



ELECT-M702 Social Justice Mysticism Fall, 2020

1. Course Information

- Dates for the Class
 - 14 weeks, online (synchronous and asynchronous). Synchronous meetings are **Tuesday**, 7:30-8:30.
- No prerequisite
- Platform is Populi

2. Instructor(s) Information

- Dr. Robert Saler
- rsaler@cts.edu
- Can be reached most easily by cell phone at 773-909-4984

3. Course Description

Uses three historical examples of socially engaged spirituality in the 20th century: Catholic Worker founder Dorothy Day, French philosopher Simone Weil, and the Eastern Orthodox saint Maria of Paris. All three of these women were deeply formed by prayer and mystical experience, and all three took on power structures of their day (two to their own deaths in World War 2). This course will examine key aspects of their lives and writings with an eye towards answering the following question: how does a life of deep prayer form courage for activism and helping the poor? How does Christian charity manifest itself at both individual and systematic levels? We will be particularly attentive to how these questions shape our own contemporary discernment for the lives of prayer, ministry, and social justice to which God calls us and the church.

4. Student Learning Outcomes

M.Div. Student Learning Outcomes

1. Formulate a clear, compelling, and critical vision of Christian faith that draws on critical perspectives on the Bible, Christian tradition, theology, culture, and other appropriate resources;

2. Demonstrate best practices of leadership that are appropriate to the specific context of the leader's ministry, interpreting how God is present and moving toward transformation, and how Christian communities and other communities can join God in that movement; and
3. Articulate a personal spiritual and theological identity consistent with the leader's theological vision and demonstrated in behaviors indicating the capacity to sustain the leader through different (and sometimes difficult) seasons of leadership.

MTS Student Learning Outcomes

1. Make critical theological judgments and use quality research and compelling support regarding texts, ideas, figures, and/or other phenomena encountered in the MTS program, in papers and/or other forms of expression that demonstrate analysis and reasoned conclusions;
2. Differentiate, describe, and evaluate basic theological schemes with special attention to the ways that different perspectives view authority, scripture, and tradition, experience, and theological claims in and about the contemporary world;
3. Listen actively and insightfully to all theological perspectives;
4. Demonstrate implications of theological/religious thinking and practices; and,
5. Develop a passion to formulate creative ideas/expressions in compelling ways, and cultivate theological curiosity throughout their lives.

5. Course Materials and Texts :

Note: the following titles may be purchased in any edition.

Weil, Simone. *Awaiting God: A new translation of Attente de Dieu and Lettre a un Religieux*
ISBN: 9781927512036
Price: \$15.95

Thurman, Howard. *Howard Thurman: Essential Writings* (Modern Spiritual Masters Series)
ISBN: 1570756708
Price: \$15.54

Skobtsova, Maria. *Mother Maria Skobtsova: Essential Writings* (Modern Spiritual Masters)
ISBN: 9781570754364
Price: \$13.99

Weil, Simone. *Simone Weil: Selected Writings* (Modern Spiritual Masters)
ISBN: 1570752044
Price: \$15.92

Day, Dorothy. *The Long Loneliness: The Autobiography of the Legendary Catholic Social Activist by Dorothy Day*
ASIN: B01N3MERSK
Price: \$10.22

Soelle, Dorothee. *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance*.
ISBN: 9780800632663
Price: \$25.99

6. Course Assignments/Requirements

1. Assignment 1 - Online Discussions - 20% of grade

- a. Every week a short lecture about the readings will be posted as a link on Populi under the "Discussions" tab for the course. Each week you are required to make three total posts on each thread, responding BOTH to the original post/lecture by the instructor AND to posts from your colleagues. This interaction is crucial to the success of the course. You should aim for both quantity of posts (no fewer than three per week) and quality. The three posts for the week are due by midnight on Sunday of each week, although the original post must be made by Thursday of a given week.

NOTE: on some weeks the discussion board postings may be replaced by brief essays. These will count as "discussion" pieces even if they are sent directly to the professor and not posted on the board.

- b. Learning Outcomes: M.Div. 2 and 3, MTS 1.
- c. Due Date: Throughout the time of the course

2. Assignment 2 - Midterm - 40% of grade

- a. Description: Students will complete a take-home essay test with an opportunity to write essays on multiple themes from the readings and course discussions. All readings and notes may be used.
- b. Learning Outcomes: M.Div. 1 and 3, MTS 1 and 3
- c. Due Date: 11/22 by 11:59 PM

3. Assignment 3 - Letter to a Colleague - 40% of grade

- a. Description: Students will write a substantive letter to a colleague utilizing readings and themes from the class. All readings and notes may be used.
- b. Learning Outcome: M.Div. 1 and 3, MTS 1 and 3
- c. Due Date: 12/14 by 11:59 PM.

Guidelines for Estimating Student Workload

In view of the Federal definition of a credit hour, as well as USDE and ATS flexibility as to how in-class and out-of-class time is allocated within an overall framework consistent with that definition, each CTS credit hour is constituted by approximately 45 hours total of student work. This means a three-credit-hour course at CTS will include approximately 135 hours of student work, allocated across the following four categories:

- (1) **Direct Instruction.** I.e., face-to-face time with the instructor “in class,” whether in a classroom on the CTS campus, visiting a congregation or clinic, etc.
- (2) **Research/Study.** I.e., reading texts, watching films, exploring online resources, attending worship services or other events, engaging with art or artefacts, interviewing, flash card work, etc.
- (3) **Writing/Creation.** I.e., writing papers, creating projects, preparing presentations, group project planning, etc.
- (4) **Practice.** I.e., engaging in spiritual practices, immersive practical experiences, etc.

Each course syllabus should include information specifying the number of hours expected in each of these categories, such that the total number of expected hours for each three-credit-hour course is approximately 135.

General guidelines as to workload expectations with regard to reading and writing:

- **Reading:** For relatively dense reading, assume as few as 10-15 pages/hour; for relatively accessible reading, assume as much as 20-25 pages/hour.
- **Writing:** Assume about 2-3 hours per page for essays.

(Adopted by the Christian Theological Seminary Faculty at the May 13, 2016 Meeting)

Distribution of Course Workload

Assignment	Estimated Time (in hours)	Due Dates	Grade Percentage
Class Discussion Time	30 30	Comments due by Sunday evening of each week	20
Reading:	73		
Tests: Test Final Paper	12 20 32		40 40
Total	135		100

7. Course Schedule

- Instructor’s Course Pedagogy and Norms
Online conversation allows for careful crafting of comments; however, it can also lead to a lack of visual cues and diminished sensitivity for others. The way to navigate this is to watch carefully for signs that one’s comments are constructive rather than dismissive. The instructor will step in to facilitate this as necessary.
- As instructor, Dr. Saler is committed to a high degree of connectivity through both discussion boards and email. If you need to discuss anything with him, please do not hesitate to reach out.
- Detailed Course Schedule:

Each week’s course material assignments, readings, discussion prompts, etc. are available in Populi under the “Lessons” tab on the right hand side of the screen. Lessons for the week will be made available at 12 AM on the Monday of each week.

8. American Disabilities Act

If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, you must register with the Office of Student Disabilities and Accommodations. Contact Karen Kelm, SDA Coordinator in the SDA Office, at 317/931-2330 or email kkelm@cts.edu. Students are required to provide documentation of disability to SDA Office prior to receiving accommodations.

9. Optional Supplemental Material

Occasionally, articles and resources will be posted to the Populi webpage for this course that are germane to the themes of the course but not required.