

ST. MARY'S ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE
Spring 2018

Tuesdays

6 pm – 8:30 pm

Theology Colloquium: Sacrifice

Dr. Derek A. Olsen

Prerequisites: minimum GPA of 3.5, completion of 39 credits, and intention to graduate in current academic year, or matriculation in the C.A.S. program., or instructor's permission

Course Description: The Theology Colloquium is an interdisciplinary seminar, with classic readings from Scripture, theology, philosophy, and literature, that seeks to integrate and broaden the educational experiences of M.A. in Theology candidates. It is the capstone course in the M.A. in Theology. This year's focus is sacrifice. A central theme of the Old and New Testaments, sacrifice as a theological concept has played an important role in how Christians think about a wide variety of topics including the Eucharist, Christ's work of atonement, and ethics. The course will be enriched by guest lecturers who bring the special gifts of their disciplinary specialty to bear on our common work.

Course Requirements (grade % in bold):

- Students should expect to read *at most* 1,400 pages of required reading. (Because the Colloquium is a culminating experience for the degree, requirements are greater than for a typical course.) Students will be allowed to substitute one book of their own choosing for an equivalent required text, as negotiated with the instructor.
- Students should expect to write *about* 24 double-spaced pages. These will be comprised of the following:
 1. Students will write one brief critical engagement with an aspect of sacrifice that they believe merits significant attention or discussion. This can be rooted in the required reading, or be a substituted book (see above). This *2-page paper* is meant to help your classmates understand more fully the theological importance of the topic. It will be shared with classmates and discussed in class. **(10%)**
 2. Students will analyze one dimension of the Christian understanding of sacrifice (using interpretive approaches from the various theological sub-disciplines which comprise the MA in Theology: Scripture, history, ecumenics, worship, systematic theology, moral theology, spirituality), and construct or synthesize a compelling interpretation. About *12 pages*. **(35%)** This paper has the shape "*Christian faith claims that*"
 3. Using their constructive interpretation of sacrifice (assignment 1) as a lens for analysis, students will evaluate and engage one significant issue in our present cultural context, offering a critical and constructive response or proposal. About *10 pages*. **(35%)** This paper has the shape "Because Christian faith claims that, *Christians ought to*"
- Students should expect to participate actively in each class session (the course is primarily seminar style discussion of assigned readings). Students will also submit a discussion question or two the day before each class session. **(20%)**.

Required Texts:

- Anselm of Canterbury and Evans, G. R. *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 ISBN: 019954008X (pbk.)
- Daly, Robert J. *Sacrifice Unveiled: The True Meaning of Christian Sacrifice*. New York, NY: T&T Clark International, 2009. ISBN: 0567034216 (pbk.)
- Kirwin, Michael. *Discovering Girard*. New York: Cowley Publications, 2005. ISBN: 1561012297 (pbk.)
- Levenson, John D. *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity*. Rev. Ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995. ISBN: 0300065116 (pbk.)
- Lothes Biviano, Erin. *The Paradox of Christian Sacrifice: the loss of self, the gift of self*. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2007. ISBN: 082452456X (pbk.)
- Louth, Andrew, Ed. *Early Christian Writings: The Apostolic Fathers*. NY, NY: Penguin Books, 1968; revised 1987. ISBN: 0140444750 (pbk.)
- Luther, Martin. *Three Treatises*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990. ISBN: 0800616391 (pbk.)