

REL 467: Contemporary Theory & Praxis in Religious Education

Fall Semester 2019

Course Outline

Class Start Date Sept. 18, 2019—Class End Date Nov. 30, 2019

Class Meeting Time: Fridays 6:30-9:30 pm; Saturdays 9:00 am-12:00am

Instructor Name: Dr. Barbara Wotherspoon
Office: N/A
Office Hours: As required.
Telephone: 306-370-5931
Email: barbara.wotherspoon@newman.edu

Location: Bishop James Mahoney High School Library

Course Description

A study and critique of issues and trends in contemporary religious education, including theories, curricula, Church documents, and the General Directory for Catechesis. Teaching strategies and their approach to religious education are discussed and practiced.

Course Objectives

The following are the proposed goals for the course:

- a) To demonstrate an understanding of the influence of contemporary theories, Church documents and the General Directory for Catechesis as they apply to religious education curricula.
- b) To demonstrate knowledge of, and apply within the classroom or school setting, the religious education theories of contemporary Catholic educational theorists.
- c) To develop a personal integrative approach to the praxis of religious education.
- d) To recognize and discern the cultural complexities of modern-day classrooms as they impact Catholic education.
- e) To integrate life experience and spiritual growth into one's own learning and teaching.
- f) To contribute to one's own learning and assessment.

Course Assignments and Evaluation

1. Prayer Celebration: 12 marks

Part 1 (10 marks): Create a 10-15 minute prayer celebration for the class that reflects your own identity and integrity as a Catholic educator; please feel free to allow your own personality, gifts, and philosophy to shine in this special time of connection to God. Feel free to use the standard celebration format (Standard celebration format is as follows: Opening song, Welcoming Rites, Scriptural Passage, Ritual action, Sending forth, Closing song) **OR** Create a meaningful community format of your own using the type of relevant “language” that Ron Rolheiser advocates.

Due Date: Please sign up for an opening or closing prayer for one of the twelve classes.

Part 2 (2 marks): Prepare a one-page outline of your prayer celebration for members of the class. Using brackets, cite direct or indirect connections to the readings. **Due Date:** Day of Presentation

Scoring Criteria for Prayer Celebration (2 marks each):

- Creativity
- Relevance
- Community Participation
- Acknowledgement of varied “ways of knowing”
- Echoes of introductory readings

2. Private Reflective Journal: 24 marks (4 marks X 6 weeks)

In a maximum of 250 words each, provide an in-depth personal reflective response to 2 questions per week (2 marks each) within a designated time frame. Each reflection should be written in proper paragraph format. **Due date: Designated date prior to each class.**

3. Discussion Board: 24 marks (6 marks X 4 weeks)

Part 1 (4marks): On the Discussion Board, post your responses to 2 questions (2 marks each) about one or more of the required readings within a designated time frame prior to the class for which they are due. Incorporate references to theory, praxis, your own experience, your teaching situation, and the shared experiences of others in the class into your postings. Please do not exceed 250 words per question. Conclude with an integrated summary that advocates your position as a Catholic educator. Each reflection should be written in proper paragraph format.

Part 2 (2 marks): Respond in writing to the posting of one other person on the Discussion Board, and orally to the posting of one other person during the class in which the questions are discussed (1 mark per posting). **Due date: Designated date prior to each class.**

4. Paper-20 marks

Choose one of the following theorists discussed in class:

- Maria Harris, Teaching and Religious Imagination
- William J. O’Malley, Reason as Primary Method
- Bernadette Stankard (Howard Gardner), Multiple Intelligences
- Jeffrey Wilhelm, Inquiry-Based Learning

In a 1800-2500 word paper, please do the following:

- 1) Explain the theoretical/research background that the educator advocates (1-2 pages).
- 2) Critically examine the ways in which the educator's theories and praxis align (or do not align) with the Scriptural model of Jesus as teacher (1-2 pages).
- 3) Explain aspects of the theory/research that resonate with your philosophy as a Catholic educator; challenge aspects that do not align with your philosophy (1-2 pages).
- 4) Explain in which ways the theory/research echoes (or does not echo) the GDC, *Gaudium et Spes*, other Church documents concerning Catholic education, and the theories of contemporary theorists (1-2 pages).
- 5) Give specific examples of how you might apply the theoretical principles/research to your own teaching situation. Explain how you might make adaptations for cultural complexities if they exist within your specific situation (1-2 pages).

Provide a complete bibliography of materials you have used.

Criteria for paper:

Structure and Style

- Introduction
- Organization-Development of thesis/focus, coherence and clarity
- Conclusion
- Grammar, sentence structure
- Spelling, punctuation, referencing

Content

- Evidence of comprehension of class readings and activities
- Evidence of application of theory and GDC requirements
- Evidence of critical thinking
- Evidence of integrative approach to praxis

Note: Marking will follow standardized rubric guidelines for Newman Theological College

Due Date: Nov. 15, 2019 (to be submitted online)

5. Theoretical Framework: 20 marks

On one page (or the equivalent-feel free to be creative in this regard) create a visual representation of your integrated theoretical approach to the praxis of religious education in relation to your own position as an educator (15 marks).

Clearly indicate the theorists, documents, and experiences that have influenced your position.

Provide a brief oral explanation of your representation to the class on Nov. 29, 2019. Submit a 2-page written explanation online on or before Dec. 2, 2019 (5 marks).

Scoring Criteria for Theoretical Framework:

- Evidence of connection to assigned and additional readings
- Evidence of application of theory and Catholic document requirements into praxis
- Evidence of recognition and discernment regarding the cultural complexities of modern-day classrooms as they impact Catholic education
- Creativity, uniqueness, relevance
- Depth of integration into personal integrity and identity

Due Date: Visual Representation and Oral Explanation: Nov. 29, 2019

Written Explanation: Dec. 2, 2019 (to be submitted online)

Required Reading

Palmer, Parker *The Courage to Teach*, pdf Chapter One
 Rolheiser, Ronald *Secularity and the Gospel*, pdf Chapters One, Two, Three
 Groome, Thomas *Educating For Life*, pdf Chapter 2
 Stankard, Bernadette *How Each Child Learns*, pdf selected pages
 Harris, Maria *Teaching & Religious Imagination*, pdf Chapter 2
 O'Malley, William
 Religion/CE Textbook, Teaching Manual and grade-level SK Curriculum Guide
 Your own invaluable teaching and life experience!
 Please also have access to the following: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV)
 General Directory for Catechesis. Ottawa, Ontario: Concacan Inc., 1997
 Catechism of the Catholic Church. Ottawa, Ontario: Concacan Inc., 1999
 Documents of Vatican II: *Gaudium et Spes*
 Pope Francis, *Laudato si'* (24 May 2015)
 Selected articles distributed in class

Recommended Reading

Rohr, Richard, join at <https://cac.org> for daily meditations
 Readings as discussed in class

Course Requirements

This is a class that links theory to praxis, and it is important that participants be in attendance for all classes. It is also essential that students conduct readings and respond to online questions in both the private journal and the class discussion board prior to the class for which responses are due, as these questions are directly connected to the achievement of course objectives. Participants in the class will plan a prayer celebration, conduct research, write a paper, and design a personal integrative theoretical framework for the praxis of religious education. There will be no final exam.

Course Schedule

Weekend One: Sept. 13-14, 2019

Friday:

Opening Prayer Celebration
 Introductions, Overview, Readings, Moodle, Assignments, Evaluation, Prayer Celebration Sign-up
 Jesus as Teacher
 Closing Prayer Celebration

Saturday:

Opening Prayer Celebration
 In-class introduction to educational theorist: Thomas Groome, Shared Christian Praxis
 Closing Prayer Celebration

Note: Please complete required Readings (Groome, Palmer, Rolheiser), Journal Entries, and Discussion Board Postings for Weekend Two prior to Sept. 27.

Weekend Two: Sept. 27-28, 2019

Friday:

Opening Prayer Celebration
Educating for Life, Groome, Chapter Two
Courage To Teach, Palmer, Chapter One
Closing Prayer Celebration

Saturday:

Opening Prayer Celebration
Secularity and the Gospel, Chapters One, Two, Three
Closing Prayer Celebration

Note: Please complete required Readings (O'Malley, Harris, Stankard, Wilhelm), Journal Entries, and Discussion Board Postings for Weekend Three prior to Oct. 18.

Weekend Three: Oct. 18-19, 2019

Friday:

Opening Prayer Celebration
Reason As Primary Method, O'Malley
Teaching & Religious Imagination, Harris, Chapter Two
Closing Prayer Celebration

Saturday:

Opening Prayer Celebration
How Each Child Learns, Stankard
Inquiry-Based Learning, Wilhelm
Explanation of Assignments 4 & 5
Closing Prayer Celebration

Note: Please complete required Readings (GDC #80-87, *Gaudium et Spes*, *Laudato si'*), Journal Entries, and Discussion Board Postings for Weekend Four prior to Nov 1.

Weekend Four: Nov. 1-2, 2019

Friday:

Opening Prayer Celebration
GDC, #80-87; 139-147; 181-185
Gaudium et Spes, Introduction
Closing Prayer Celebration

Saturday:

Opening Prayer Celebration
Pope Francis, *Laudato si'* (24 May 2015)
Review of Theory and Application to Praxis
Closing Prayer Celebration

Note: Paper is to be Submitted Online on or before Nov. 15.

Note: Please complete Moodle Readings (TBA), Journal Entries and Discussion Board Postings for Weekend 5 prior to Nov. 22.

Weekend Five: Nov. 22-23, 2019

Friday (Tentative):

Opening Prayer
Field Trip TBA (or) Class Discussion and Introduction to other Theorists
Closing Prayer

Saturday (Tentative):

Opening Prayer Celebration

Class Discussion and Introduction to other theorists

Thomas Berry, *Integrated Cosmocentric Education*

Henri Nouwen, *Three Dimensions of Spiritual Growth*

Richard Rohr, *Contemplation in Action*

Miller, J. P. et al, *Holistic learning and Spirituality in Education*

Paulo Freire, *Empowerment education* (Anti-“banking”, conscientization, praxis)

Anti-oppressive/anti-racist education

Closing Prayer Celebration

Note: Visual Representation and Oral Explanation Due Nov. 29

Note: No Readings or Discussion Board Required for Next Class

Note: Journal Entry is required prior to Nov. 29

Weekend Six: Nov. 29-30

Friday:

Opening Prayer Celebration

Panel of Guest Speakers

Closing Prayer Celebration

Saturday:

Opening Prayer Celebration

Sharing of Visual Representations

Final Class Activity

Closing Prayer Celebration

Note: Journal Entry is required prior to Dec. 2.

Note: Written Explanation of Theoretical Framework is due Dec. 2.

General Academic Information

Late Submission Policy.

No credit will be given for late submissions in the Private Journal or the Discussion Board. Late submissions for other assignments will be granted at the discretion of the instructor.

On-Campus Course Attendance

No credit will be given for a course if the student has been absent, for any reason whatever, from one-third or more of the lectures and/or seminars scheduled for the term. Likewise, no credit will be given if term assignments or other assignments are or remain incomplete.

Leave of Absence and Policy for Incompletes

Extensions to an incomplete grade may be granted in extenuating circumstances, but may not exceed 16 weeks following the end of the course. Students who fail to complete course work by the agreed deadline will have a grade assigned which is based on work completed.

Academic Integrity

Acts of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, etc.) are subject to an appropriate penalty. The grade “F” may be assigned to a student guilty of such acts by the professor of the course in which the infraction occurred. A second offense against academic integrity renders the student liable to

automatic dismissal from NTC. Further details are available in the Student Handbook in the Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Grievances

Students may appeal grades received; the procedure is outlined in the Student Handbook in the Grade Appeal Policy. For other grievances, students will refer to the Student Grievances Policy also outlined in the Student Handbook.

NOTE: The GPA is computed on the basis of cumulative grade point (letter) values, not percentage values. All courses are included in this calculation except those exceeding degree requirements and/or received as transfer credits from other recognized institutions.

Grading System

Undergraduate Studies C.Th., Dip.Th., B.Th.			Graduate Studies M.T.S., M.Div., M.Th., G.C.C.S.A., M.R.E.		
Grade Meaning	Grade	Grade Point	Grade Meaning	Grade	Grade Point
Excellent	A+	4.0	Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0		A	4.0
	A-	3.7		A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3	Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0		B	3.0
	B-	2.7		B-	2.7
Adequate	C+	2.3	Adequate	C+	2.3
	C	2.0		C	2.0
	C-	1.7		C-	1.7
Marginal	D+	1.3			
	D	1.0			
Fail	F	0.0	Fail	D+	1.3
				D	1.0
				F	0.0

Written Assignments - Style and Format

Newman Theological College requires that all written work be submitted in acceptable academic format and style. Please note the following regulations:

Regulations

Research papers, book reports, article summaries, reflection papers, and essays should be double-spaced, printed on one side only, and submitted on white, 8.5" x 11" paper.

A standard type style, such as Times New Roman, with a 12-point font size, must be used. The instructor will specify the most recent edition of the style manual to be used:

1. Kate Turabian, "A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
2. Joseph Gibaldi & William Ahters, eds., "MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers" (New York: Modern Language Association of America).
3. American Psychological Association "Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association" (Washington: APA Publications).

Copies of these standard references may be purchased in the NTC bookstore.

Ignorance of standard form is not considered an acceptable excuse for deviation from required standards of format and style.

Academic Regulations

The following Academic Regulations are located in the Academic Calendar for your reference:

- Changes in Registration: Add/Drop/Withdraw Notice
- Course Work
- Final Examination Schedule
- Incomplete Grade Policy
- Inclusive Language

Related Academic Matters

The following Related Academic Matters are located in the Academic Calendar for your reference:

- Grade Reports & Posting
- Glossary of Academic Terms

Other Related Policies

The following policies are located in the Student Handbook for your reference:

- Academic Misconduct Policy
- Grade Appeal Policy

Recording of Lectures

Audio or video recording of lectures, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior consent of the instructor. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Student Accessibility Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Student Services, contact Doreen Bloos at 780-392-2450 ext. 2212; Email doreen.bloos@newman.edu .



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