

THEO 186.003

Fall Semester 2017

Tu/Th 2:30-3:45pm
Corboy Law Center 711

Theology Department
Loyola University Chicago

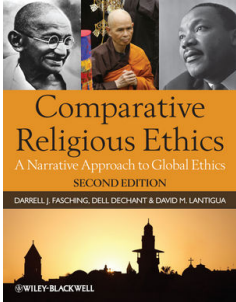
Dr. James S. Mastaler
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Office Hours (Tu) 1-2:30pm
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Global Religious Ethics

James S. Mastaler, PhD



Required Text

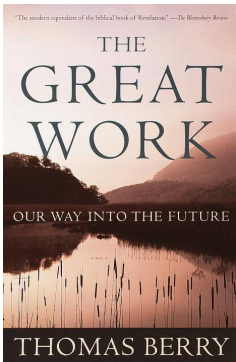


Comparative Religious Ethics: A Narrative Approach to Global Ethics 2nd Edition
Fasching, Dechant, & Lantigua
Wiley-Blackwell 2011

Course Description

This course explores the diversity of religious narratives and sacred stories people and religious communities use to make sense of their world and guide moral action. We will examine central theological themes, ethical precepts, major sources and methods for moral discernment inherent to the Christian traditions, as well as Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, and Hindu traditions. We will observe similarities and differences among these traditions but from within the particular and pressing context of today's ecological crisis. We will investigate basic assumptions about what it means to be human, assumptions about what people of various faiths and no faiths imagine God is or is not, as well as ideas about how some of these communities believe we ought to live in relation to each other and the natural world around us. We will examine especially how these faith communities and their traditions help people to make sense of the world today, given the new and often disorienting challenges of problems such as climate change, species extinction, and general environmental degradation. Through the extensive use of film, primary and secondary readings, as well as individual and group research, students will formulate and articulate how various religious stories can help or hinder religious communities in taking responsible moral action on the part of social justice and planetary flourishing.

Recommended



The Great Work: Our Way into the Future
Fr. Thomas Berry
Three Rivers Press
1999



I welcome the opportunity to meet you and talk with you outside of class time.

You may see me without an appointment during my office hours or you may arrange an appointment by seeing me before or after class or by contacting me via e-mail.

Attendance and Participation Policy

One of the most important aspects of this course is your critical engagement with the lectures, primary and secondary readings, and films, as well as the conversations you have with your peers inside the classroom.

It is especially important to attend class and to come prepared to participate actively in the class.

Your regular attendance, readiness for class, and active participation is expected.

Absences for University business such as academic trips and athletic travel, religious observances, or significant illnesses ought not to count against the student's successful completion of course requirements provided you inform the instructor beforehand and offer proper documentation (like a physician or athletic department notification).

Late Assignments & Incomplete Work

Assignments are due in class at the beginning of the session noted and always in paper copy.

Students who miss a class session for any reason are responsible for

all assignments and material covered during class.

Missed exams and presentations typically cannot be made up unless pre-arranged with the instructor in cases of University sanctioned absences for official university business.

Late submission of assignments (including all electronic submissions emailed to the instructor in lieu of paper copies submitted in class) will lose 10% for each day they are late and will not be accepted after one week from the original due date, at which time a grade of "0" will be recorded.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible.

Also, contact Services for Students with Disabilities (in the Sullivan Center at Lake Shore Campus, Maguire at Water Tower, or via email at sswd@luc.edu) as soon as possible to arrange appropriate accommodations.



Intentional.
Free.
Open.
Honest.
Intellectual.

We create this space
together.

Expectations on Classroom Decorum

The goal of our time together in this course is for each of us to seek a greater understanding of each other and the material under investigation.

While this requires individual effort, it also requires the collaboration and cooperation of your classmates and colleagues.

It is each person's responsibility to create the intentional, free, open, and honest intellectual space necessary in this pursuit.

We each deserve to feel comfortable expressing our thoughts and we owe it to each other to express them with increasing clarity, greater understanding, and respect for new or different perspectives. We also deserve to have our pre-existing ideas about the world rigorously though constructively challenged.

Every individual shares this responsibility with every other individual, including your instructor.

No particular ideological, religious or moral viewpoint is expected from you—only a willingness to engage each other and this course's content honestly, critically and constructively.

Learning Outcomes

By taking this course, students will have gained skills and understanding in these distinct areas:

- Use of moral deliberation to clarify and develop one's critical thinking on environmental problems
- Nuanced moral argumentation on environmental issues
- Attentive listening to the viewpoints and experiences of others
- Appreciation of the complexities of religious stories and the environment
- Introductory awareness of various theological responses to environmental issues

Policy on Intellectual Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is regarded as a serious violation of honesty and a grade of "0" will be recorded for any assignments found plagiarized.

Please review the official University policy on standards and consequences:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academic_integrity.shtml

Lectures, films, small and large group discussions, interactive participatory learning, essays, and exams all constitute this course's learning formats and evaluation techniques.

Your full engagement is essential to the overall success of this course

Course Evaluation

Accountability in Learning

Research Essay (15 points) A 3-4 page essay on a topic you will choose at the beginning of the semester, in tandem with your collaborative assignment and in consultation with your instructor. It is to be relevant to a theme, thinker, or text from the religion associated with your collaborative panel.

Collaborative Panel & Handout (10 points) Individuals give a 5-minute presentation with a 1 page summary handout. Working alongside a team of colleagues, students present their independent research as part of a panel and in a way that is creative and engaging. Handouts shall be posted on Sakai 1-week prior to your presentation or printed copies distributed in class.

Exams 1 & 2 (25 points each)


Two exams will assess your fundamental knowledge of course material covered in lectures, class discussions, films, and assigned readings.

Final Integrative Essay (15 points)

A 3-4 page essay on a secondary religious tradition explored in the course (different from that of your first essay). The essay should engage a tradition in the same manor as the first essay, but this one should also include a demonstrable integration with the topics explored in the last few weeks of the course. It is due during the FINAL EXAM period at 4:15pm on Saturday 16 December.

Religion in the News (5 points) Share and summarize in 3-5 minutes a news article germane to the course.

Participation (5 points) For regular participation in, and meaningful contributions to,



Scale: A (94.0-100), A- (90.0-93.9), B+ (87.0-89.9), B (83.0-86.9), B- (80.0-82.9), C+ (77.0-79.9), C (73.0-76.9), C- (70.0-72.9), D+ (67.0-69.9), D (60.0-66.9), F (0-59.9)

Each class dynamic is unique. This course plan is intended to guide our time together over the semester. It is subject to modification as may be necessary, in order to adjust to the rhythm and particular needs of the group.

Course Plan Reading Schedule & Rubrics Available Online

29 August	Course Introduction	31 August	Views on God and Religion—Resources
05 September	Religion, Ethics, and Storytelling	07 September	<i>Faces of the Enemy</i>
12 September	The Socratic Religious Experience	14 September	<i>Trial of Socrates</i>
19 September	EXAM 1	21 September	Reading "Check-in" ch. 1-7
26 September	Hindu Stories—Ancient and Postmodern	28 September	<i>Bhagavad Gita</i> workshop & discussion
03 October	Hindu Perspectives; panels/essays	05 October	<i>Groundhog Day</i>
10 October	No Class—Fall Break	12 October	Finish film and discussion
17 October	Buddhist Stories—Ancient and Postmodern	19 October	Buddhist Perspectives; panels/essays
24 October	Jewish, Christian, & Islamic Stories	26 October	Sacred texts workshop & discussion
31 October	Jewish, Christian Perspectives; panels/essays	02 November	Christian, Islamic Persp.; panels/essays
07 November	EXAM 2	09 November	Reading "Check-in" ch. 8-13
14 November	Eco-Feminisms and Interdependence	16 November	Eco-Feminisms; panels/essays
21 November	Eco-Justice and Environmental Racism	23 November	No Class—Thanksgiving Holiday
28 November	Eco-Justice; panels/essays	30 November	Reading "Check-in" ch. 14-17
05 December	<i>Journey of the Universe</i>	07 December	Finish film and discussion