

ONLINE COURSE TITLE:

TESP 124 48096 Theology of Marriage

SEMESTER/ YEAR:

Summer Session I 2009

June 18 - July 22 – last class day

July 23 - exams

FACULTY NAME AND E-MAIL ADDRESS:

Dr. Jean Ponder Soto

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Where is marriage headed—as an institution and for the couple?

This 5 week course, composed of an Introduction and 5 Sessions, will consider the following hypothesis:

Marriage in the West is an institution that has adapted to the demands of the times by changing the requirements, roles and meanings of marriage. Alongside and within with these adaptations, there is a trajectory of theological meanings about marriage that can be found in developments along the axis of horizontal and vertical finality. The two finalities intersect in the spouses' conversions and their spirituality of marriage.

The students will question the changes in marriage in order to make judgments about the direction and overall ability of these changes to support healthy, holy marriages. The students use an interdisciplinary approach for learning:

- an historical overview of marriage,
- theological vocabulary and processes such as “horizontal and vertical finality; grace”
- psychological methods for a good marriage,
- the philosophical meaning of concepts such as love and sexuality,
- a contemporary spirituality of marriage.

At the end of the class the students should be able to identify the direction and orientation of marriage in much of US culture and its relationship to certain Christian theologies of marriage.

EXPECTATIONS FOR CLASS MEMBERSHIP:

- Students will be grouped into teams of four or five. Each student is expected to be a good team player by contributing her or his share of work and by participating in discussions, and by generally helping your team to do well.
- Hand in all required work in a timely manner, including each student's contribution to her or his team's work.
- Be courteous in your online correspondence.

The class is designed to encourage dialogue and the exchange of ideas. Disagree or offer a different perspective in a respectful manner. Refrain from all offensive language.

- Honor your classmates' time (and your own!) by posting thoughtful remarks related to the class material.
- Chat on your own time.

ROLE OF THE PROFESSOR

Since one of the goals of an online class is to enable the students to learn through their own investigations and discussion, my role in your discussions is limited. I will, however, monitor all online correspondence. At times I will enter into a discussion to offer a comment or give direction. I will evaluate your written work and be available to answer you questions individually or as a group. You may e-mail me at any time and expect a response within 24 hours. I reserve the right to change course content and requirements in order to serve the educational needs of the class. Any changes will be made with ample notice.

OVERALL COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

- Reading/listening to all required material
- Required postings for discussion forums in all sessions
- Vote for Image Contest
- Choose Image from Flickr and post link

- Worksheets for 2 of the sessions
- 1 multiple-choice test on the history of marriage, and some theological and philosophical vocabulary;
- One 3- 4 page paper;
- Final team project– a collage of images or an image that illustrates what you have learned from this course.

COURSE CONTESTS

Each Session (1-5) has an image by a famous (and not so famous) artist. Every student is asked to write a paragraph or two on the meaning of the image and its relationship to the content of the session. These are posted on Thursday, the next to last day of the Session, and on Friday the class will vote on what they consider the best explanation of the image. While the paragraphs themselves on the meaning of the image are not graded, every student is required to enter the contest and vote. Participation points (one each) will be deducted for failure to 1. submit the paragraph, or 2. vote. The winner will receive a \$15.00 gift certificate from Amazon.

SESSION IMAGE IN FLICKR

Each student is asked to find an image from the website Flickr that she or he thinks expresses the meaning(s) of that Session.

You must first enroll in Flickr; enrollment is free.

Include a couple of sentences that explain your choice (space provided by Flickr) and post the link in the box in ANGEL provided for that purpose. Other students are invited to respond to your image and comments. In order to encourage creativity, the choice of the image and your comments will not be graded. However, a participation point for that session will be deducted if the assignment is not completed.

Note: no Flickr image due for Session 1 and Session 5

TEAM WORK

The class will be divided into teams and named after a color. You will be notified of your team and given their names and e-mail addresses.

- *Discussion Questions*

Every class session has discussion questions. After team collaboration, the team secretary will post a response to each of the discussion questions. The position of secretary will rotate with each new session. The secretary will begin her or his team's discussion, summarize the team's response, and post it. After posting the team's response, the secretary's chooses the next person to take the job for the following Session. Each team member/student—not the secretary—is required to submit to the instructor (Dr. Soto) the material they contributed to the team discussion. A Drop Box is provided in the Session for this purpose. In other words, I need evidence that each student has worked on the team assignment. If a student does not help with the teamwork, she or he will NOT receive the team grade for that assignment.

INDIVIDUAL POSTINGS

Each student is expected to respond to one other team Discussion posting in every Session.

In addition, each student should comment on at least two Discussion posting by other individual students, or their Flickr image.

The point of this requirement is to get a conversation started among the students about the Discussion material and their choice of images.

Postings Summary

Team Postings:

1— for each session's discussion question

Individual Postings:

1— responding once to one other teams' discussion post;

2— responding to individual students' comments on the Discussion Post OR Flickr image.

DUE DATES:

TEAM DISCUSSION responses should be posted by midnight every Wed. so that others may respond to them during the rest of the week.

FLICKR IMAGE with comments should be posted by midnight every Wed. so that others may offer their comments during the rest of the week.

Note: no Flickr image due for Session 1 and Session 5

IMAGE CONTEST PARAGRAPHS should be posted by midnight every Thurs. so that students may vote on them by Fri. midnight. Winners will be announced early in the next week.

WORKSHEETS and other written assignments for each session are usually due by Friday, midnight, which is the end date of that Session.

Session Schedule

START DATE: Introduction and “Before You Begin” Thurs. June 18. AM

End Date: Sun. June 21 12:00 midnight

Click on the “Lessons” tab and select *Before You Begin*. You will be directed to:

- introduce yourself in a posting, write about a marriage you have known,
- meet your team members,
- post a photo (if you can) and descriptions of the qualities of your ideal mate,
- familiarize yourself with the online environment, ask questions, and
- chat a little with two other students.

Continue working on class assignments under “Lessons” listed under—

SESSION 1: *A Brief History of Western Marriage.*

Start Date:	Mon. June 22 AM
Post Team Discussion	Wed. June 24 by 12:00 Midnight
Submit Image Paragraph	Thurs. June 25 by 12:00 Midnight
Submit Questions for Quiz	Thurs. June 25 by 12:00 Midnight

Post Individual Responses,
Vote on Image Paragraph
Take Quiz from 6/26, 3:00 PM to—

End Date SESSION 1: Fri. June 26, by 12:00 Midnight

SESSION 2: *Introduction to Theological Perspectives on Marriage*

Start Date:	Mon. June 29, AM
Post Team Discussion	Wed. July 1 by 12:00 Midnight
Post Flickr Image	Wed. July 1 by 12:00 Midnight
Submit Image Paragraph	Thurs. July 2 by 12:00 Midnight Post Individual

Post Individual Responses,
Vote on Image Paragraph by—

End Date SESSION 2:

Fri. July 3 by 12:00 Midnight

SESSION 3: On Love

Start Date Mon. July 6 AM
Post Team Discussion Wed. July 8 by 12:00 Midnight
Post Team Flickr Image Wed. July 8 by 12:00 Midnight
Submit Image Paragraph Thurs. July 9 by 12:00 Midnight

Post Individual Responses,
Turn in Worksheets
Vote on Image Paragraph by--

End Date SESSION 3:

Fri. July 10 by 12:00 Midnight

SESSION 4: Sex, Sexuality and Gender

Start Date Mon. July 13 AM
Post Team Discussion Wed. July 15 by 12:00 Midnight
Post Team Flickr Image Wed. July 15 by 12:00 Midnight
Submit Image Paragraph Thurs. July 15 by 12:00 Midnight

Post Individual Responses,
Submit Paper
Vote on Image Paragraph by--

End Date SESSION 4:

Fri. July 17 by 12:00 Midnight

SESSION 5: A Spirituality of Marriage

Start Date: Mon. July 20 AM
Submit Team Image illustrating what
You have learned in the class Tues. July 21 by 12:00 Midnight
Post Team Discussion
Submit Image Paragraph Wed. July 22 by 12:00 Midnight

Post Individual Responses,
Vote on Team Collage by--
Vote on Image Paragraph by--

End Date SESSION 5:

Thurs. July 23 by 12:00 Midnight

Angel remains open for collage viewing until Sunday, July, 26, Midnight

GRADING POLICY:

The 5 Sessions are worth a total of 20 points each.

The students' work, with one exception, will be graded under three aspects—*CONTENT*, *EXPRESSION*, and *PARTICIPATION*.

CONTENT: this includes the content of all graded work, meaning the discussions, Flickr image comments, worksheets, papers and final project. The contests are not graded. All other work is graded according to the following scale:

Number of Points Skills

3-4	Demonstrates excellence in grasping key concepts; critiques* the work of others; provides ample evidence of support for opinions; readily offers new interpretations of discussion material.
2	Shows evidence of understanding most of the major concepts; is able to agree or disagree when prompted; is skilled in basic level of support for opinions; offers an occasional divergent viewpoint.
1	Has mostly shallow grasp of the material; rarely takes a stand on issues; offers inadequate levels of support.
0	Shows no significant understanding of material.

*To “critique” does not necessarily mean, “to criticize.” It means to offer a reasoned analysis that could affirm as well as negate.

EXPRESSION: is divided into two kinds—formal and informal.

Informal expression includes on-line discussion, and is not strictly graded for grammar and eloquence, but for participation and content. This policy is intended to encourage the free flow of ideas, candor and spontaneity.

Formal expression includes required worksheets and papers and is graded according to the following scale:

Number of Points Skills

3	Student uses complex, grammatically correct sentences on a regular basis; expresses ideas clearly, concisely, cogently, in logical fashion; uses words that demonstrate a high level of vocabulary; has rare misspellings.
2	Sentences are generally grammatically correct; ideas are readily understood but show signs of disorganization; some transitions between concepts are missing; there are occasional misspellings, especially with homonyms not detected with spelling checks.
1	Poor use of the language, garbles much of the message;

only an occasional idea surfaces clearly; language is disjointed; there is overuse of the simple sentence and repetition of words; paragraphs are often unrelated to each other.

0 Writing is largely unintelligible.

PARTICIPATION: Includes the required response from the students in all written work. It is graded according to the following scale:

Number of Points Skills

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 | Contributions are prompt, timely, relevant, self-initiated; remarks are posted freely on all assignments throughout the course; there is no attempt to dominate conversation. |
| 2 | Student generally keeps up with the discussion; needs an occasional prompting to contribute; might participate in some discussions more than others. |
| 1 | Participation is spotty; picks and chooses topics to get involved in; offers short, perfunctory postings when prompted; takes limited initiative. |
| 0 | Student rarely participates freely; makes short, irrelevant remarks. |

Adapted from John F. Bauer, Rebecca S. Anderson, *Evaluating Students' Written Performance in the Online Classroom*

POINT VALUES FOR SESSION COMPONENTS

Session 1

Discussion 10 points

Quiz 10 points

Session 2

Discussion 10 points

Worksheet 10 points

Session 3

Discussion 10 points

Worksheet 10 points

Session 4

Discussion 10 points

Paper 10 points

Session 5

Discussion 10 points

Final project 10 points

1 Participation point for each item will be deducted per Session if the student fails to:

1. Enter the Image Contest
2. Submit required individual posts to Discussion Forum and/or Flickr image
3. Choose and comment on a Flickr image and post the link

Required Text:

- *C21 Resources, Fall 2007*. A Service of Boston College

Copies of this issue (in newspaper format) of C21 Resources may be obtained for free at the SCU Bookstore. Or you may order a copy to be sent to your address for free from the following:

Eden Prendergast

Church in the 21st Century Center

Boston College Phone: 1-617-552-0470 E-mail: church21@bc.edu

- John Gottman Ph.D., with Nan Silver, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999.
- Judith Wallerstein, with Sandra Blakeslee, *The Good Marriage: How and Why Love Lasts*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1995.

Technology Requirements:

High speed Internet connection

Internet Browser

Real Player