

WAYS OF UNDERSTANDING RELIGION

RSOC 9, #48574

Spring 2009, Tuesday and Thursday, 8:00 A.M.

Instructor: Tennant Wright, S.J,

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Office: Kenna 317, Hours: Tues & Wed, 3:30-4:30 P.M.

Classroom: Kenna 109

***N.B. The description of “Ways of Understanding Religion”
RSOC-9 #48574 in the Spring 2009 “Schedule of Classes” is
incorrect!***

Course Description and tentative Syllabus

This course encourages students to find their own needed Way (religious or otherwise) in their lives, present and future.

The center of the course emphasizes discerning crucial life decisions and offers practical methods for resolving them.

Each class session begins with a simple meditation. (Instructions will be given.)

The course demands serious reflection on life, loves, suffering, death and hope.

There will be a brief essay of personal reflection due on the reading for that day (one page maximum, double spaced, computer printed). *No late papers are accepted.* **(2/3 of the course grade)**

There will be daily class discussions in which each student is expected to take part. **(1/3 of the course grade)**

No examinations.

Grading

FINAL GRADES: From past experience grade percentage tends to be:

A – 20% B – 30 % C – 40% D – 10%

GRADES ON WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

A – Correct grammar, with insight, imagination, and elegance, for example, the essays of the regular columnists in THE NEW YORKER, THE (British) TABLET, THE NEW YORK TIMES (op.ed).

B – Correct grammar, easily readable, concise, with insight and creativity.

C – Correct English, readable, satisfactory.

D – Not satisfactory.

GRADES ON CLASS PARTICIPATION:

A – Regular participation: Insightful, concise, clear with elan, for example, the speeches of President Barack Obama.

B – Somewhat regular participation, insightful, concise and clear.

C – Irregular participation and little insight.

D – Not satisfactory

Readings

Selected Essays, for example:

David Brooks, "The Frozen Gaze" The New York Times, June 17, 2008

Steve Jobs (Speech)

Bill Gates (11 Rules)

Robert Ronald, S.J. (Obituary)

David Remnick, "Cornerman," The New Yorker, August 2000

Flannery O'Connor (Short Story, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find")

Books:

"The Prison Diary of Arthur Longworth #299180" (if available)

Thich Nhat Hanh, "Peace is Every Step" SCHEDULE, Spring 2009,

ROSC 9 (tentative)

Mar. 31 First Class - Syllabus, and "Questions for a syllabus"

Apr. 2 David Brooks, "The Frozen Face" – Tiger Woods

7 Bill Gates', "11 Rules"

9 NO CLASS - *Holy Thursday, Passover*

14 Thich Nhat Hanh, pp. 1-48

16 Max Roosevelt, "Student Expectations and Grades"

21 David Brooks, "What Life Asks of Us"

23 Guest lecturer, Angie Boissevain, Sensei

28 Steve Jobs' "Three Stories: Education, Love and Loss, Death"

30

May 5

7 Guest lecturer: Karen Gaffney
12
14 Guest lecturer: Prof. Thomas Plante
19
21
26
28
June 2 Progoff, "Journal"
4 Last class