its impact and role in the development of leadership theory and practice.
- Demonstrate a reflective capacity for engaging others in the discussion of the meaning structures of their lives and the organizations and culture(s) in which they live, particularly using the concepts and language of multiple intelligences, social and emotional learning and leadership theory, which can serve as a surrogate for traditional theological themes and issues.

### **TEXTBOOKS**

- William Fleming, *Arts and Ideas*, Holt Rinehart, Winston.
  - I have the 8<sup>th</sup> edition. The current edition is 2 volumes and very expensive, so you might look on line for the 8<sup>th</sup> or an earlier edition.
- Paul Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Meaning*, Chicago. Paul Tillich, *The Dynamics of Faith*, Harper and Row.

- Terry Eagleton, *The Meaning of Life, A Short Introduction*, Oxford.
- Karen Armstrong, *The Great Transformation, The Beginning of our Religious Traditions*, Knopf.

## **METHODS IN THE COURSE**

I tend to think of my method of teaching as “interrupted lecture.” I have an outline of the material we need to cover and will follow it. However, some of the best learning takes place when questions are asked. Feel free to ask them. I will referee whether they take us too far a field. The more the lecture becomes a discussion, the more I think we learn. I will take responsibility for keeping us on track and making the connections.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **Session 1: September 22**

Worlds of Meaning: their elements, their dynamics, their health and decline  
 Reading to prepare for this class: First class, no preparatory reading

### **Session 2: September 29 (Feast of Michael the Archangel)**

Three worlds of meaning: Periclean Athens, the world of Gothic, and the Enlightenment.

Reading to prepare for this class: three chapters from Fleming’s *Arts and Ideas*.  
 In my edition they are:

- Chapter 2: The Hellenic Style
- Chapter 8: The Gothic Style
- Chapter 17: The 18<sup>th</sup> Century Styles

### **Session 3: October 6**

The Ultimate in Worlds of Meaning  
 Reading to prepare for this class: Paul Tillich, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*

### **Session 4: October 13**

The dynamics of ultimate meaning  
 Reading to prepare for this class: Paul Tillich, *The Dynamics of Faith*

### **Session 5: October 20**

When worlds fall apart  
 Reading to prepare for this class: Fleming, *Arts and Ideas*  
 Chapter 21: Early Modern Styles  
 Chapter 22: Later Modern Styles  
 Chapter 23: Postmodern Styles

(JB, Job, Qoheleth)

**Session 6: October 27**

Is there an ultimate ground for meaning?

Reading to prepare for this class: Terry Eagleton, *The Meaning of Life, A Very Short Introduction*, Chapters 1 and 2.

**Session 7: November 3**

Is there an ultimate ground for meaning?

Reading to prepare for this class: Terry Eagleton, *The Meaning of Life, A Very Short Introduction*, chapters 3 and 4.

**Session 8: November 10**

Ritual and Kenosis

Reading to prepare for this class: Armstrong, *The Great Transformation*, Chapters 1-3.

**Session 9: November 17**

Knowledge, Suffering and Empathy

Reading to prepare for this class: Armstrong, *The Great Transformation*, Chapters 4-6.

**NOVEMBER 24: NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING BREAK****Session 10: December 1**

Concern for everyone, All is One

Reading to prepare for this class: Armstrong, *The Great Transformation*, Chapters 7-8.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- Class participation in discussion and reflection on the readings.
- Reading of assigned material in preparation for all classes.
- Four short papers
  - Take one chapter from Fleming that we are not using in the course. Pick one artifact that is discussed in the chapter and discuss how it embodied the ideas of the world of meaning of that time. This paper should be about 1500 words (5 pages). Due at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> class.
  - Take a chapter from Fleming we are not using in the course. In the light of Paul Tillich's *The Dynamics of Faith* discuss how that period looked for/found/expressed the ultimate in its world of meaning. This paper should be about 1500 words (5 pages). Due at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> class.
  - Pick some expression of our present world of meaning that is important to you. Discuss how it embodies our world of meaning, the importance it plays in your

life, and whether and how it points to the ultimate. This paper should be about 1500 words (5 pages). Due at the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> class.

- Take one of the main themes in the chapter titles of Armstrong's *The Great Transformation*. Discuss why that theme is important in understanding the human self; how that theme was embodied in the work of two of the Axial peoples, and how that theme is present or absent in our world. About 1500 words or 5 pages. Due at the beginning of the 10 class.

### **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.

### **GRADING**

Each paper will count for 25% of the final grade

Class participation and the professor's sense of the student's mastery of the material overall will be taken into consideration.

### SCORING RUBRIC TEMPLATE

<b>Introduction</b>	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explains the theological issue to be addressed</li> <li>Helps reader understand the nature of the issue—reader understands what is at issue</li> <li>States your purpose and provides a map or blueprint forecasting the structure of your paper</li> </ul>	Meets all criteria at high level; clearly presents problem	Meets some criteria; uneven or has some lapses in development	Meets few criteria; fails to orient reader to problem
<b>Summary of Source' Position</b>	30 27 24	21 18 15 12	9 6 3 0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows how your chosen theologian deals with the issue raised in your introduction</li> <li>Clearly summarizes the theologian's position and argument</li> <li>Uses appropriate sources; treats them with fairness and balance</li> <li>Shows a clear understanding of the position and the arguments of the chosen theologian</li> </ul>	Meets all criteria at high level; clear, balanced, accurate	Meets some criteria; uneven; some lapses in clarity balance, or accuracy	Meets few criteria; often unclear, undeveloped, inaccurate
<b>Presentation of Your Own Position</b>	30 27 24	21 18 15 12	9 6 3 0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly develops your own ideas in the light of the theologian's position</li> <li>Has a clear thesis</li> <li>Has effective arguments to support the thesis; arguments are clear and well developed</li> <li>Shows appropriate complexity of thought and wrestling with the theological issue</li> </ul>	Meets all criteria at high level; clear, strong development, good sense of complexity	Meets some criteria; uneven or has some lapses in clarity or development; less complex	Meets few criteria; often unclear or undeveloped, or too superficial or thin
<b>Explanation of Ministerial Implications</b>	15 14 12	10 9 7 6	5 4 2 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates the significance of the issue for ministry; shows what is at stake</li> </ul>	Meets all criteria at high level	Meets some criteria; uneven	Meets few criteria
<b>Overall Clarity of Organization</b>	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has a well-organized, easy-to-follow structure</li> <li>Has effective paragraphing; each paragraph develops one idea clearly</li> <li>Connects paragraphs to one another in a logical and understandable way with effective transitions</li> <li>Is unified around a central thesis and develops that thesis clearly in all its parts</li> </ul>	Meets all criteria at high level	Meets some criteria; uneven	Meets few criteria
<b>Effective Sentence Style and Mechanics</b>	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is well-edited without errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, or spelling</li> <li>Has a clear, concise, readable style</li> <li>Properly formats, punctuates, and cites quotations, paraphrases, and summaries of other authors' ideas.</li> </ul>	Meets all criteria at high level	Meets some criteria; uneven	Meets few criteria

## From SEATTLE UNIVERSITY'S ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

### **Introduction**

Seattle University is committed to the principle that academic honesty and integrity are important values in the educational process. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense against the academic community. Acts of academic dishonesty will be addressed according to the Academic Honesty Policy.<sup>1</sup>

### **Standards of Conduct**

Without regard to motive, student conduct that is academically dishonest, evidences lack of academic integrity or trustworthiness, or unfairly impinges upon the rights and privileges of others is prohibited. A non-exhaustive list of prohibited conduct includes:

#### **A. Committing Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of the work or intellectual property of other persons, published or unpublished, presented as one's own work. Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to copying, paraphrasing, summarizing, or borrowing ideas, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or an entire paper from another person's work without proper reference and/or acknowledgement. While different academic disciplines have different modes for attributing credit, all recognize and value the contributions of individuals to the general corpus of knowledge and expertise. Students are responsible for educating themselves as to the proper mode of attributing credit in any course or field. Note that plagiarism can be said to have occurred without any affirmative showing that a student's use of another's work was intentional.

#### **B. Cheating on Exams and Other Assignments**

Cheating is acting dishonestly or deceptively in connection with an assignment, examination or other activity related to a course. Examples of cheating include but are not limited to:

- Copying another person's work during an examination;
- Allowing another person to copy one's work;
- Using unauthorized materials during an examination;
- Obtaining test materials before they are administered;
- Having someone take an exam in one's place; and
- Taking an exam for someone else.

It is the responsibility of the student to consult with the faculty member concerning what constitutes permissible collaboration.