



ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

Department of Religious Studies

RS 255: Roman Catholicism

Fall 2022

MW, 10:00am – 11:20am, SJ1 3016

We acknowledge that much of our work takes place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. The campus is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. We give thanks for the privilege to work on this land and we are committed to working toward reconciliation and healing through research, learning, teaching, and the building of community.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Cristina Vanin
Email: cdvanin@uwaterloo.ca
Office: Sweeney Hall (SH) 2030
Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Calendar Description:

This course offers comprehensive knowledge of the significance of Roman Catholic beliefs, values, and practices for our time. Topics analyzed in a wide context include spirituality, ethics, the meaning of the sacraments, prayer, sin and salvation, questions of authority, tradition, change, and views on sexuality and gender.

Detailed Description:

When you think of a religious 'tradition' such as Roman Catholicism, you may think of something that's static, unchanging — something 'carved in stone.' Yes, you can find continuity in Catholicism; some things have remained relatively the same over the centuries. But it is also the case that religious traditions, like any tradition, are rooted in persons and so they are also dynamic, diverse, always changing and developing. This course will pay attention to characteristics of Catholicism that have sustained over time as well as to the ways in which Catholicism has developed and changed over time.

I would also say that religious traditions have to do with people who believe certain things, whose lives are grounded in faith. So we will see how Christian faith emerges and develops by paying attention to scripture and history and to how Christianity is expressed by this particular Christian tradition of Roman Catholicism. Why is it, and how is it, that people come to be part of this tradition and live it out in their day-to-day lives?

We will be asking what it means to live as a Catholic Christian today. To do that, we will look at the reality of today's world and ask what meaning and significance a Christian faith like Catholicism can have in the face of the challenges and injustices we face. We're going to do this within the context of Pope Francis who became pope in 2013 and who, from the outset, has been a public voice calling on all of us

to respond to the cries of the poorest people and to the cries of our common home, the Earth.

Our aim throughout the term is to develop a community of learning so prepare yourselves to read and think actively and creatively, to communicate your ideas with all of us, and to ask lots of questions! As Monika Hellwig (who taught at Georgetown University) said: “Some people worry when they have questions about their faith, or when they begin to realize that the old explanations, good enough before, no longer seem to offer coherent meaning. This worry is misplaced. To believe means to want to understand, and to want to understand means to be asking questions.”

COURSE OBJECTIVES and /or Learning Outcomes

- familiarize ourselves with contemporary Catholicism and its relationship to current challenges and injustices
- reflect critically on key aspects of Roman Catholicism
- learn about some of the major contours of the long and complex history of Roman Catholicism; its distinctive rituals, structures, attitudes, ideas, and ways of living
- find out about Catholic social teaching, Catholicism’s approach to issues of social justice
- understand the impact and significance of Roman Catholicism as a living tradition
- participate in a community of learners wherein you can engage in conversation, demonstrate respect for the ideas of others, and communicate your own insights and ideas clearly

REQUIRED TEXTS [AND OTHER REQUIRED READINGS]

- Pope Francis, *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future. Pope Francis in conversation with Austen Ivereigh*. Simon & Schuster, 2020.
- additional readings will be indicated on our LEARN site

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Weighting</u>
Active Participation + Citizenship	Course	10%
Leading Class Discussion	One Class (TBD)	15%
LEARN Discussions	Post: one time	10%
	Response: four times	20%
Research Project Proposal / Outline	November 7, 2022	10%
Research Presentation	TBD	
Research Paper	December 12, 2022	35%
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Total		100%

*Please note that detailed assignment guidelines will be posted on LEARN. What follows are some general descriptions of the various assignments:

Assignment 1: Active Participation + Citizenship

All students are expected to come to class having completed the assigned readings and prepared to contribute to discussion. When we come to class prepared, it contributes to the good (or demise) of the whole. We will be learning with and from each other so it will help all of us if we have read thoughtfully and are prepared to dialogue with each other.

Assignment 2: Leading Class Discussion

Students will sign up to lead class discussion one time during the semester, for one of the Monday classes. The intention is to engage us in understanding and thinking together about the reading(s) assigned for the day; about the key insights presented; about the significance of what is being said; about how a given reading is related to what we have read previously or to things that you have read and learned about elsewhere. It is also about raising questions for us to consider and discuss.

Assignment 3: LEARN Discussion [Post]

Students will sign up to post to LEARN discussion one time during the semester. Posts must be submitted by Friday evening, 11:59pm. The posts will consist of a written critical reflection on the reading(s) assigned for the Monday class.

Assignment 4: LEARN Discussion [Response]

Students will respond to LEARN posts four times during the semester. Responses must be submitted by Monday morning, 9:00am. The response will indicate the further insights that the post has provided for you and you will pose at least two further questions that are raised for you by the post.

Assignment 5: Research Project Proposal [DUE: November 7]

This assignment gives you the opportunity to work with a partner and to research a person or group / organization that demonstrates and is inspired by Catholicism's concern to transmit values and to change the world for the better. You will learn about the particular issue(s) of social justice that this person or group is responding to. You will also learn about the principles of social teaching that are at the heart of Catholic faith. You will explain how and why this particular Catholic person or group is an example of Catholic social teaching, and why you think it is important for us to know about them. Preparing the research project proposal allows you to try out your ideas and get feedback on them before you develop them into the final research presentation and essay. Feedback will be provided via a meeting with the instructor.

Assignment 6: Research Presentation [tentatively — November 30 and December 5]

Each group will sign up to present their research to the rest of the class. The presentation itself will take no more than 15 minutes. You will follow the presentation with generating 10-15 minutes of conversation / discussion.

Assignment 7: Research Essay [DUE: December 12]

Each group will write and submit a formal essay, in the sense that it should follow an accepted academic style, especially in terms of the proper citation of references and it should have a bibliography. The essay should be 3000-3750 words in length (12-15 pages), 12-point type [Times or Times Roman], double-spaced, one-inch margins.

Submission

Assignments must be submitted onto LEARN Dropbox.

COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
1	September 7	Introduction	
2	September 12 September 14	Indigenous Residential Schools in Canada and Roman Catholicism Catholicism in the time of Pope Francis ("Oh, how I would like a poor Church, and for the poor.")	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pope Francis' penitential pilgrimage to Canada: July 25, 2022 meeting with Indigenous peoples First Nations, Métis and Inuit • Interview with Indigenous leader and residential school survivor, Phil Fontaine, CBC Front Burner podcast, July 27, 2022 • April 1, 2022, Pope Francis meets with delegations of Canada's Indigenous Peoples, Métis and Inuit • Pope Francis' Address to Media, March 2013 • Pope Francis TED Talk 2017 • Pope Francis, <i>Let Us Dream</i>, postscript by Austen Ivereigh
3	September 19 September 21	Why do we need to see? What do we need to see? Racism	<p>Pope Francis, <i>Let Us Dream</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prologue • Part One: A Time to See <p>Fr. Bryan Massingale, Fordham University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The assumptions of white privilege and what we can do about it," <i>National Catholic Reporter</i>, June 1, 2020 • "How the church can combat racism and white privilege," <i>America Media</i>, Behind the Story
4	September 26 [Post] [Lead Discussion]	Migrants and Refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mennonite Central Committee: 'Becoming beautiful trees: preschool program for refugees in Uganda grounds students with love'

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
	September 28	2SLGBTQ+ persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development • resources on COVID 19 impacts <p>James Martin, SJ, <i>Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion and Solidarity</i></p>
5	October 3 [Post] [Lead Discussion] October 5	Poverty, Homelessness, Work Our common home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephanie and Joe Mancini, "Virtues," in <i>Transition to Common Work: Building Community at The Working Centre</i> • The Working Centre, Kitchener • St. Mary's Church, Kitchener: Tiny Home Takeout Program • Pope Francis TED Talk 2020 • one of my book chapters
	READING WEEK	October 8 - 16	None
6	October 17 October 19	Why does Pope Francis have this sense of church? This sense of what it means to be Roman Catholic? Of what is needed in our time? Discernment: the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola	Pope Francis, <i>Let Us Dream</i> • Part Two: A Time to Choose TBC
7	October 24 [Post] [Lead Discussion] October 26	Women and the Church Synodality: how are we church?	TBC TBC

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
8	<p>October 31 [Post] [Lead Discussion]</p> <p>November 2</p>	<p>What does it mean to be part of a community of faith? The Roman Catholic community of faith?</p> <p>The Life of the Church: prayer; sacraments; devotions; rituals; etc.</p>	<p>TBC</p> <p>TBC</p>
9	<p>November 7</p> <p>November 9</p>	Vatican II: A Turning Point	<p>Pope Francis, <i>Let Us Dream</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part Three: A Time to Act • Epilogue <p>John O'Malley, SJ, Georgetown University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Looking at Vatican II with Pope Francis' Eyes" <p>Thomas Rausch, Loyola Marymount</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Church and the Council," in <i>Catholicism in the Third Millennium</i>
10	<p>November 14 [Post] [Lead Discussion]</p> <p>November 16</p>	Catholic Social Teaching: Embracing the Margins	<p>TBC</p> <p>TBC</p>
11	<p>November 21 [Lead] [Lead Discussion]</p> <p>November 23</p>	<p>Catholicism is a living tradition</p> <p>The Church as the People of God</p>	<p>TBC</p> <p>TBC</p>
12	<p>November 28</p> <p>November 30</p>	<p>The Tapestry of Roman Catholicism: Weaving the Threads Together</p> <p>Presentations</p>	

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
Last Class	December 5	Presentations	

MANAGING UNCERTAIN TIMES

We're going to hope that conditions will be such that we will continue with in-person classes through the entire fall term, but the pandemic renders our best laid plans precarious, so let's be prepared for whatever may come.

If you find yourself unable to attend class due to an extenuating circumstance, lecture notes and/or slides can be made available to you upon request. Furthermore, we will discuss the idea of sharing the responsibility of creating notes that capture our meetings.

If we have to cancel in-person classes for a short period of time (e.g., one week), we will move either one or both of the class meetings online, via MS Teams, during the scheduled class times. These online class meetings will not be recorded.

If we have to cancel in-person classes for an extended period of time, we will move the class meetings online, via MS Teams, during the scheduled class times. These online class meetings will not be recorded.

COURSE POLICIES

Correspondence:

If you need to contact me by email, please use my cdvanin@uwaterloo.ca address. In most cases, I will respond to emails within 24 hours, although I can't guarantee that I will be looking at email on weekends. You should **use your UW email addresses** for all correspondences with me. Though our course does have an MS Team, I will not be checking the chat for messages. It's best to email me.

Class announcements generally will be posted on LEARN.

Late Assignments:

Late assignments will be penalized at the rate of three per cent (3%) per day, including weekends.

Extensions:

All extensions must be requested a minimum of one week before the assignment is due. Any requests after this week will be granted only if accommodations are secured through proper processes (e.g., self-declaration of illness, VIF, other relevant documentation). Without documentation, no extension will be granted after the original due date has passed.

Attendance

Students are responsible for attending and taking notes at all classes.

Electronic Devices

I request that there be no off-task use of technology while we are participating in our class meetings. Also, please turn off all sound on your devices during class meetings.

Privacy and Permissions

Materials, lectures, and all audio, video and written content on LEARN is absolutely not to be circulated or reproduced beyond LEARN and this course. Please be considerate and respectful of your colleagues and your instructor's privacy.

The instructor maintains copyright over this course. It is the intellectual property of the instructor and not to be copied or reproduced for any purposes without explicit permission.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Petitions and Grievances](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties, check the [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Appeals](#).

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please

register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff at St. Jerome's encourage students to seek out mental health support if needed.

On Campus

Due to COVID-19 and campus closures, services may be available only online or by phone.

- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 ext. 32655
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and Counselling Services
- SJU Wellness Coordinator: Lindsay Thompson (Lindsay.thompson@uwaterloo.ca)

Off campus, 24/7

- [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-4300 ext.6880
- [Here](#) 24/7: Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- [OK2BME](#): set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 ext. 213