

## **Theological Integrations Teaching Guidelines**

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### **Course Overview**

The requirement of the Theology course sequence in the Integrations curriculum emerges out of the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University's unique mission as Catholic Benedictine institutions. The discipline of theology occurs within the bounds of a commitment to a particular religious community: its scripture, traditions, and practices; and the willingness to affirm the normativity of its truth and values. This is in contrast with the discipline of religious studies, which calls for a descriptive, non-normative study of religion/s. For example, Christian theology classically has been defined as 'faith seeking understanding,' where faith is the point of departure and return in a reasoned search to understand the contents of that faith better. Thus, it is an inquiry into faith, belief, and the religious dimensions of human existence, whether one's own or that of others. This second theology course can be on a variety of topics that meet the learning objectives and can include religions other than Christianity.

### **Learning Goals**

#### Religious Engagement - Intermediate

Students analyze forms of religious engagement by drawing on sources that may come from a range of academic disciplines.

#### Theological Reasoning - Intermediate

Students interpret theological sources and their contexts. They compare perspectives on a teaching, theme, or doctrine.

#### Write - Intermediate

Students demonstrate consideration of the context, audience, and purpose of their writing and use compelling content to clearly support ideas. They consistently organize their arguments using relevant evidence. The language is clear and straightforward, with few errors.

Click [here](#) for a full list of scaffolded learning outcome

### **Curriculum Guidelines for Theological Integrations**

- Theological Explorations is a prerequisite
- Theological Integrations courses must be a 300-level course
- Theological Integrations courses can be taught in any department
- Theological Integrations courses cannot be designated as
  - A Cultural and Social Difference: Identity (CSD 1) or A Cultural and Social Difference: Systems (CSD 2) OR
  - A Way of Thinking, OR
  - Learning Foundations, Learning Explorations, or Learning Integrations.

- Theological Integrations courses can also carry an Engagement designation, except for the Benedictine Raven engagement.

### **Teaching Guidelines**

1. In the Religious Engagement - Intermediate Learning goal, students analyze forms of religious engagement by drawing on sources that may come from a range of academic disciplines.
  - a. This course moves students from an identification of one or more forms of religious engagement with society to an *analysis* of forms of religious engagement.
  - b. As stated in the learning goal, examples of religious engagement must be drawn from at least one discipline, but can draw from sources that come from a range of academic disciplines.
  - c. Religious engagement implies how religious persons engage society religiously or how religious beliefs and practices inform persons' social actions. Thus, it is not simply a matter of religious engagement within a particular faith community, but the implications of that engagement for society [which may include persons also beyond that community].
2. In the Theological Reasoning – Intermediate Learning goal, students interpret theological sources and their contexts.
  - a. This course moves students from the identification of theological sources to an *interpretation* of theological sources.
  - b. As stated in the beginner Theological Reasoning learning objective, theological sources, which may include scripture, practices, texts, or art forms, explain a theological teaching, doctrine, or theme.
  - c. Thus, these sources emerge from and operate within a particular religious community and aid that community in understanding its normative truth claims and values; students will study sources in the context in which they were produced.
  - d. Students will also compare multiple perspectives on theological teachings, themes, or doctrines.
    - For example, a student might be asked to compare different authors' perspective on the same theological theme or compare different faith traditions' teachings on a topic.
    - Although etymologically theology would seem to concern strictly theistic religions, as a reasoned discipline making sense of truth and value, theology can (and does) include non-theistic religions as well.
3. In the Intermediate Write Learning Goal, students demonstrate consideration of the context, audience, and purpose of their writing and use compelling content to clearly support ideas. The language is clear and straightforward, with few errors.
  - a. They consistently organize their arguments using relevant evidence. “Compelling evidence” can be drawn from class readings, or from additional research depending on the faculty member’s instructions.

- b. Students are expected to write at least two formal essays that contain appropriate evidence in support of the student's argument. In order to develop organizational skills, these essays should be at least four pages in length.
- c. Faculty may devote class time to teaching writing or provide individual instruction. Each of the required essays receives both peer and faculty feedback, and revision must be part of the process.
  - Specifically, at least one of the essays must involve a revise and resubmit process for students. The faculty feedback on these essays can come through significant written comments or an individual conference. Students are strongly encouraged to make use of the Writing Center.
- d. The intermediate Write learning goal will be assessed through an essay placed in the student's Integrated Portfolio.