

The University of Calgary
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Religious Studies

January 7, 2008

Religious Studies 417.03 Recent Religious Thought: Post-Holocaust Theologies

Winter 2008 W 12:00 - 2:30 in SS 1332
Consultations TBA in SS 1301

Instructor: Dr. Virginia Tumasz
Office: SS 1301
Office Hours: M 10:00 - 11:00 or by appointment
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Required readings:

Elie Wiesel *Night*
Melissa Raphael *The Female Face of God at Auschwitz*
Course Reader Available at *Bound and Copied*, Students' Union Copy Centre

Course description:

This course is a seminar for the study of theological developments in response to the Holocaust, especially in Judaism but also in Christianity. We will read excerpts from texts that have become classics in the field, written by Richard Rubenstein, Emil Fackenheim, and Eliezer Berkovits, and follow up with a detailed study of a more recent book by Melissa Raphael. Raphael presents a critical analysis of the classical works while developing her own feminist theology of the Holocaust. In addition to this overview of Jewish theological responses, we will briefly examine some of the issues raised in Christian theological circles by considering the pioneering work of Rosemary Radford Ruether in *Faith and Fratricide*.

Course procedure:

The entire class will meet as a seminar on Wednesday afternoons. Each week, beginning with the third week of class, one student will have primary responsibility for providing pertinent background material, presenting the assigned reading, and leading the class in discussion. That person will meet with me on the preceding Friday or Monday to prepare for the session by discussing the content of the reading and talking about effective strategies for presentation and especially for generating and leading discussion.

Please note that all members of the seminar are expected to be active participants in discussion at all class meetings. The success of the seminar depends on all members preparing for and attending each meeting.

Course requirements:

➤ 10% for level and quality of participation throughout the term

A successful seminar requires the preparation and participation of all of its members. You are expected to prepare for each class by reading the assigned text and reflecting on

it so that you arrive at class ready for discussion. This portion of your grade will be determined by your willingness to contribute to discussion throughout the term, as well as the nature and quality of your contributions and the respect that you show to other members of the seminar in discussion.

- 15% for five written responses to assigned texts
 - You are required to write five short response papers, each about two pages in length. Each paper is worth 3% for a total of 15%. These responses will be marked Pass/Fail. The Pass will be counted as an 'A' in the calculation of your final grade and the Fail will be counted as an 'F.'
 - You can complete this requirement for any five weeks starting with the third week, excluding the session for which you have primary responsibility.
 - Written responses should consist of critical reflections on the text, including questions that the assigned text raises for you. They should not summarize the text.
 - Responses must be handed in at the beginning of class. In no case will a paper be accepted at a later time as this would defeat the purpose of the assignment, which is preparation for class discussion. Neither will the paper be accepted if you cannot stay for class on that day, for the same reason.
- 35% for seminar presentation and direction of discussion
 - The student responsible for Wednesday's seminar will make arrangements to meet with me earlier in the same week or at the end of the preceding week to discuss the material and to develop presentation and discussion strategies.
 - You are required to prepare a handout for distribution to the class to facilitate your presentation. Please bring a draft of the handout to your consultation with me.
 - You are required to submit a self-assessment of your presentation of about one page in length. The self-assessment should be emailed to me before noon of the Monday following your presentation. Please insert your text into the body of the message, i. e., do not send as an attachment. Failure to complete this requirement will result in a penalty of one full letter-grade (e.g., a drop from a B to a C) on the presentation.
 - Your grade will reflect an assessment of your preparation, your handout, your presentation, and your self-assessment.
- 40% for research essay, due April 21
 - In an essay of 10-12 pages (3000 – 3600 words) you should address a topic relevant to the course content. You must get approval from me of the topic of your research; the final paper will not be accepted unless you have done so. Please email me a statement of your research topic, along with your research question and tentative bibliography, by March 5.
 - You will be asked to give a brief account of your research at one of the last two meetings of the term. A penalty of one full letter grade will be imposed if you fail to meet this requirement or if it is obvious that you have failed to prepare for the presentation. In addition to presenting your research findings, this is an opportunity to explore unsettled questions and to gain advice that can be helpful in the final drafting of the essay.
 - In grading the essay, I will take into account the sophistication of your research and analysis, your writing style, and the selection, use, and documentation of sources. Your

essay must center on a thesis and develop an argument. Your essay should have a bibliography of no less than 5 sources and you must include recent articles from academic journals. Please use the MLA style of documentation.

Grading:

A letter grade will be assigned to each component of the course (with the above-noted exception of the weekly written responses) according to the University’s “Undergraduate Grading System,” which appears in the University Calendar:

A+	4.00	Outstanding.
A	4.00	Excellent-superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
A-	3.70	
B+	3.30	
B	3.00	Good - clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.
B-	2.70	
C+	2.30	
C	2.00	Satisfactory - basic understanding of the subject matter.
C-	1.70	
D+	1.30	
D	1.00	
F	0	Fail - unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.

N.B. All written assignments will be graded with regard to both form and content.

Core competencies:

Some of the skills that students can expect to develop in completing the work for this course include:

- careful reading of texts
- critical analysis
- organization of material for presentation
- effective direction of discussion
- oral presentation
- written communication
- independent research

Academic Integrity:

Students should familiarize themselves with University policy regarding "Intellectual Honesty" and "Integrity in Scholarly Activity."