

IDS COURSES – FALL 2012

442-01 – *Pondering the Big Questions* – Pennings

TR 9:30-11:20 a.m. – MM242

In this course we use the infinite as a unique springboard from which to dive into the “big questions” of life, such as the existence and nature of God, and our place in the scheme of things. We begin by studying the infinite, including its history and underlying philosophy, and its connections with absolute truth. Then we branch into related topics beginning with the special and temporal infinity/finiteness of the universe. This look outward leads us to gaze inward: our self-awareness, a holistic view of body and mind, our morality, and theodicy are all topics for reading and discussion. Finally, we consider the existence of absolute moral truth. (No special knowledge of mathematics is needed for this course.)

452-01 – *Education & Christian Ways of Living* – Donk

W 1:00-3:50 p.m. – VZN247

An examination of how Christians think they ought to live, how and why they think they ought to live that way, and how Christian ways of living can and should affect teachers, teaching and learning. Special attention is given to the influence teachers have on the values of their students.

455-01 – *Vocation and Health Care* – Hoogerwerf

T 7:00-9:50 p.m. – LH121

This course is designed to explore what it means to think about the meaning of vocation (from the Latin *vocare*, to call) especially in the context of health care. Using the concept of vocation suggests several questions: What would it mean to be 'called' as a caregiver or healer? How would health care be different if one approached it as vocation rather than simply a career? How does theology, spirituality, and ethics become an integral part of the vocation to care for those who are sick? If students do not expect to be working in health care, similar questions can be posed with the context of their own field and work. When we consider our vocations or callings, we do not only think about jobs. Our life is more than our work, and our sense of calling can inform all of life: our relationships, leisure, citizenship, use of natural resources, and our service to the wider communities we live in. The way we frame our questions and answers will unavoidably draw on the religious or philosophical perspectives we bring, so our topic is inescapably concerned with our worldviews.

457-01 – *Christian Thought and Spiritual Life* – Perovich

TR 3:00-4:20 p.m. – MM159

An exploration of the Christian spiritual traditions with an emphasis on the integration of prayer and the encounter with God into everyday life. Representative readings from Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox sources will investigate characteristic Christian ways of becoming aware of God, of interpreting that awareness, and of shaping our lives in response to it.

463-01 – *Family, Faith, and Calling* – Frens

TR 9:30-10:50 a.m. - TBA

This interdisciplinary course will explore the intricate relationship and balancing acts between family and work, faith and calling, job and vocation. By applying the Christian ways of understanding stewardship, service, family dynamics, and calling, students will come to recognize and articulate their own personal values and convictions in their responsibilities to God, family, and employer. Readings, journaling, and discussions will help students form reasoned positions on a variety of issues relating to family, faith, and calling in contemporary American society.

468-01 – *Change, Complexity, Christianity* – Portfleet
TR 12:00-1:20 p.m. – LH222

When a culture undergoes profound change, the members of that culture many times experience confusion and insecurity because they are caught between two value structures and two expectations. The old role models, ultimate truths (religious and cultural), skills and ways of thinking no longer seem to work in this new culture. We are currently in such a time of accelerating change as our culture shifts from the 2nd Wave Culture (the Industrial/ Scientific culture) to the 3rd Wave Culture (the Information Age). This course will explore the complex changes occurring, the new value structures emerging, and the relationship of the Christian faith to this new culture.

SENIOR SEMINAR COURSES – FALL 2012

495-01 – *Making Good on Your Dreams* – Lunderberg
MW 3:00-4:20 p.m. – LH120

Backpacking across Europe. Signing on for an extended service project. Growing in your knowledge of yourself and your world. Getting accepted by your top choice of grad schools. Interviewing for your dream job. Establishing a relationship with a significant other. As you think about college and about graduating from college, what do you imagine to be your absolutely top-notch, sparkling, over-the-top, utopian experience?

In this class, we'll think about the ways we define our perfect worlds on several levels: personal, political, global. We'll talk about our responsibilities in shaping, in making this utopian adventure, and we'll examine what our ideas of "the perfect world" mean within the context of the Christian faith. We'll consider how we respond when the world we live in doesn't meet our expectations. (Not just "why do bad things happen to good people," but why do bad things happen to me and how do I deal with them?)

We'll read some great literature by writers who have dreamed of what a perfect world might look like--and by others who are scary-good at pointing out the challenges to such idealizations. Energetic class discussion will be our goal. Disagreement and rebellion will be encouraged. Writing assignments will include reading responses and short essays which will culminate in the Senior Seminar "Life View" paper.

495-02 – *Perfecting People* – Herrick
TR 12:00-1:20 p.m. – GRV201

This course explores efforts to promote bio-technological enhancements to the human body and mind, as well as related developments such as artificial intelligence, robotics, extending the human life span, and space exploration. Arguments and narratives developed in print and visual media—including fictional media such as books and movies—will be considered, as will scientific publications and popular writing by scientists. Particular attention will be paid to arguments and narratives about progress, human evolution, or improving the human race. The history, ethics, and religious implications of enhancement technologies will also be taken up.

495-03 – *Things That Matter*- Dykstra
W 6:00-8:50 p.m. – LH220

What are the things that matter? What sustains and motivates, who helps us learn and grow, where can we go for meaning and consolation? Searching for answers, we often look to past lives to understand aspects of our own lives: childhood, growth, love, faith. This senior seminar will do just that, reading biographies of 19th and 20th century figures, such as Walt Whitman and Isak Dinesen, to probe and discuss central questions in our own lives. We'll also look to biography as inspiration and guide to

writing our own story. Class time will be devoted to discussion and to writing workshops; assignments include short papers, a class presentation, and a substantial life view paper.

495-04 – *Doubt and Faith in a Secular Age*- Husbands

TR 1:30-2:50 p.m. – LH222

Taking up W.H. Auden's claim that there is a great difference between "believing something still" and "believing something again" this course examines doubt and belief in the midst of a post-Christian West. A common attitude to Christianity is effectively captured in Emerson's remark (made at the close of his last sermon on the Lord's Supper): "I have no hostility to this institution" it's just that "I am not interested in it". Looking at sociology, the "new atheism," literature, cultural analysis, and Christian theology, this course seeks to understand why belief in a secular age is fragile. Seeking to recover an account of faith relevant to humanists and radicals, we aim to discern patterns of our lives that give rise to the hope that we may bear the image of God.