***Description, Syllabus and Expectations***

**Immigration and Assimilation:**

**The U.S. Catholic Experience (Fall 2020)**

**James L. Heft, PhD**

**Alton Brooks Professor of Religion**

**MW 8:30-9:50**

**Course Description**

Religious traditions are inescapably “enculturated,” that is, shaped by and shape the culture in which they first take root and live. When Catholics from Europe began to arrive in the United States, they found themselves surrounded by Protestants, many of whom had fled from Catholic oppressors in Europe. These Protestants prized their newfound religious freedom and insisted on the separation of Church and State. This course explores how, beginning in the 18th century, Catholics adapted to and interacted with, opposed and learned to live with American Protestants, and then, in the 20th century, along with Protestants, faced a common challenge: an increasingly commercialized, pluralistic and secular culture. Of course, Native Americans and Hispanics were in North America long before any European Immigrants arrived. From 1619 on, more and more Africans were enslaved in the American Colonies. Given also the high percentage of Hispanics who are Catholics, it is important to understand their place and importance in the Catholic Church in America.

We will begin the course with an overview of immigration trends in the United States, and the role that Catholic immigrants played in it. We will then explore various issues that Catholics faced in the United States. Then we will look at some of the teachings of the Catholic Church on contemporary issues, such as religious pluralism, atheism, role of women, evolution, new interpretations of the commandments and virtues, and art.

Religions, including Catholicism, evolve over time. From the time of the French Revolution (1789) through most of the 19th century, the Catholic Church in Europe felt as though it were under siege; Catholics in the United States tried to distinguish their situation from that in Europe. After WWII, and by the time of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the evolution of Catholics’ self-understanding in the United States changed dramatically. Many of the issues that Catholics had to deal with had ramifications not only for them, but also for people other religions as well as for non-believers. This course helps students understand how at least one major religious tradition gradually came to understand itself as it adjusted to a foreign country that was dominantly Protestant and during the 20th century became secular and more pluralistic.

Reading materials include primary texts written by those who found themselves in the midst of these developments in the 19th and 20th centuries, official documents of the Catholic Church, a scholarly treatment of contemporary Catholicism, and videos on various subjects.

**Required Research Papers**

The purpose of the three required papers is to acquire a clearer understanding of some of the dynamics of immigration and assimilation, the experience of Catholic immigrants, both European and Hispanic, and aspects of Catholic tradition (e.g., a particular teaching or movement within the Church). Catholics also faced major challenges in the United States (e.g., fundamentalism, eugenics and anti-Catholicism). There will also be the opportunity to explore controversial issues within Catholicism (e.g., the ordination of women, homosexual marriage, or legitimate dissent from Church teaching) and between Catholicism and contemporary culture (e.g., secular humanism, the role of women, and the contemporary “spiritual but not religious” movement among young adults).

For your first two papers, I recommend that you explore one of the following topics:

**First Paper**: Irish, German or Italian Immigration; Slavery and the Catholic Church in the 19th century; Know Nothing Party and American Protective Association; the 1864 *Syllabus of Errors* and U.S. Catholics.

**Second Paper**: Evolution and Catholicism; Eugenics; Al Smith and John F. Kennedy; *Testem benevolentiae*; the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

**Third Paper**: your choice.

The main purpose of the papers you will write is **exposition**. For example, in a four page (double-spaced typed) paper, I want you to explain in the first three pages what you have learned about the issue or topic; only on the last page, page four, will I expect you to express your personal opinions. Good bibliographical sources for your research may be found, for example, at the end of each of Doyle’s chapters, as well as through the service of the USC libraries (contact Professor Melissa Miller). On a separate sheet, I will provide a number of reliable sources on the internet. Note: Many internet sites claim to present Catholic teaching and thought but are unreliable. Please do not use them. I will give you a list of approved internet sources. You may find the deadlines for the submission of your papers in the syllabus.

**Short Reports**: A one-page report, that is, a succinct summary of the contents of the readings (and sometimes videos) is required. What I expect to see is how well you understand what you have read and seen. Most important is that you formulate three questions based on your reading. The quality of these questions, the insight and understanding they show, are very important. They will constitute 30% of your final grade. Take time to think about them. I will grade each report and return you to them by the next class meeting.

**On-Line Expectations**

I expect everyone to be on screen for each class session with microphone muted. If any of you have difficulties participating because you live in very different time zones, please contact me for resolution. Several different approaches will be used to increase class participation; for example, small group discussions and periods together on zoom to speak, ask questions, and respond to other students in the class.

**Learning Objectives**

Several pedagogical goals that direct this course:

1. Acquire an understanding of original texts in their historical and cultural contexts.
2. An ability to identify important historical, religious and cultural contexts of readings and events and to explain why.
3. To understand American Catholicism in the 19th century in ways that illuminates clearly the dramatic changes and impact of Vatican Council II (1962-1965).
4. An ability to understand and critique contemporary American culture and the patterns among American Catholics, those who come from both Europe and Latin America.
5. The ability to explore controversial issues of the day, including sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, the role of women, and the polarization between conservative and liberal Catholics.

**Grading**

Be *forewarned* that I will grade your papers for **both content and form**; that is, I will be looking not only for the clarity and understanding you show in the treatment of the topic, but also for your ability to write clearly. Grammatical mistakes and misspellings will result in a lower grade. **Plagiarizing in any form will merit an automatic F**. Therefore, if you quote directly from any source, put that quotation within quotation marks, and provide appropriate bibliographical information to identify the source. There are now websites professors use to track down unidentified quotations that students pass off as their own thinking. There will also be three tests in the form of short essay questions; the last of the three will be a cumulative final examination. Grading for this course will be as follows:

30% on regular one-page reports on the readings/videos for each class.

30% on your three research papers.

35 % on your three exams.

5% on participation and extra credit opportunities.

**Times to Meet**

It is possible to reach me at [heft@usc.edu](mailto:heft@usc.edu). I will respond in as timely a manner as possible. I would also like to have an opportunity to get to know each of you personally through short interview with you. These meetings will allow me to get to know you better and learn about your expectations for the course, and how I might best be of help to you in this course. I live near campus, just two blocks north on West 30th Street.

**Course readings and video materials will be posted weekly on Blackboard in a file with the due date in the title. You should read or watch them *before* the classes in which they will be discussed. The regular reports on the readings should be submitted the day that the readings are discussed.**

Students can call the Blackboard Help line 24/7 at **213.740.5555** and choose option 2.

If you are experiencing issues logging into Blackboard, select option 1.

You may also find Online help at <https://studentblackboardhelp.usc.edu/>.

**Syllabi Fall 2020**

M Aug 17th **Introductions, Review Course Syllabus and Expectations**

W Aug 19th **Immigration in the U.S. Overview**, Native & African Americans.

“Slavery and the Bible” **BB**

**“**Letter to Philomen-New Testament” **BB**

Video: America’s Great Indian Nations (1995, 54 Min), **YouTube Video**: Slavery Scar on the U.S. (2017, 12 Min), Please watch videos *before* class meeting. All on **BB\***.

M Aug 24th **Catholic Trends and US Immigration:**

Video: The Immigration of the History of the U.S. of America (2014, 12 min). **YouTube. BB**

Article: “Roman Catholics and Immigration in the 19th Century,” by Julie Byrne (BB)

“When America Hated Catholics,” **BB**

Pew Research Center: “How US Immigration Laws and Rules have changed Through History” Internet **BB**

W Aug 26th **Critical Issue: Church and State, Religious Freedom**:

“In 1915: When Bigotry was all the Rage,” *LA Times*, 12/9/15 **BB**

“Al Smith and the Emergence of the New America,” *America* **BB**, “Religious Affiliation of U.S. Presidents,” two pages **BB,** “Who was Shut Out? Immigration Quotas,” one page, 1925-1927 **BB.**

M Aug 31st **Con’t**

W Sept 2nd **Catholicism and Evolution**

Planned Parenthood and Margaret Sanger **BB**

Eugenics (Buck Case) **BB**

“Catholicism and Science,” J. Heft **BB**

M Sept 7th **Labor Day: No Class**

W Sept 9th **Catholicism and Evolution** Con’t.

M Sept 14th **Exam #1**

W Sept 16th **Moral Theology and Social Thought BB**

M Sept 21st **Con’t**

W Sept 23rd **Catholicism and the Intellectual Life** **BB - First Paper Due**

M Sept 28th ***Yom Kippur*** Doyle: **Commandments, Virtues, Pacifism** **BB**

W Sept 30th Doyle, Con’t.

M Oct 5th Doyle: **Women and Feminism** **BB**

W Oct 7th Doyle: **Religious pluralism and atheism BB**.

M Oct 12th Con’t.

W Oct 14th **Exam #2.**

M Oct 19th **Racism and U.S. Catholicism:**

Video: IACS Website: Bishop Murry

Michelle Alexander, “The Injustice of This Moment is not an “Aberration,” **BB**

“Worship of a False God, interview, Fr. Bryan Massingale BB. U.S. Conference of Bishops (“*Brothers and Sisters to Us*,”), optional, **BB**.

W Oct. 21st **Spirituality and Art**: **Second Paper Due**

Video: Bill Moyers interviews Sr. Wendy Beckett, Art Historian (**YouTube**, parts 1through 6), **BB**

Plus CF, pp. 191-194, 201-204, 204-206, **BB**

M Oct 26th **Spiritual but not Religious** (Dr. Jan Stets) **BB** TBD

W Oct 28th **Open Topics**: Student Recommendations Welcome for Topics

M Nov 2nd **Hispanic Catholics:** Minority to Majority**.**

“Latino Catholics and the Transformation of Religion in the United States,” Bk Chap by and zoom with Fr. Alan Deck, S.J. **BB**

W Nov 4th **Da Vinci Code** (BB)

M Nov 9th **D Code con’t**, **Review** of Immigration and Catholicism **(BB)**

W. Nov 11th Last Class **Final Paper Due**.

**Final Exam: November 18, 8:00 – 10:00AM**

\* Blackboard - Content