Theology 60893: Teaching Theology
Summer 2017 – M.A. Program
July 10th- July 28th
M-F, 8:30-11:00am/320 Malloy

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This course will provide an introduction to pedagogy for theological educators. The primary focus of the course will be on a) the vocation of teaching theology and b) basic pedagogical principles for the theology classroom. Students will engage educational and sociological research relevant to teaching high school and learn pedagogical techniques which build upon this research. Much of the class will be spent working through how to teach key doctrinal moments in the U.S. Catholic Bishops' High School Curriculum Framework in a pedagogically effective manner.

Course Goals

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1) Articulate a vision of theological education in terms of:
    a. The nature of theology as a discipline
    b. The vocation of a theological educator
    c. Sociological research into high school students today.
2) Describe and employ basic principles of course design, including the ability to:
    a. Articulate a clear vision for a high school theology course
    b. Develop a basic plan for assessing student learning
    c. Develop well-structured and sensible unit and lesson plans
3) Engage and apply key findings from research into student learning
4) Thoughtfully reflect upon the dynamics of the classroom

Course Requirements

Class Participation (20%)

Much of this course will be run on the mode of discussion and thus regular participation is required. Students are expected to come to class a) on time, b) having read and engaged the course material, and c) ready to thoughtfully discuss the material in class. In-class teaching opportunities are included under participation.

Short Papers (20%)

Throughout the course there are small reflections or drafts of teaching materials due. Details on each of these will be given in class or through Sakai.

Major Papers (60%)

There will be two major "papers" for the course. The following is the requirement for all of those preparing to teaching in the fall. Others in the course are encouraged to follow the same structure, but adjustments are possible in consultation with the professor.

"Paper" 1: At the end of the second week, students will turn in a basic plan for teaching a particular high school theology course. This will include a complete course plan, a completed unit plan for

every unit of the course, two "ready-to-teach" lesson plans, and a reflection on pedagogical principles.

"Paper" 2: The final assignment is due on the last day of class. This paper will be a "portfolio" for a particular high school theology course, including overall course goals, basic unit plans, one completely planned unit of the course, and a brief reflection on pedagogical principles.

Course Policies

Attendance is required. Students may miss one class without penalty. Each additional absence will result in the reduction of the student's grade by one letter grade.

Laptops and tablets are permitted, but should only be used for activities related to the class.

The Notre Dame Academic Code of Honor Pledge is observed in this course. "As a member of the Notre Dame community, I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty." Any plagiarism on written assignments will result in an F for the assignment and possibly an F for the course. A description of plagiarism can be found in the *Academic Code of Honor* section IV.B.

If you have a documented disability that will require accommodation in this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services (http://disabilityservices.nd.edu/, 574-631-7157) for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs. I am eager to accommodate your needs but I will be unable to do so without communication from Disability Services.

Course Texts

Required

James L. Heft, S.M., *Catholic High Schools: Facing New Realities* (Oxford, 2011; ISBN: 0199796653)

Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church* (Oxford, 2010; ISBN: 0195314840)

Daniel T. Willingham, *Why Don't Students Like School? A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How the Mind Works and What It Means for the Classroom* (Jossey-Bass, 2010; ISBN: 047059196X)

Jared Dees, *31 Days to Becoming a Better Religious Educator* (Ave Maria, 2013; 1594713847)

Recommended

David A. Sousa, *How the Brain Learns*, 5h ed. (Corwin, 2016; ISBN: 1506346308 [3rd and 4th edition are fine too])

Sherry Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples: The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus* (Our Sunday Visitor, 2012: ISBN: 9781612785905)

COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

Week 1: Teaching Theology

Class 1: Introduction to the Course **M, July 10**

Read: Heft, 37-60
Read: Christian Smith, "On 'Moralistic Therapeutic Deism' as U.S. Teenagers' Actual, Tacit, De Facto Religious Faith," 1-12 **(Sakai)**
Read: Sherry Weddell, "God Has no Grandchildren," in *Forming Intentional Disciples*, 15-47
Recommended: Heft, 3-36

Class 2: A Vision for Catholic Education (I) **T, July 11**

Note: see the reading guide at the end of the syllabus for distinguishing required and recommended reading for days 2-3
Read: Heft, 61-89, 143-192, 209-219
Review: Sherry Weddell, "God Has no Grandchildren," in *Forming Intentional Disciples*, 15-47
Due: Choose one high school religion/theology course as your touchstone for the class

Class 3: A Vision for Catholic Education (II) **W, July 12**

Read: Dean, 1-106
Due: Draft of a Philosophy of Religious Education

Class 4: Course Planning 101 **Th, July 13**

Skim and bring to class: Materials related to the course you have chosen to develop in the class
Bring to class: Sousa, *How the Brain Learns*, 249-257 **(Sakai)**
Recommended: Wiggins and McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 1-37 (selections) **(Sakai)**

Class 5: Assessments and Unit Planning 101 **F, July 14**

Due: Draft of overall course plan

Week 2: Research on How Students Learn and Integrating It into Our Teaching

Class 6: Lesson Planning 101: How to Structure Class Time **M, July 17**

Bring to Class: Sousa, 88-95, 121-124 **(Sakai)**
Due: Draft of course units

Class 7: Student Learning and Thinking **T, July 18**

Read: Willingham, 53-86
Read: Dees, *31 Days to Becoming a Better Religious Educator,* 103-114
Due: Draft of lesson plan 1

Class 8: Student Learning and Thinking II **W, July 19**

Read: Willingham, 1-52

Class 9: Homework and Practicing Skills **TH, July 20**

Read: Willingham, 107-126
Read: Marzano, *Classroom Instruction that Works*, 60-66, 96-102 **(Sakai)**
Recommended: Sousa, 86-88, 118-120, 125-126 **(Sakai)**

Class 10: Student Learning as Novices **F, July 21**

Read: Willingham, 87-106, 127-145
Read: *Made to Stick*, 242-246 **(Sakai)**
Due: Paper 1

Week 3: Further Matters in Teaching **M, July 24**

Class 11: Student Learning and Student Intelligence

Read: Willingham, 146-188

Class 12: Reviewing Assessments **T, July 25**

Due: Draft of quiz and exam questions

Class 13: Classroom Management **W, July 26**

Read: Dees, *31 Days to Becoming a Better Religious Educator,* 71-90
Read: Selections from Cabrini and Bosco **(Sakai)**
Recommended: Marzano, "Classroom Management," in *What Works in Schools*, 88-105 **(Sakai)**
Due: Draft of classroom management vision and principles

Class 14: Managing One's Time and Surviving Year One **Th, July 27**

Read: Willingham, 189-204
Due: Complete draft of unit assessments

Class 15: Returning to the Vision of the Whole **F, July 28**

Due: Paper 2

Reading Guide for Days 2-3

On the second and third days of class will focus on generating a "vision for Catholic education" in dialogue with the work of James Heft and Kenda Creasy Dean. Unless completed before the course begins, the reading listed is too long to be read closely in its entirety. It is recommended that students *skim* the whole and slow down at particular parts of interest. As you read, prepare answers to the following questions:

- In light of Heft (and Christian Smith and Sherry Weddell from day 1), what are the most important cultural points with regards to American teens that must be kept in mind by teachers of theology?
- In light of Heft, what are the overarching goals/purposes of Catholic education? What is the place of the (theology) teaching within his vision of Catholic high schools?
- What elements from Dean's positive vision for the Church would you integrate in a vision for Catholic high school teaching?

In terms of particular sections from Heft and Dean, I would recommend paying particular attention to the following:

- Characteristics of Catholicism applied to Catholic schools (Heft, 76-81)
- Unique characteristics of Catholic Schools (Heft, 82-88, 209-212)
- Sociological Studies and Three Recommendations (Heft, 154-167)
- Three recommendations (Heft, 162-167)
- The role of the teacher (Heft, 70-71, 173-176, 181-182)
- Religion and faith in American (Dean, 6-7, 16-17)
- Weaknesses in articulating and practicing the faith (Dean, 19, 28)
- Confronting Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (Dean, 37-39)
- Generative faith: missionary identity and the "cultural toolkit" (Dean, 63-81)