

**CH 645 Social Transformation
Learning From 13th and 14th Century Mystics**

**Ambrose University College
May 3-7, Spring/2010**

Instructor: Heidi Grogan
Office Hours: By appointment
Class Times: M-F 9:00-4:00

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Required Texts

The Dialogue: Catherine of Siena, The Classics of Western Spirituality. (Paulist Press/1980)

Michael Crosby, Finding Francis, Following Christ. (Orbis Books/2007)

Dorothee Soelle, The Silent Cry, Mysticism and Resistance. (Fortress Press/2001)

Student handouts provided during the course will contain additional readings and specifically, survey material of contemporary social problems

Bibliography

Bernard McGinn, The Flowering of Mysticism, Men and Women in the New Mysticism (1200-1350). (The Crossroad Publishing Company/1998)

Bernard McGinn, The Harvest of Mysticism in Medieval Germany (1300-1500). (The Crossroads Publishing Company/2005)

Mark McIntosh, Mystical Theology. (Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1998)

Susan Rakoczy, Great Mystics and Social Justice. (Paulist Press/2006)

Tony Campolo and Mary Albert Darling, The God of Intimacy and Action; Reconnecting Ancient Spiritual Practices, Evangelism and Justice. (Jossey-Bass/2007)

John Tyson, Invitation to Christian Spirituality. (Oxford University Press/1999)

Evelyn Underhill, Mystics of the Church, (James Clark and Co. Ltd./1925)

Mary Ann Fatula, Catherine of Siena's Way (Darton, Longman and Todd/1987)

Alice Curtayne, Saint Catherine of Siena. (First Augustine Publishing Company/1981)

Mary Jeremiah, The Secret of the Heart: A Theological Study of Catherine of Siena's Teaching on the Heart of Jesus. (Christendom Press/1995)

Mary Catherine Hilbert, Speaking with Authority, Catherine of Siena and the Voices of Women Today (Paulist Press/2008)

Patricia Mary Vinje, Praying with Catherine of Siena. (Saint Mary's Press/1990)

Murray Bodo & Susan Saint Sing, A Retreat with Francis & Claire of Assisi. (St. Anthony Messenger Press/1996)

Francis and Claire: The Complete Works, The Classics of Western Spirituality (Paulist Press/1982)

Johannes Jorgensen, St. Francis of Assisi. (Doubleday)

Ivan Gobry, Saint Francis of Assisi. (Ignatius Press/2006)

Course Description

Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena have had a significant impact on Western Christian Spirituality. This biography course will introduce students to the historical and church milieu of the 13th and 14th century, and examine the lives of the two mystics, specifically their lived understanding of the self-giving love of the Trinity, and the resulting impact it had on their response to the social justice issues of their time.

This course will survey social problems of the 21st century including poverty and violence, including the social response. In so doing, a key question addressed by the course pertains to how the social responses of Francis and Catherine to 13th and 14th century social problems offer a model for attending to the brokenness of our world today.

The course will be taught as a seminar that blends lectures and student presentations. Because the course takes for form of a seminar, students will engage small group discussions so that course learning might be personally applied, and so that students might discover in these mystics a companion for their contemporary spiritual journey.

Course Objectives

- To understand mysticism, its definition, traditional components and lived application
- To acquaint students with biography and hagiography as genres of historical writing
- To provide students with portraits of two influential mystics in the context of the history

of the church: Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena

- To explore how the two mystics understood the Trinity and consequently lived out their relationship to God; specifically, how their spirituality informed their response to the social issues of their time.
- To understand the social issues and their political underpinnings, of 13th and 14th Century Italy
- To understand 21st century social problems and the mindset of individualism and entitlement that perpetuates them.
- To apply the Christian worldview of Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena when examining potential responses to contemporary social problems; specifically, to understand how the approaches taken by these two mystics to the social issues of their time, offer us as ways of responding to parallel issues today .

Course Schedule

Day 1/May 3 Historical Contexts and Understanding Mysticism

Morning Lecture:

- a) Survey of 13th And 14th Century Italian Church and Social History
- b) Introduction of the lives of Francis and Catherine: their conversion experiences, role of scripture, role of the Holy Spirit, and family dynamics/fallout in response to their mystical lifestyle

Morning Seminar Discussion:

- a) Our church family tree – identifying the commonalities and differences between 13th and 14th century social issues and our society now, and is there relevance to this understanding?
- b) Discussion of social consequences of Christian conversion experiences

Afternoon Lecture:

- a) Film: *Catherine of Siena, Reforms from a Mystic*
- b) Introduction to hagiography
- c) Defining mysticism – 3 stages, community versus individuality; relation to institutions/tradition and scripture, etc.

Mystics' Journal: Personal Reflections via a Guided Response to Scripture and Words of the Mystics

Afternoon Seminar Discussion:

- a) Film: *Francis: Subverting the Honor/Shame System*
- b) Comparison of how we tell the stories of key church personalities in our time versus 13th

- and 14th century, discussion of the relevance of the different approach.
- c) Discussion of the place of mystics in our day.

Day 2/May 4 Becoming Poor & the Heart of Jesus

Morning Retreat: Praying with Francis & Catherine

Morning Lecture:

- a) Francis of Assisi: The Social Spirituality of Francis of Assisi: Kissing the Leper - the theology behind Francis' understanding of the humanity of Christ.
- b) Catherine of Siena: Loving God Through Loving Neighbour/Reparation and the Heart of Jesus
- the theology behind Catherine's understanding of the "The Secret of the Heart of Jesus".

Morning Seminar Discussion:

- a) Understanding the mystics' relation to the humanity of Christ (Via Apostolica, images and metaphors used by the mystics – i.e. Francis' knightly commitment to Lady Poverty, Catherine's "Bridge" and mystical marriage, etc.)
- b) Resonance with our personal stories, our responses to social issues given these medieval companions on our own spiritual journey.

Afternoon Lecture:

- a) Guest Lecture: Poverty issues in Calgary and Canada
- b) Christian presence, responses and approaches to poverty today

Mystics' Journal: Personal Reflections via a Guided Response to Scripture and Words of the Mystics

Afternoon Seminar Discussion:

- a) Contributions of Francis and Catherine to western Christian spirituality; relevant applications?
- b) Comparing their personal stories to ours: reflection on relationship with the Trinity and response to the social issues

Day 3/May 5 Unity and Peacemaking

Morning Retreat: Praying with Francis & Catherine

Morning Lecture:

- a) Francis of Assisi: Church-building and the nonviolent way.
- b) Catherine of Siena: Letters to Popes and Kings: “*Stand Up and Be a Man!*” and local peacemaking

Morning Seminar Discussion:

- a) Understanding how the politics of 13th and 14th Century Italy (state and church politics) interfaced with the social responses of Francis and Catherine; specifically, understanding the influence of their identification with the self-giving love of the Trinity and the humanity of Christ (noting the differences between Francis’ and Catherine’s approaches)
- b) Resonance with our personal stories; Christian community responses to social issues involving violence and church disunity. Given these medieval companions on our own spiritual journey, i.e. is there learning we can receive?

Afternoon Lecture:

- a) Guest Lecture: Violence in Calgary and Canada
- b) Christian presence, responses and approaches to violence and church disunity today

Mystics’ Journal: Personal Reflections via a Guided Response to Scripture and Words of the Mystics

Afternoon Seminar Discussion:

- a) Contributions of Francis and Catherine to western Christian spirituality; relevant applications?
- b) Comparing their personal stories to ours: reflection on relationship with the Trinity and response to the social issues.

Day 4/May 6 Motives and Approaches: “Nourished in the Wounds of Christ”

Morning Retreat: Praying with Francis & Catherine

Morning Lecture:

- a) Francis of Assisi: Working outside the institution: respect for the church along the way; role of community; receiving stigmata
- b) Catherine of Siena: dealing with failure and burnout; role of community; receiving stigmata

Morning Seminar Discussion:

- a) Sustained in their ministries: prayer, Eucharist, visions,
- b) Their relationship with their followers: rules and roles.

Afternoon Lecture:

- a) Examining the source of our vision for our own ministries: examining our motives, our need for affirmation from those we serve, places of support, etc. and discussing disappointment, discomfort and failure
- b) Personal rhythms of contemplation and action: prayer, Eucharist, spiritual practices

Mystics' Journal: Personal Reflections via a Guided Response to Scripture and Words of the Mystics

Afternoon Seminar Discussion:

- a) Contributions of Francis and Catherine to western Christian spirituality; relevant applications?
- b) Comparing their personal stories to ours: reflection on relationship with the Trinity and response to the social issues

Day 5/May 7 Legacies of Worth and Dignity

Morning Retreat: Praying with Francis & Catherine

Morning Lecture:

- a) Francis of Assisi: The call to “Rebuild My House” and implications of “Follow Me” versus “Worship Me”) for environmental issues, treatment of marginalized persons, and the materialism which feeds the gap between rich and poor
- b) Catherine of Siena: Dead man walking (engaging the story), and implications of the call to walk on the two feet of love for damaged individuals and institutions

Morning Seminar Discussion:

- a) Contributions of Francis and Catherine to western Christian spirituality; relevant applications?
- b) Comparing their personal stories to ours: reflection on relationship with the Trinity and response to the social issues

Afternoon Lecture: A Themed Examination of the Lives of Francis and Catherine

- a) Identifying common threads in the spirituality and theology of Catherine and Francis (images used re: Christ’s passion, relationship to Christ and understanding of the self-giving love of the Trinity for humanity, etc.)
- b) Identifying common threads in the approach Francis and Catherine took to social issues

Mystics' Journal: Personal Reflections via a Guided Response to Scripture and Words of the Mystics

Afternoon Seminar Discussion:

- a) Brainstorming what these two mystics offer us: what do we learn from them?

- b) The idea that we are all mystics – what does this mean?
* Students will present mock discussions occurring between the two mystics regarding the spirituality and social issues of their lives, and of ours.

Course Requirements and Grading

A. Participation in classes –leading Seminar Discussion

Students will be provided handouts to prepare for introducing the seminar discussion portion of the classes.

B. Reading:

1. Text books:
Due Date: Recommend - the beginning of the course.
2. 300 pages from selected books in the bibliography and handouts of journal articles on social issues. 100 pages each pertaining to Catherine of Siena, Francis of Assisi and social problems survey readings.

Please hand in an outline of the titles and page numbers that you read. Please indicate in half a paragraph how each reading influenced you. This may take the form a letter of insight to fellow Christian companions or an individual involved in addressing a social cause you are concerned with, or a personal response to God (in the spirit of a dialogue or a prayer.)

Due Date: June 7

C. A Critical Reflection Paper on the Three Textbooks

- a. Length: 5 pages per text double spaced plus title page; note for Soelle's text the critical reflection should encompass the introduction, chapters 1, 5, 8-9, and 11-14. See instructor for specific instructions regarding focus of this paper.
- b. Content: The papers will demonstrate:
 - i. An assimilated understanding of the content of the book. (Please do not simply elaborate the Table of Contents. Demonstrate in your summary your own grasp of the heart of the book's intention and impact.)
 - ii. A clear articulation of the spiritual theology themes that inform the context and focus of the text
 - iii. An assessment of the relevance of the text's spirituality for today's social problems, and an appraisal of the value of the text for your life and ministry

Due Date: July 7

D. Research and Integration Project

- a. Length: 15 pages double spaced plus title page and bibliography
- b. Content: the project will include a research aspect focusing on an aspect of the spirituality of either Catherine or Francis which has been studied in this course (3 pages); it will express how the student's relationship with God is affected by this understanding, through a mock letter addressed to the mystic from the student, in the tone of correspondence with a spiritual companion (2 pages).

The second half of this project will reflect how the student might consequently apply a mystical response to a contemporary social issue, an issue over which the student is currently stirred to compassion. Students will accomplish this by identifying the social issue and the related historical background, including but not excluded to how social, political, and economic factors affect the issue, persons and populations affected and to what degree, how the social problem is addressed by contemporary society (solutions proposed by governments and Christian ministries), and the effectiveness of current efforts (5 pages).

Lastly, students will compare and contrast the approaches of contemporary society and those of the mystic studied in this project, by concluding the paper with a mock letter written by the mystic studied, and addressed to either the student or the political/church leader of the student's choice. It should display a critical understanding of the social and spiritual aspects of the issue and contemporary society's response, and should contain what the student perceives the lessons of the mystics to be for our age, as relevant to the issue researched. The tone of the letter should reflect the images and spiritual orientation of the mystic author, and should highlight parallels between the medieval Italian context and the 21st century context of the social issue. The letter should be specific to the way that this particular mystic initiated social transformation, as arising from his/her intense understanding of the self-giving love of the Trinity. (5 pages)

Due date: August 7

Grading:

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| 1. Class Participation – Leading Seminar Discussion | 15 marks |
| 2. Completed Reading | 15 marks |
| 3. Critical Reflection on the Texts | 30 marks |
| 4. Research and Integration Project | 40 marks |

Total: **100 marks**

Grading Schedule

Excellent	Very Good / Good	Satisfactory	Minimal Pass
96-100 A+	82-85 B+	68-71 C+	56-59 D+
91-95 A	75-81 B	63-67 C	50-55 D
86-90 A-	72-74 B-	60-62 C-	
			Failure
			<50 F

Submission of assignments:

No assignments will be received by electronic transmission. Assignments must be submitted to Spring Modules Academic Office, 150 Ambrose Circle SW, Calgary, AB T3H 0L5. The title page of ALL assignments should include the course name and number, the professor's name, the student's name, and ID number. If mailed, assignments must be postmarked by the due date.

Graded assignments will be returned to the Academic Office and will be retained for six months. Students may pick up their assignments at the Academic office.

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.

Although extensions to coursework within the spring/summer semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last due date listed on the syllabus unless they have received permission for a "Course Extension" from the Registrar's Office. Requests for course extensions must be submitted to the Registrar's Office two weeks prior to the course due date <http://www.ambrose.edu/publications/academiccalendar>). Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control.

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar and the Student Handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean.

Students are advised to retain this syllabus for their records.

Registration and payment in full is open up to the morning of the first day of class.

Students may drop this class and receive a full refund only prior to the second class session (i.e., before 1 pm on Tuesday, on the first day of class). No tuition refund will be issued after this deadline.

Students may voluntarily withdraw or change their registration from credit to audit, without academic penalty, only prior to completing 70% of the course (i.e., before 1pm on Friday, or the fourth day of class). Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. 'W' grades are not included in grade point average calculations. A limit on the number of courses from which a student is permitted to withdraw may be imposed. Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw

from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

All registration changes must be made through the Registrar's Office by completing a Registration Revision Form. Forms are available in the Registrar's Office or on the website at www.ambrose.edu/registrar.

Notification of grades will be mailed to all students shortly after they are received from the instructor.

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person's ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from Ambrose. Students are expected to be familiar with the policy statements in the current academic calendar and the student handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student's permanent record.

DISCLAIMER

The instructor reserves the right to change all or part of this syllabus as he seeks to adjust to advances in the field, the particular dynamics of the class, or whatever is in the best interest of students.