

THEO 280: Religion and Interdisciplinary Studies

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions

Religion and Interdisciplinary Studies: Theologies and Spiritualities of Resistance

THEO 280-003

Attributes: Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies Minor

[Dr. Derrick Witherington](#)

Tues-Thurs 8:30 – 9:45 a.m.

The Christian life consists of love of God and love of neighbor, and this requires that Christians adopt certain postures and practices which places the love of God and others at the center of their lives. While this mindset and set of practices should inform Christian practice at all times, during times of persecution, unrest, or upheaval, circumstances have called and continue to call for heroic and even risky expressions of Christian love which themselves resist ideologies which divide, exclude, and separate people from God and others. In this course, we will be examining a set of Christian spiritual practices through the ages which can be read as “spiritualities of resistance” and so gain an appreciation for how Christian spirituality can be seen as a means of resisting harmful ideologies. The course will present a thematic survey of the history of Christian spirituality, including a focus on the role of the prophet, martyrdom, mysticism, and public/political theologies. Figures we will explore include Ignatius of Antioch, Augustine, Martin Luther, Simone Weil, Edith Stein, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, James Cone, René Girard, Gustavo Guttierrez, and Pope Francis, along with others. By the end of the course, students will be able to articulate the shape and themes of a Christian Theology of Resistance theologically and philosophically and also be able to explain how various historical and cultural pressures have shaped this spirituality in the past and present.

Religion and Interdisciplinary Studies: Queer and Trans Studies in Religion Through Film

THEO 280-004 and 005

[Dr. Molly Greening](#)

Tues-Thurs 1:00 pm – 2:15 pm (Section 004)

Tues-Thurs 2:30 pm – 3:45 pm (Section 005)

This course will be taught through the lens of queer and trans studies in religion with a heavy emphasis on film as a medium for critical reflection. Using Melissa Wilcox’s *Queer Religiosities* as our textbook, we will reflect on themes like stories, conversations, practices, identities, communities, and politics and power throughout the semester. Students will gain literacy in the disciplines of religious studies and gender studies through in-depth exploration of course content, interactive class discussion, and films mostly available through Loyola’s libraries. They will be challenged to understand the real-world application of these concepts by

keeping up with news stories that highlight current events concerning gender and religion. Students will gain confidence in their ability to have discussions about LGBTQIA+ issues and religion while critically engaging multiple theoretical frameworks from the disciplines of religious studies, queer theory, and trans studies.

Religion and Interdisciplinary Studies: Religion and Technology

THEO 280-01W (WRITING INTENSIVE)

[Dr. Olivia Stewart-Lester](#)

MWF 10:25-11:15 am

This writing intensive seminar will analyze the ways religion and technology intersect in our modern life. It will also argue that the study of religion provides distinctive tools to illuminate the ways human beings produce, interact with, and are shaped by technology, even in contexts where the future of traditional religious movements is uncertain. Drawing on foundational and cutting-edge religious studies scholarship, this course will examine the following topics: community in the digital age; AI, sentience, and the divine; tech use and ritual; founders and scriptures; technology, consumption, and celebrity; asceticism, digital fasting, and “monk mode.” The course will conclude by considering the future(s) of technology and religion, and what these intersecting themes have to say about our shared humanity.

Units

1. Technology, religion, and community (Greg Epstein, *Tech Agnostic: How Technology Became the World's Most Powerful Religion, and Why It Desperately Needs a Reformation*)
2. Technology, sentience, and the divine (Tanya Luhrmann, *How God Becomes Real*)
3. Technology and ritual (Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*)
4. Technology and scripturalization (Vincent Wimbush, *Scripturalectics: The Management of Meaning*)
5. Technology, consumption, and celebrity (Kathryn Lofton, *Consuming Religion*)
6. Technology and asceticism (Elizabeth A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity*)
7. Technology, religion, and the future

Religion and Interdisciplinary Studies: Christianity, Race, Prisons and Policing

THEO 280-002

Attributes: Race and Ethnicity Minor; Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies Minor

Dr. Sandra Sullivan-Dunbar

MWF 12:35 pm – 1:25 pm

This course will explore how Christianity has been used both as a tool of colonizing power and as a source of liberating resistance, with specific reference to the construction of race and white supremacy in the United States context. We will ask how Christianity has been entangled with both slavery and abolitionism, with policing and calls for the reform or the abolition of policing, with mass incarceration and with movements to disrupt the carceral state. We will examine how some White Christians developed theologies to justify slavery and white supremacy, and some Black Christians developed theologies that empowered them to resist and seek liberation.

We will read classical and contemporary Christian thinkers and their reflections on the use of state power, including policing, to maintain social order, and when and whether Christians should participate in the use of force. We will read the work of a prominent Christian ethicist who once served as a law enforcement officer, as well as arguments for the abolition or radical transformation of policing. Finally, we will ask about connections between the legacy of slavery and mass incarceration and current escalations of immigration enforcement and policing by federal agencies.

Readings will likely include selections from the following:

- Robert P. Jones, *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity*
- Kelly Brown Douglas: *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God*
- Selections from Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, on state use of force
- Tobias Winright, *Serve and Protect: Selected Essays on Just Policing*
- Mariame Kaba, *We Do This Til We Free Us: Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice*