

AMERICAN CATHOLIC STUDIES

Courses

Our Courses

AMCS 3101. The Discernment Seminar. (1 Credit)

The seminar serves as a point of entry to the American Catholic Studies certificate program and an opportunity to reflect deeply and critically on the pressing global challenges. Taken in the spring of the sophomore year, the seminar invites students to explore how to deploy their talents in the service of a more just and humane society. In this process, students learn how to communicate effectively and memorably about the multifaceted global issues of our time.

Attributes: AMST, ASRP.

AMCS 3130. Faith in U.S. Politics. (4 Credits)

This course will examine the effects of religion on the contemporary American political landscape. How does religion shape the American political system? In what ways and to what extent should religious considerations be allowed to influence public policy? How does religion affect citizens' voting decisions? Does faith really have an impact on the political behavior of elected officials? Special attention will be paid to the role of religion in the 2008 presidential election and to the influence of the American Catholic Church and Catholic voters. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: AMST, APPI, ASRP.

AMCS 3150. Catholics and Popular Culture. (4 Credits)

An exploration of the intersection of popular devotion and popular culture in the experience of American Catholics, examining the ways in which Catholics are portrayed and participate in popular media and consumer society and how this expresses and/or transforms what it means to be both American and Catholic. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: ACUP, AMST, ASAM, ASRP.

AMCS 3160. American Music and Catholic Imagination. (4 Credits)

The course examines the role of Catholicism in shaping the contributions of 20th- and 21st-century American musical artists. It explores how artists negotiate questions of identity, ethnicity, and race while engaging themes of incarnation, community, and redemption. Interdisciplinary in its method, the course demonstrates how the kaleidoscope of American musical styles, such as jazz, rock, pop, salsa, and hip-hop, has been enriched by the expression and interrogation of Catholic symbols and ideas. Note: Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attribute: THEO.

AMCS 3200. American and Catholic. (4 Credits)

This course examines the contributions of various Catholic figures and movements from the end of the 19th Century to the start of the 21st. How did the various Catholic generations of the past 110 years understand themselves as Americans and Catholics? And how did subsequent generations change that understanding? This course will give particular emphasis to how younger generations initiated or prompted change, with an eye to discovering how youth culture today might be shaping the future of American Catholic identity. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: ADVD, AMST, APPI, ASRP.

AMCS 3250. Contemporary Catholic Fiction. (4 Credits)

This course will examine several major Catholic writers of the 20th century (Graham Greene, Flannery O'Connor, Mary Gordon, J.F. Powers, and others). This course will examine Catholic themes and issues in their writings. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

AMCS 3251. Labor, Leisure, and God. (4 Credits)

An examination of a variety of philosophical, theological, and aesthetic concepts studying work and play. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: AMST, ASHS, ASRP.

AMCS 3256. Comparative Economic Systems. (4 Credits)

Survey of the salient features of alternative economic systems; the mixed economies of the western world and Japan, the reforms in the former Soviet, Eastern European, and Chinese economies; problems of measuring economic performance. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: GLBL, INST, IPE, ISIN, SOIN.

AMCS 3320. The Writing Irish. (4 Credits)

This course will explore the influence of Catholicism on the development on Irish and Irish-American Literature from the early 20th century to the present. Featuring Irish- and American- born writers of Irish ancestry, the course will focus on the work of writers such as James Joyce, Patrick Kavanaugh, Seamus Heaney, Eavan Boland, Mebh McGuckian, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Kennedy, Elizabeth Cullinan, Frank O'Hara, Alice McDermott, and Michael Donaghy. Through selected historical and critical readings, we will attempt to create a descriptive narrative of what happens when Irish writers wrestle with Catholic identity in the context of 20th-century political and economic struggle, both in Ireland and in America, and a growing culture of unbelief. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: ACUP, ALC, AMST, ASLT, IRST.

AMCS 3333. American Catholic Fictions. (4 Credits)

This course explores the narratives created by American Catholic artists and the variety of forms their stories take. Emphasis will be on the 20th Century and contemporary American Catholic novelists and short story writers, such as William Kennedy, John O'Hara, Flannery O'Connor, Ron Hansen, Mary Gordon, David Plante, and Andre Dubus. In addition, students will engage the work of American Catholic filmmakers (such as Coppola and Scorsese), visual artists (including Mapplethorpe and Warhol), and the music & lyrics of Catholic composers/songwriters (such as Bruce Springsteen). We will consider the content of these visual, musical, and literary narratives in light of their grounding in the specific American and Catholic Culture they portray, and we will explore the particular capability of each genre to convey the artist's vision of the possibilities and limitations of the world he or she inhabits and (re)creates. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: ACUP, ALC, AMST, ASLT, IRST.

AMCS 3340. Catholicism and Democracy. (4 Credits)

This course will examine the relationship between Catholicism and democracy, placing particular stress on their relevance to contemporary American public life. In this context, Catholicism will be understood not only as a religious institution, but as the source of a tradition of communitarian social and political thought, while democracy will be understood not only as a form of government, but also as an ethos shaping American society. Authors and texts will include Alexis de Tocqueville, Orestes Brownson, Dorothy Day, John Courtney Murray, and relevant documents from Vatican II and the American hierarchy. The historic tension between Catholicism and democracy will be the subject of our conversation as will the possibilities for greater harmony between them. In particular, we will explore the possibility that Catholicism's communitarian orientation might serve as a corrective to American individualism and consumerism, while democratic institutions and practices might have something to offer Catholicism. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: ADVD, AMST, APPI, ASRP, ASSC, PJRJ, PJST, POSC, REST.

AMCS 3350. American Catholic Poetry. (4 Credits)

A course focused on poets whose work is grounded in the faith and culture of the Catholic Church in America. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: ACUP, AMST, ASRP, WGSS.

AMCS 3355. American Catholic Novel. (4 Credits)

The appearance and importance of faith in the work of American Catholic novelists, including J.F. Powers, Alice McDermott, Mary Gordon, Walter Miller, Ron Hansen and John Kennedy Toole. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: AMST, ASLT, ASRP.

AMCS 3359. American Catholic Women Writers. (4 Credits)

An examination of American Catholic women's imaginative writing, looking at Denise Levertov, Flannery O'Connor, Valerie Sayers, Mary McCarthy, and Mary Gordon. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: AMST, ASLT, ASRP, WGSS.

AMCS 3360. Ethnic and Catholic Literature. (4 Credits)

This course engages the question of what it means to be both "ethnic" and "Catholic" in America and explores the ways in which these primary aspects of identity influence the work of writers affiliated with three of the most visible European Catholic ethnic groups that immigrated to the United States in the early 20th Century: the Irish, the Italians, and the Polish. Students will read memoir, fiction, and poetry by representative writers from each group, including work of J.T. Farrell, Elizabeth Cullinan, Don DeBello, Helen Barolini, Czeslaw Milosz and Adam Zagajewski. Through selected historical and critical readings, we will attempt to create a descriptive narrative of what happens when writers wrestle with ethnic and Catholic identity in the context of the 20th century political and economic struggle in America, a predominantly White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant society, and a growing culture of unbelief. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

AMCS 3450. The Catholic Metropolis. (4 Credits)

A history of Catholicism in the New York metropolitan area focusing on sites of historic significance that inscribed a permanent Catholic presence and shaped an evolving urban culture. Students will explore and research architectural sites, locations of popular devotions, and streetscapes that reveal identities of parishes as urban villages. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

AMCS 3451. Niebuhr in America. (4 Credits)

Focusing on the influential work of liberal Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, the course will trace the development of major strands of modern American social and political thought and actions including the Social Gospel, Catholic Worker and Settlement House movements—as reactions to nativism, consumerism, industrialism, individualism, and greed. Niebuhr helped shape both contemporary liberalism and Neo-Conservatism and was the architect of a "Christian realism," which influenced American Catholic and Jewish thought. Niebuhr is widely known as the author of the "Serenity Prayer" ("God give us the serenity to accept what cannot be changed...") Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: AMST, APPI, ASRP.

AMCS 3535. Building the Ideal City: Ethics and Economics Foundations of Realizable Utopias. (4 Credits)

This course introduces students to the investigation of the role that economic concepts such as profit, work, utility, and exchange play in defining the ideal city as a realizable political project. Students will explore ethical and economic concepts and their interrelation in the debate on the best form of State and government that developed from antiquity to modern American utopian communities. This course includes texts from various sources - philosophical, theological, juridical, and literary. Through these readings, students will learn how theoretical and practical ideas on the best form of society developed in time and still influence modern political thought. The course also focuses on the impact of the socioeconomic doctrines of the Catholic Church in shaping the idea of a possible, realizable, ideal city. Among the texts and authors included are Plato, St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Dante, Boccaccio, Thomas More, Leon Battista Alberti, Tommaso Campanella, Francis Bacon. Taught in English with coursework in Italian for credit in Italian. Note: Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: ACUP, ALC, AMST, APPI, ASHS, ASRP, INST, ISIN, ITAL, ITMO, MVPH, MVST.

AMCS 3777. Jesuit Conspiracy in America. (4 Credits)

From colonial times, rumors of Jesuit conspiracies abound in American religious and political rhetoric. Jesuits, it was thought, were plotting to win America for the Pope. This course explores the history of the Jesuits in America and the related topics of anti-Catholicism, separation of church and state, Vatican II, Catholic education, divisions within the U.S. Catholic community, past and present, and how Jesuits real and imagined inhabit these stories. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: AMST, ASRP.

AMCS 3975. Catholic Across Cultures. (4 Credits)

A seminar exploring, comparing, and contrasting the Catholic fiction of disparate cultures including Britain, Ireland, France, Brazil and Japan. Authors read will include Waugh, Greene, Percy, Bernanos, Endo and more. American authors will also be considered. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: ACUP, AMST, ASRP.

AMCS 3981. Catholic Studies Seminar I. (4 Credits)

This course is the first half of a year-long interdisciplinary seminar, introducing students to the Catholic Studies concentration, using literary, theological and historical texts. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

AMCS 3982. Catholic Studies Seminar II. (4 Credits)

This course is the second half of a year-long interdisciplinary seminar, introducing students to the Catholic Studies concentration, using literary, theological and historical texts. NOTE: Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: AMST, ASHS, ASRP, IRST.

AMCS 4950. Christianity and Gender/Sexual Diversity: Interdisciplinary Perspectives. (4 Credits)

Employing perspectives from history, theological ethics, and LGBT studies, this course will investigate what it means to take queer perspectives on Christianity sexuality, and discipleship. Readings will include biblical, historical, and contemporary materials that seek to illuminate the ways in which Christians and Christian communities have responded to sexual and gender diversity. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attributes: BEHR, ICC, THHC.

AMCS 4990. El Salvador: Revolutionary Faith. (4 Credits)

This course examines social, political, and religious developments in El Salvador from the years following the Second Vatican Council through the end of the civil war (1965-1993) in order to explore a range of issues regarding the nature of religion, politics, and the role of the Catholic Church. The course will include a weeklong trip to El Salvador. Note: Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

Attribute: SL.

AMCS 4999. Independent Study. (1 to 4 Credits)

Courses in Other Areas

The following courses offered outside the program have the AMCS attribute and count toward the American Catholic Studies certificate program:

Course	Title	Credits
AFAM 3130	Racial and Ethnic Conflict	4
AFAM 3150	Caribbean Peoples and Culture	4
ECON 4110	Ethics and Economics	4
ECON 4870	Economic Foundations of Catholic Social Teaching	4
ENGL 3002	Queer Iconoclasts: Sexuality, Religion, Race	4
ENGL 4135	Bible in English Poetry	4
FITV 3551	Film History 1950-Present	4
HIST 1400	Understanding Historical Change: Latin America	3
HIST 3260	Medieval Ireland to 1691	4
HIST 3965	Colonial Latin America	4
ITAL 3012	Medieval Storytelling	4
LALS 1400	Understanding Historical Change: Latin America	3
LATN 3061	Christian Latin	4
MLAL 3010	Politics and Poetry in the Middle Ages: The Rise of Vernacular Culture in the Mediterranean	4
MLAL 3012	Medieval Storytelling	4
MLAL 3033	Prison Literature from Martin Luther to Martin Luther King	4
MVST 4006	Dante's Cosmos: Science, Theology, and Literature	4
MVST 4010	Medieval Franciscans and the Dream of a Just Economy	4
PHIL 3301	Problem of God	4

PHIL 3354	Problem of Evil	4
PHIL 3557	Confessions of Augustine	4
PHIL 4418	Issues of Life and Death	4
POSC 4013	Religion and American Politics	4
SOCI 3427	Hispanics/Latinos in the USA	4
THEA 4500	Theatre, Creativity, and Values	4
THEO 3200	Introduction to New Testament	3
THEO 3212	Gospel of John	3
THEO 3375	American Religious Texts and Traditions	3
THEO 3390	Church in Controversy	3
THEO 3542	Catholic Social Teaching	3
THEO 3610	Christ in World Cultures	3
THEO 3620	Great Christian Hymns	3
THEO 3874	Religion in America	4
THEO 3876	Muslims in America	4
THEO 3995	Religion and the American Self	4
THEO 4005	Women and Theology	4
THEO 4008	Religion and Ecology	4
THEO 4013	Religion and American Politics	4
THEO 4025	Future of Marriage in the 21st Century	4
THEO 4040	Home, Away, and In-Between	4
THEO 4411	Religion, Theology, and New Media	4
THEO 4600	Religion and Public Life	4
THEO 4853	Spirituality and Politics	4
THEO 4870	Economic Foundations of Catholic Social Teaching	4