

ST. PETER'S SEMINARY / KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
at *The University of Western Ontario*
Fall Semester 2011

Introduction to Sacramental Theology
5141 – A
Tuesday, 9:30 – 11:30, Room 108

Professor: Fr. Pierre Robitaille
1-416-698-1105
E-mail: pierrecharles43@hotmail.com
Office Hours by Appointment

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a theological, historical, biblical and liturgical examination of the Sacraments of the Catholic Church. Sacraments are more than just mechanical ways in which to experience God in Christian liturgy – what has been traditionally defined as “a visible sign of an invisible reality”. Indeed, the seven Sacraments of the Catholic tradition are privileged and graceful theological/liturgical expressions of the living of our faith. By studying the historical development, central beliefs and communal practices of the Sacraments, students will learn to articulate the nature of the sacramental system in Catholic worship and to define the key concepts and understandings and religious practices, including the role and duties of the minister, that are part of the discourse of sacramental theology.

This course is to be taken in conjunction with 5141 – B

B. GOALS

This course will assist students to grow in the following knowledge, skills and attitudes:

KNOWLEDGE:

1. Demonstrate knowledge, with attention to historical development, of the central texts, beliefs, ethical understanding, and ritual practices of Catholicism.
2. Recognize and interpret the impact of history, traditions and cultures on the development of Christian doctrine and practices.
3. Recognize the input of the faith community and the requirements of a proper celebration of the seven Sacraments.

SKILLS ADDRESSED IN THIS CLASS:

1. To be able to evaluate theological ideas by comparing the points of view of patristic, medieval, modern and contemporary scholars on concepts about the Sacraments.

2. To be able to generate ideas, hypotheses, opinions and questions that help to articulate and synthesize information about sacramental theology and its impact in contemporary Catholic beliefs and worship.

ATTITUDES:

1. To develop an appreciation of the value of communal worship.
2. To see the proper celebration of the seven Sacraments as deepening one's life and belonging in the Eucharistic community in all its richness and diversity.

C. READINGS OR TEXTBOOKS

A. Required:

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1994.

The Rites, Vol. 1. New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1990.

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults. (USCCA) United States Conference of American Bishop.

B. Recommended:

Noll, Ray R. *Sacraments: A New Understanding for a New Generation.* New London, Connecticut: Twenty Third Publications, 2008 (ISBN # 978-0-89622-993-8).

Bausch, William J. *A new look at the Sacraments.* Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty Third Publications, 1983 (ISBN # 0-89622-174-1).

D. ASSIGNMENTS

Seminar Class #1:

During this class, we will discuss as a class William J. Bauch's - A new look at the Sacraments. Each student will be expected to have read the book and be able to participate in a conversation about the book. In order to facilitate this conversation, each student will be asked to make a brief presentation on a portion of the book and be able to lead the classroom discussion for this portion of the class.

This class will take place on September 27, 2011. (It is valued at 10% of the final grade.)

Reflection Paper #1:

The Catholic Women's League of your parish invites you to give its members a talk on the seven Sacraments and why they are crucial for the faith life of the Church's members. Please write a three to four page paper in which you present the ideas that you would need to communicate properly in order to deal with the subject.

This paper is due on October 18, 2011. (It is valued at 15% of the final grade.)

Reflection Paper #2:

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

A) The pastor at the local parish has asked you to assist with the baptismal preparations at the parish. You are asked to speak to a group of parents about the importance of infant baptism and the responsibilities that it places on the parents. Please write a three to four page paper in which you present the ideas that you would need to communicate in order to deal with this subject.

OR

B) During the week of prayer for Christian unity, your parish and the local Evangelical community have scheduled a number of evening talks to explain different aspects of the faith to the members of the other denominational group. You have been asked to speak to a group of Evangelical parishioners about the sacrament of Confirmation and its meaning for Catholics. Please write a three to four page paper in which you present the ideas that you would need to communicate in order to deal with this subject.

OR

C) A friend tells you that she recently attended the celebration of a Catholic Baptism for a relative. She herself is not a Christian and she asks you to explain the theological notion of the character mentioned by the minister and given in the Sacrament of Baptism. Please write a three to four page paper in which you present the ideas that you would need to communicate in order to deal with this subject.

This paper is due on November 1, 2011. (It is valued at 15% of the final grade.)

Reflection Paper #3:

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

A) Your parish is preparing a group of grade 2 students from your local elementary school for their first celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. You are asked to speak to them about the notion of personal sin and about why Catholics must confess their sins to a priest. Please write a three to four page paper in which you present the ideas that you would need to communicate in order to deal with the subject.

OR

B) You are working as a pastoral worker in a hospital. There you visit an elderly man who is dying of cancer. He is very anxious and afraid. The family asks you not to speak to him about the Sacrament of the Sick because they are afraid it will make him even more frightened. What do you say to them. Please write a three to four page paper in which you present the ideas that you would need to communicate in order to deal with the subject.

OR

C) You have been invited to St. Joseph's all girls High School to give a talk on Holy Orders. You are to explain to the students why there are three different "orders" and why the sacrament is reserved to men. Please write a three to four page paper in which you present the ideas that you would need to communicate in order to deal with the subject.

OR

D) You are asked to give a talk on the Sacrament of Marriage to the parish's marriage preparation course. Explain the Church's understanding of this sacrament for the young couples gathered there. Please write a three to four page paper in which you present the ideas that you would need to communicate in order to deal with the subject.

This paper is due NO LATER than November 22, 2011. (It is valued at 15% of the final grade.)

Seminar Class #2:

Using chapter Ten ("Contemporary Issues in Sacraments") and Eleven ("The Future of the Sacraments") of Ray R. Noll's book, *Sacraments: A New Understanding for a New Generation*, as a spring-board for discussion, students will be asked to choose an issue from here to open discussion on the topics which the author believes present a challenge to the contemporary Church. Each student will be asked to present the issues relevant to the issue he/she selects and to facilitate a portion of the discussion on the issue.

This class will take place on November 22, 2011. (It is valued at 10% of the final grade.)

Final Exam:

The final EXAM will be a 20 minute comprehensive oral exam, to be scheduled by the Seminary. Students will be asked to demonstrate a knowledge of the material covered in class and of the required readings. This will be worth 35% of the final grade.

E. SCHEDULE, TOPICS & READINGS:

* Lectures 1 and 2 (September 13 & 20): Introduction to Sacramental Theology.

Required readings:

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 1076-1209 (pp. 237-263 in the edition published by the CCCB).
2. United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (USCCA), pp. 165-179.

* Lecture 3 (September 27): Seminar Class #1 – See assignments for further info.

* Lecture 4 (October 4): Introduction to the Sacrament of Baptism.

Required readings:

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 1210-1284 (pp. 265-277 in the edition published by the CCCB).
2. *USCCA*, pp. 182 – 199.

* Lecture 5 (October 11): Introduction to the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Required readings:

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 1285-1321 (pp. 277-284 in the edition published by the CCCB).
2. *USCCA*, pp. 201-21.1

* Lecture 6 (October 18): Introduction to the Theology of the Eucharist.

Required readings:

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 1322-1419 (pp. 285-304 in the edition published by the CCCB).
2. *USCCA*, pp. 213 – 232.

* Lecture 7 (October 25): Introduction to the Sacrament of Penance & Reconciliation.

Required readings:

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 1420-1498 (pp. 305-320 in the edition published by the CCCB).
2. *USCCA*, pp.233 – 247.

* Lecture 8 (November 1): Introduction to the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

Required readings:

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 1499-1532 (pp. 320-326 in the edition published by the CCCB).
2. *USCCA*, pp. 250 – 259.

* Lecture 9 (November 8): Introduction to the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

Required readings:

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 1536-1600 (pp. 327-340 in the edition published by the CCCB).
2. *USCCA*, pp. 261 – 275.

* Lecture 10 (November 15): Introduction to the Sacrament of Matrimony.

Required readings:

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 1601-1666 (pp. 341-353 in the edition published by the CCCB).
2. *USCCA*, pp. 277 – 292.

* Lecture 11 (November 22): Seminar Class #2 on Contemporary Issues and the Future of Sacramental Worship – See assignments for further info.

Required readings:

1. Ray R. Noll, *Sacraments: A New Understanding for a New Generation*, pp. 135-175.

* No lecture on November 29, since I will be attending the annual meeting of The Academy of Homiletics.

* Lecture 12 (December 6): Course Review and Examination Preparation.

* December 13: Oral Exam.

F. POLICIES REGARDING SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS

1. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates as given above. Assignments may not be dropped off at King's or submitted electronically.
2. It is the responsibility of the student to organize his or her work so that the assignments are completed on time. For a serious reason, a student may approach the professor before the due-date, and may be granted an extension at the discretion of the professor. **Any medical reasons will be confirmed by proper documentation as approved by the Dean's Office.** A penalty of 10% of the value of the assignment will be deducted for each day it is overdue without permission.
3. **No electronic devices will be allowed during tests or the examination, unless approved in advance by Student Services at the University or King's.** (This refers to students with disabilities who have permission to use a word processor to write their exams/tests.)
4. **Students who miss tests will negotiate a "make-up" date with the professor. Any medical reasons will be confirmed by proper documentation as approved by the Dean's Office.**

G. UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

Students are responsible for knowing the University's academic policies and regulations and any particularities of their own course of study. These can all be found at the University's website (<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>). Ignorance of these policies is not an excuse for any violation thereof. The following policies are particularly important to note:

1. **Submission of Assignments:** It is the responsibility of the student to organize his or her work so that the assignments are completed on time. A penalty of 10% of the value of the assignment will be deducted for each day it is overdue without permission.

2. **Plagiarism:** Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt by quotation marks or footnotes. Plagiarism is a major academic offence. Students may be required to submit their work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

3. **Selection and Registration of Courses:** Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all prerequisite course(s) have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any anti-requisite course(s) that they have taken.