

Theology Department Undergraduate Majors and Minors Courses
Loyola University Chicago
Spring 2025


THEO 280 02 Religion and Interdisciplinary Studies
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00-11:15 am
Instructor: Mark Lester, mlester2@luc.edu

Engaged Learning- required for THEO and RS Interdisciplinary major track

What makes us human? To what end is human labor directed? How do we interact with the divine realm? This class explores the relationship of myth and ritual in Ancient West Asia and the Hebrew Bible. Individual units are structured around the great literary works of ancient Mesopotamia and Canaan (Gilgamesh, Atrahasis, Enuma Elish, Baal Cycle, Song of Erra and Ishum) and the monumental compositions of the Hebrew Bible (the Priestly Source and the Deuteronomistic Composition). Throughout the course, students will be exposed to fundamental methods in the study of religion—particularly ancient religion including the study of myth and ritual, approaches to orality and textuality, ancient poetics, narratology, and anthropological approaches to the study of ritual. More than anything, however, this class invites us to approach ancient literature on its own terms and to reflect on the timeless questions at the heart of ancient epic, myth, and ritual.

THEO 302 001 Wis. Lit. and the Psalms: Suffering and the Justice of God
THEO 373 001 Theology Capstone
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-12:45 pm
Instructor, Robert A. DiVito, rdivito@luc.edu

Course Description The Wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible and select psalms serve in this course as classic loci for taking up the questions that swirl around the human experience of suffering, particularly the suffering of the innocent. Like nothing else suffering can challenge all attempts at meaning in life; and so it is not surprising that religious belief both plays a key role in supporting human purpose in the face of suffering and itself is liable to the crises in meaning that same suffering ent



“The Poem of the Righteous Sufferer: I will Praise the Lord of Wisdom” and “The Babylonian Theodicy.” We will see some of the variety of answers to the questions posed by suffering, including specific developments such as the emergence of belief in life after death. To deepen our reading and thinking, a number of contemporary philosophical, theological, sociological, and literary treatments that have as their subject matter our problematic will also be read. These include Peter L. Berger’s

THEO 342/478 001: Perspectives on Life & Death
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:00-5 pm
Instructor: Aana Vigen, avigen@luc.edu

Mortality and vulnerability are an inescapable part of being human. In fact, they are integral dimensions of all life on earth. Given this reality, what constitutes a “good life” and a “good death”? What does it mean to value and care for life and not? What might Christian social ethics contribute to bioethics? This seminar will discuss a range of medical topics (prenatal care & birth, ARTs, reproductive genetic testing, abortion, care for the chronically ill, definitions of death, euthanasia, end-of-life care options, physician-assisted suicide) within these larger questions. It will also attend to the socio-economic contexts in which these topics are situated. It may also explore what it means to value life in terms of global and ecological health needs/realities. This course is a combined advanced undergraduate and graduate seminar. It is open to both upper-level undergraduates and to graduate students. Upper level undergraduate and graduate students in Bioethics, SES and WSGS are especially invited to join this class and conversation. Students need to be Theology or Religious Studies Majors/Minors, but they do need a strong interest in studying Christian theological sources/figures/themes as they relate to the above subject matter. The emphasis is on collaborative learning. While the professor will make presentations throughout the course, students are responsible for being prepared to participate actively in all class sessions.

THEO 350 / LITR280 Topics in Islam: Masterpieces of World Literature: Sufi Literature
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 9:20 – 10:10 am
Instructor: Omer Mozaffar

Writing Intensive

In this class we will survey the writings of the Sufis. The Sufis represent a variety of approaches to Islam, most commonly within the genre of "Spirituality." In the process of studying these works, we will also construct concepts of Islamic Spirituality within these traditions. As this is a Writing Intensive course, we will also learn some basic rules for effective writing.