

Theology and Literature
LSHV 443-01
Wednesdays 6:30 – 9:30pm, September 7 – December 7, 2016
William J. O'Brien
obrienw@georgetown.edu

It would be difficult to assemble a more formidable array of readings for a consideration of age-old theological questions of meaning and mystery than those assigned in this *revised syllabus* for Theology and Literature. Though some classics from the Catholic tradition are no longer required reading for this class, participants who have become familiar with them either in other classes or on their own are likely to experience reverberations throughout the semester as voices from across the ages inevitably enter into the contemporary conversation.

General Learning Goals and Outcomes

The Graduate Liberal Studies Program at Georgetown University offers a course of study which engages students in reading, research, reflection, discussion, and writing. In the pursuit of the degree, students are to discern and wrestle with the content generally associated with the “liberal” arts in the root meaning of that term, namely, what it means for human beings to be endowed with freedom and what ennobles and enhances human freedom. Two goals of the program in general and of this seminar in particular are to analyze and assess human values (who are we and what ought we to do?) and to undertake such study in an interdisciplinary fashion. The intention is to draw from the social sciences as well as from those fields generally defined as the humanities (e.g., **theology**, philosophy, **literature**, and art), recognizing that the moral dimension of human life embraces social, political, and economic relationships as well as personal choices.

Readings

September 7	Introduction
September 14	Dante's <i>Inferno</i>
September 21	Samuel Beckett's <i>Waiting for Godot</i>
September 28	Albert Camus' <i>The Plague</i>
October 5	Etty Hillesum's <i>An Interrupted Life</i>
October 12	Jacques Lusseyran's <i>And There Was Light</i>
October 19	Edward P. Jones' <i>Lost in the City</i>
October 26	Walker Percy's <i>The Moviegoer</i>
November 2	E.L. Doctorow's <i>The City of God</i>
November 9	Fyodor Dostoyevsky's <i>The Grand Inquisitor</i>
November 16	Marilynne Robinson's <i>Home</i>
November 30	Annie Dillard's <i>Holy the Firm</i>
December 7	Isak Dineson's <i>Babette's Feast</i>

Writing

Three short (3-4 page) papers will be required of all who are registered for the course. At the end of each class meeting, participants will be given topics for possible papers related to the following class's assigned reading. Participants will be free to submit papers on any of the assigned readings.

Participants will also be expected to submit a more substantial (10 page) research paper. This paper will be due December 14. **All papers must be meticulously proofread and submitted on time. Late papers will be accepted, but will be subject to a letter grade penalty.**

Academic Standards: MALS and DLS students are responsible for upholding the Georgetown University Honor System and adhering to the academic standards included in the Honor Code Pledge stated below:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor; and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Disability Notice: If you believe you have a disability, you should contact the Academic Resource Center—Suite 335, Leavey Center (arc@georgetown.edu)—for further information. This office is responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.