

RELG 5559-004—Ethics and Aesthetics:
Engaging Religious Aesthetics in Public Life
 University of Virginia, Spring 2016

Professor: Nichole M. Flores Email: nichole.flores@virginia.edu Office Phone: (434) 243-3937 Office: Gibson S433 Twitter: @nicholemflor	Class Meetings: M 3:30-6PM Class Location: New Cabell Hall 368 Office Hours: Tuesday 3:15-4:15 Wednesday 1:00-2:00 Appointment by email
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

How might aesthetics inform approaches to religious engagement in plural socio-political contexts? After framing the question and exploring philosophical resources for response, the seminar explores contemporary theological and ethical conversations as well as constructive horizons in this vital area of inquiry.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Students are expected to attend each class and come prepared to engage in critical discussion of the assigned text. Students will be evaluated on the overall quality of participation and demonstrated capacity for collegiality and professionalism. – 10%
- **A one page, single-spaced essay discussing the week’s readings will be due via Collab each Monday at 1:00 PM.** All students must submit 9 out of 11 (no papers for weeks 1, 7, or 13; research abstracts due week 15). Essays will be returned on a weekly basis with comments but no grades. Please collect and resubmit the first 4 or 5 essays for grading; follow the same process with the second set of essays. Essays will be evaluated for accuracy, breadth of readings covered, specific references to the texts, and clarity and cogency of argument. – 20%
- **A final research essay of 20-25 pages should be posted to Collab by May 6 at 5pm.** Students will present brief abstracts of their research during the final week of class – 70%

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICIES:

- All written work should be posted to the Collab “Assignments” tab in Microsoft Word format using the following file format: LastName_Reflection1 (Gonzalez_Reflection1, Jones_FinalResearchEssay, etc.)
- Weekly reflections should be posted to Collab by 1pm on Mondays; the assignment will close promptly at 1pm and no late reflections will be accepted.
- Final research essay extensions will be considered under extenuating circumstances, however, **a new deadline will be assigned and enforced.**

AUDITOR EXPECTATIONS:

- Graduate Students and Doctoral Candidates are invited to audit the seminar
- Auditors are expected to register as auditors through UVa SIS
- Auditors are expected to attend seminar
- While auditors are not expected to write the weekly response essays or final research

paper, they are expected to submit a discussion question prior to class each week. Weekly submissions are crucial to the success of the seminar, especially in light of its communal and participatory aims.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Roberto S. Goizueta, *Christ Our Companion: Toward a Theological Aesthetics of Liberation*
2. Cecilia Gonzalez-Andrieu, *Bridge to Wonder: Art as a Gospel of Beauty*
3. John W. de Gruchy, *Christianity, Art and Transformation*
4. John Dewey, *Art as Experience*
5. Martha C. Nussbaum, *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice*
6. Maureen H. O'Connell, *If These Walls Could Talk: Community Muralism and the Beauty of Justice*
7. Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just*
8. Christopher D. Tirres, *The Aesthetics and Ethics of Faith*
9. Emilie M. Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*

Book reviews and supplemental texts are available via UVa Collab.

COURSE OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Week 1 – January 25

(Collab) O'Connell, "Appendix: Imagining the Signs of the Times"

(Collab) Frank Burch Brown, "Rethinking Aesthetics," excerpt from, "Can Aesthetics be Christian?" in *Religious Aesthetics: A Theological Study of Making and Meaning*

I. PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

Week 2 – February 1

Scarry

Week 3 – February 8

Nussbaum, Chapter 1 and Parts I & II

Week 4 – February 15

Nussbaum, Part III

Week 5 – February 22

Dewey

II. PERSPECTIVES IN ETHICS AND AESTHETICS

Week 6 – February 29

Wolterstorff

Week 7 – March 7

NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

Week 8 – March 14

De Gruchy

Week 9 – March 21

O'Connell

Week 10 – March 28

Townes

Week 11 – April 4

Goizueta

Week 12 – April 11

Gonzalez-Andrieu

Week 13 – April 18

No Class

Week 14 – April 25

Tirres

Week 15 – May 2

Research Abstract Presentations

Exam Week – May 6*Research Paper Due*