CBMN 350: Suffering, Solidarity, and God
(Ateneo Course Th199: Contemporary Topics in Theology)
Spring 2017, Tuesday 1:30-4:30pm ISO Room 107

The English “others” is actually used in opposition to the “self;” and implies the recognition of the self as a separate entity. In contrast kapwa is a recognition of a shared identity, an inner self shared with others. -- Virgilio Enriquez

It is necessary to educate ourselves to endure the unexpected. But it is a terrible thing not to be able to expect. Thus it is necessary to keep together, in one struggling act of the imagination, the expected and the unexpected. – William Lynch

There are many types and kinds of call, but the core of the experience is always the same: your soul is awakened, transformed, or exalted, so that instead of dreams and presentiments from within, a summons comes from without—a portion of reality presents itself and makes a claim. – Hermann Hesse

Seminar Description

How ought we to live in a world marked by suffering and injustice? Where might we find hope in a world that breaks our heart? How does the religious imagination of the people whom we will accompany this semester approach these issues, especially when faced with pain, violence, and disappointment? This course will begin to address these questions by exploring how people try to find meaning in a world filled with both injustice and a sense of the transcendent. Using a variety of sources including philosophical and theological essays, film, and literature, we will examine how one critically engages experiences of interconnection, solidarity, and suffering, and uses such experiences to discern one’s vocation and calling.

The seminar presupposes that students are actively engaged in their praxis communities 14 hours each week, and it seeks to integrate this experience with rigorous philosophical and theological reflection. A central aim of the seminar is to give students the ability to reflect philosophically, theologically, and spiritually on their experience accompanying communities living on the margins of Filipino society, and through this reflection to deepen their understanding of how they might find meaning in life and respond to the call to work for social justice and the common good. A special emphasis will be placed on the Catholic theological tradition since over 80% of the Philippine people identify as Roman Catholic; however, the seminar is designed for students of all backgrounds and faith traditions, and aims to help them bring their own beliefs and perspectives into conversation with the predominantly Christian context they will be encountering in their praxis communities.
Learning Outcomes

The seminar will use a variety of philosophical and theological texts to help students articulate and analyze the central issues that arise in their praxis communities. Through in-class discussions, weekly essays, personal journals, and a final synthesis project, the students will achieve the following learning outcomes:

• Demonstrate an ability to reflect philosophically, theologically, and spiritually on their experience accompanying communities living on the margins of Filipino society, and through this reflection to deepen their understanding of how they might find meaning in life and respond to the call to work for social justice and the common good.
• Be able to articulate coherently central philosophical and theological issues, such as the problem of evil, the existence of God, theories of social justice, and the nature of the self and its relationship to community.
• Demonstrate an ability to identify, analyze, and critique the main arguments found in the writings of philosophers and theologians, both Western and Filipino.
• Identify the diversity of faith that is found in US and Filipino cultures, and appreciate how these varied spiritual and religious approaches can influence the ways one responds to suffering and injustice.
• Demonstrate an ability to apply philosophical and theological theories to their experience accompanying Filipinos living in poverty, and use this analysis to deepen their appreciation of how scholarly reflection and community engagement mutually support one another.

Required Texts

Course Reader (to be passed out)  F. Sionil Jose, Mass  John L’Heureux, The Shrine at Altamira

Course Outline

Please note: Readings will be distributed as the semester progresses. The conversations in this class emerge both from the praxis encounters and the texts we read. Thus, we may need to adjust or replace some readings as the semester progresses.

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topics and Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) 24 Jan</td>
<td>Engaging Questions</td>
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<td>(3) 31 Jan</td>
<td>Opening to the Complexity</td>
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<td>John Caputo, “Love of God” (from On Religion)</td>
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<td>(4) 7 Feb</td>
<td>How is faith lived by Filipinos on the margins? How Might Faith Help One Engage Reality?</td>
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<td>Pierre Charentenay, S.J., The Philippines: An Asiatic and Catholic Archipelago (94-99)</td>
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<td>Salvador T. Martinez, Jesus Christ in Popular Piety in the Philippines</td>
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<td>Albert Alejo, S.J. Popular Spirituality as Cultural Energy</td>
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Gabriel Marcel, “The Ontological Mystery” |
| 21 Feb     | How Does Community Call us Forth?                                      | Martin Buber, I and Thou, Parts I and II (esp. 3-17, 31-34, 51-54, 59-61)  
Gerald May, “Willingness and Willfulness” (esp. 1-7) |
| 28 Feb     | How Do We Discern Where “Reality” is Leading? (Submit Mid-Semester Paper & Journals) | Dean Brackley, The Call to Discernment, (45-54, 78-89, 133-142)  
Joan Mueller, Faithful Listening (102-107, 113-125) |
| 7 Mar      | What Sources of Inspiration Draw Us Out of Ourselves?                  | F. Sionil Jose, Mass (1-134)                                             |
| 14 Mar     | What Gives Us the Strength to Sacrifice for Others?                    | F. Sionil Jose, Mass (135-256)                                             
Reynaldo Ileto, Pasyon and Revolution, “Light and Brotherhood” |
| 21 Mar     | Vacation Break                                                        |                                                                           |
Karl Rahner, “The Experience of Grace” (196-199) |
| 4 Apr      | How Do We Reinvest in a World that Breaks Our Hearts?                  | Book of Job (NRSV)                                                        
Gustavo Gutierrez, On Job (esp. 67-104)  
Susan Neiman, Evil in Modern Thought (314-328) |
| 11 Apr     | Can We Trust the Finite to Go Somewhere?                              | William Lynch, “The Definite” (3-18)                                      |
| 18 Apr     | When Does Suffering Lead to Life?                                     | Jerome, Miller, The Way of Suffering, (42-72)                             
Tobias Wolff, “In the Garden of the North American Martyrs” |
| 25 Apr     | How Do Others Help Us Find Freedom and Hope?                           | Gabriel Marcel, “Sketch & Phenomenology of a Metaphysic of Hope”           |
| 2 May      | Evil and Salvation: “from what, the pilgrims wondered, had she been saved?” (Final Portfolio due this week) | John L’Heureux, The Shrine at Altamira                                     |
| 9 May      | Closing Reflections: Where Do We Go From Here?                         | Frederick Buechner, “The Calling of Voices”                                
Stuart A. Schlegel, Wisdom from a Rainforest (225-256) |
Course Requirements

A. **Class Participation:** Active and consistent participation is expected of all students for all class discussions. Active participation requires students to contribute their own thoughtful reflections, to listen attentively and respectfully to the views of others, and to share in the communal journey towards deeper reflection and awareness. Students must read, watch the films, and (most importantly) reflect on how they might relate to their praxis site, **BEFORE** the date they are scheduled for class discussion. Come to class with questions, reflections and examples from your own experience. Films will be scheduled for communal viewing, and are available.

B. **Weekly Essays:** Class discussions can be less than productive if they are not structured, and the participants are not prepared. To facilitate a fruitful discussion of the texts, each week students will prepare a brief reflection on the readings and bring it with them to class. Since the purpose of these papers is to facilitate discussion in the seminar, **LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

   **Guidelines:** Identify one theme in the reading that you want to explore (guide questions will sometimes be given). Start with a thesis statement separate from the essay with a line space before and after.

   **Header:** Name, Date, Essay # (use week # above) Maximum length: **one single-spaced typed page**

   **Format:** 1” margins all sides, Times New Roman 12 pt, Paragraphs: single-spaced, indent first line of paragraph 0.5”, no space between paragraphs. Use either English or Filipino. **Submission:** Before 6pm Sunday night to be submitted digitally to the community coordinator.

C. **Mid-Semester Paper:** Students will submit a 3-5 page essay prior to the mid-semester break. The paper will provide a chance for students to begin to reflect philosophically and theologically upon their praxis experiences and the course readings, and enable the student to synthesize their learning thus far.

D. **Consultations and Journals:** You are asked to keep a weekly journal to help you connect your praxis experience with course discussions. The journal will consist of weekly entries based on class conversations and your work with the community. At times, a prompt will be given to guide your journal reflections. You should plan to write your reflections **SOON AFTER** each class, and I will ask you to type your journals for submission

   **Consultations:** Each student will schedule two (2) consultations during the semester. These will provide space for discussing the specific experiences with the praxis and Casa communities, as well as how the course is proceeding in relation to the student’s experience. This will also allow for greater contributions by individuals who are not comfortable sharing specific experiences in the classroom setting.

E. **Praxis Integration Portfolio:** The final submission will be a portfolio that builds upon the weekly essays, journal entries, and mid-semester paper and provides students an opportunity to reflect more deeply upon their experiences. Students should meet individually with the professor to develop this assignment. It may build upon the work in other Casa classes. Outside research may be necessary depending upon the topic chosen, but this is not required in all cases. You will need to re-submit all your journals and graded weekly essays with the portfolio, so be sure to save all your submitted work, and be sure to type up your journals as you go through the semester.
Grading

Class Participation 15%
Weekly Essays 25%  Final Paper and Portfolio 25%
Mid-Semester Paper 20%  Journals and Consultations 15%

Following the University of San Francisco’s grading policy, final grades will be reported as follows:
A – Outstanding; B – Superior; C – Satisfactory; D - Lowest Passing; F - Failing (course not counted toward degree requirement). The grades A, B, C, and D may be modified by plus (+) or minus (–). A grade will also be submitted to the Ateneo registrar, and, owing to differences in grading scales, it may differ from the grade submitted to USF. For Ateneo, A=4.0, B+=3.5, B=3.0, C+=2.5, C=2.0, D=1.0, F=0.0.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is at the heart of any learning experience and expected of students both at the Ateneo de Manila University and the University of San Francisco. Students are encouraged to consult with one another, but, in keeping with USF’s Academic Honor code, students are expected to “demonstrate the core values of the University of San Francisco by upholding the standards of honesty and integrity, excellence in their academic work, and respect for others in their educational experiences.” Academic dishonesty in any form with not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to USF’s Academic Honor Code. A complete discussion of the Honor Code may be found at www.usfca.edu/catalog/policies/honor/ Details on the Ateneo de Manila University code of academic integrity may be found at http://ateneo.edu/ls/quick-links-services/student-guide-code-academic-integrity Given that this course is inter-institutional, but primarily a USF course, priority will be given to the expectations of the USF honor code.