

Benedictine Raven Teaching Guidelines

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Course Overview

The Benedictine Raven designation identifies courses, outside of Theological Explorations, Theological Integrations, and any course offered within the Theology Department, that provide students exposure to “the Catholic Intellectual Tradition as guided by the Benedictine principles of the colleges’ founders.” The Benedictine Raven designation provides students with more advanced (scaffolded) learning of Benedictine practices, values, and heritage. The designation encourages students to reflect on a Benedictine perspective throughout their curricular work, and especially outside of the exposure they typically receive in their Theological coursework or their co-curricular activities. The designation is intended to be embedded in courses of almost any discipline and taught by faculty from across all divisions. In these courses, students will create a reflective artifact for the electronic portfolio that explains or demonstrates how the student used a Benedictine perspective as a lens for examining or interpreting questions in contemporary life.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

1. Articulate awareness of a Benedictine perspective.
2. Apply a Benedictine perspective to questions in contemporary life.

Click [here](#) for a full list of scaffolded learning outcomes in the broader Integrations Curriculum.

Curriculum Guidelines

- Any course (except courses that fulfill Theological Explorations, Theological Integrations, Learning Foundations, or any course with a THEO course number) may also satisfy the Benedictine Raven.
- THEO 100 (Theological Explorations) is a pre- or co-requisite for a course carrying the RAVEN designation.
- Courses will provide relevant evidence for the portfolio artifact.
- Courses that would be particularly appropriate to carry the Benedictine Raven include:
 1. Cultural and Social Difference: Systems
 2. Way of Thinking – Thematic Focus course

Learning Goals and Teaching Guidelines

Students develop an awareness of a Benedictine perspective (practices, values, and heritage) using texts or experiences inside or outside the classroom and reflect on how a Benedictine perspective might apply to questions in contemporary life.

[How to Achieve the Learning Outcomes](#)

Students will be asked to articulate and awareness of a Benedictine perspective. How will the course provide students with the vocabulary, context, and tools to develop this awareness and to be able to articulate it? Examples might include texts, other content, and modes of delivery.

Students are expected to become aware of a Benedictine perspective as a lens for understanding problems or questions and to be able to explain or articulate that awareness. Course content will be necessary to introduce students to the vocabulary, context, and tools to develop awareness and to be able to articulate it. This content could be delivered in a variety of ways. For example, an instructor or guest speaker could deliver a lecture or presentation on aspects of Benedictine practices, values, or heritage relevant to the course. And/or, an instructor could guide students through a discussion of relevant reading(s) that offer a Benedictine lens. And/or an instructor could lead students through an analysis of work(s) of architecture or art associated with the Benedictine tradition that would be relevant to the course.

Content with a “Benedictine perspective” could include a breadth of sources far beyond *The Rule of Benedict* or the CSB/SJU list of Benedictine values. Instructors are encouraged to use a variety of content that is relevant to their discipline or course and that explores the continued working out of Benedictine practices, heritage, and values at CSB/SJU and beyond. The Benedictine Institute has an extensive bibliography of textual and video resources on the Benedictine perspective broken down by topic: <https://www.csbju.edu/benedictine-institute/benedictine-raven-resources>.

The Benedictine Raven does not mandate that a specific percentage of the course or content must include a Benedictine perspective. Rather, instructors may determine how much content reflecting a Benedictine perspective will help students in their course to successfully understand a Benedictine perspective on some matter, thereby enabling them to complete the Benedictine Raven artifact for the portfolio.

When providing content on a Benedictine perspective, it is imperative that the instructor conveys essential characteristics of a Benedictine perspective rather than general ways such characteristics are often seen in day-to-day life. For example, a course covering the Benedictine value of hospitality would need to address its deep, rich character within the Benedictine perspective, something that goes beyond the typical everyday use of that value. In other words, coverage of a Benedictine perspective must do justice to the perspective.

Students will use the Benedictine perspective that they have encountered in the course content as a lens for understanding or responding to a problem or question in contemporary life. How will your course ask students to apply this knowledge?

Students will use the Benedictine perspective they have encountered in their course content as a lens for understanding or responding to a problem or question in contemporary life. One example of how students could do this would be in a theme course. For a theme course on justice, students might read writings from a Benedictine perspective on justice alongside writings from other perspectives. The students would then include the Benedictine perspective in their

discussion of a topic or problem in justice from the course. For a theme course on truth, students might compare and contrast the kinds of truths that emanate from the Benedictine wisdom tradition with truths revealed by a disciplinary tradition (e.g., empirical knowledge of social sciences). For a disciplinary course, students might learn about how Benedictine heritage inflects the discipline being studied. For example, students in an astronomy class could learn about the heritage of observatories on the SJU campus through readings or a class presentation. In their reflective artifact, they could relate the significance of astronomy in these campuses' Benedictine tradition to a problem or question in the class. Students in an American literature or history course could compare and contrast how Americans significantly influenced by Benedictine principles, such as Dorothy Day and Rod Dreher (author of *The Benedict Option*), apply a Benedictine lens to American social problems. Finally, a course offering an Experiential Engagement through service learning might have students learn the Benedictine practice of *lectio divina* to hone listening with the ear of the heart and then use that manner of listening when interacting with elderly clients at an assisted living facility.

Finally, learning outcome #2 requires that students apply a Benedictine perspective to *questions in contemporary life*. The “questions in contemporary life” should be interpreted broadly. There are no specific set of questions to which this refers. Also, this statement does not mean a course is forbidden from delving into historical context of a Benedictine perspective; rather, it implies that a course cannot solely look at historical characteristics (e.g., the life of St. Benedict or the functioning of medieval monasteries) without connecting the ideas those topics generated to questions or issues relevant to contemporary life.

Students will submit an artifact generated in this class to their portfolio. This artifact should demonstrate that they have achieved the learning goals.

Students will create an artifact that provides relevant evidence of their awareness of a Benedictine perspective and how it applies to questions in contemporary life. Such artifacts should naturally flow from students achieving the first and second learning goals. The “relevant evidence” would be a demonstration that students had grappled with particular course content from a Benedictine perspective. For example, listening is a Benedictine practice. For their artifact for the portfolio, students would need to provide evidence that they could articulate specifically Benedictine dimensions of this practice. This might mean quoting or referencing the course content on Benedictine values, discussing a specifically Benedictine artifact or practice, or drawing on specific Benedictine heritage. They would need, in other words, to be able to create an artifact that could only have been generated by someone who had learned about the Benedictine perspective on listening.

Assessment

The following draft rubric will be used to: a) determine if proposed courses can acquire The Benedictine Raven designation and b) how the reflective artifact for the portfolio will be assessed.

	<i>Meets Expectations</i>
Articulates awareness of a Benedictine perspective	Identifies and describes prominent elements of a Benedictine perspective.
Applies a Benedictine perspective to questions in contemporary life	Describes relevant applications of a Benedictine perspective.
Provides relevant evidence for the portfolio artifact	Provides relevant evidence that demonstrates how the student applies a Benedictine perspective to questions in contemporary life.