

REL 401 Paper Information

For Paper 1 and Paper 2, choose two of the topics listed and write a paper on each. You may choose other topics if you obtain prior approval. Each paper should be at least 1800 words in length and double spaced.

Organization: Papers would benefit from an outline. If a paper cannot be outlined, the organization is likely weak. Paragraphs should have a topic sentence, and paragraphs should be related to an overall purpose expressed through a thesis sentence. No abstract will be required.

Each paper should contain a short biographical section on the authors, taken from the internet; this section should not be more than 250 words. If the internet does not give biographical information for your author, then use paper sources. For your topic research, however, the internet is **not** the best place.

Research: Research for the papers should follow the recommended primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are the "materials on a topic upon which subsequent interpretations or studies are based, anything from firsthand documents such as poems, diaries, court records, and interviews to research results generated by experiments, surveys, ethnographies, and so on." (Hairston, Maxine and Ruszkiewicz, John. *The Scott Foresman Handbook for Writers* (4th ed). New York: HarperCollins College Publishers, 1996, p. 547.) If you need help with sources, you can go to the [Saint Leo Library website](#) and refer to the link, How to Distinguish Between "Primary" and "Secondary" Sources.

Quotation and paraphrase: More than three consecutive words used by another author need to be documented as a direct quotation (as a block quote or with quotation marks). Both paraphrase and direct quotation need to be documented with a footnote, an endnote or citation. The purpose of such documentation is to enable the reader to find your source with ease. Keep the use of quotations to a minimum, and use MLA formatting. If you need help with the formatting, you can go to the Online Library.

Documentation of Classical Literature: Citing Sources in Text.

The *MLA Handbook for Writers* (2003, section 6.4.8, p. 254), in its section titled "Citing Literary and Religious Works," says the following:

"When included in parenthetical references, the titles of the books of the Bible and of famous **literary works** are often abbreviated (1 Chron. 21.8, Rev. 21.3...)."

Notice that *MLA* format does not italicize the abbreviations for titles of the books of the Bible, but does italicize the abbreviations of the titles for classical literature. Note also that page numbers are not given, rather section and chapter numbers are given; these latter enable the reader to find the location of your source material in any edition or translation.

For classical works, including the Bible, please give chapter and section numbers. If you would like to add page numbers after chapter and section numbers, that is acceptable, but page numbers are not necessary. For classical literature accessed electronically give the URL, and if there are chapter and section numbers, please include those. If there are no chapter and section numbers, please submit paper copies of the sections of the material used.

Possible Topics with Resources found on the Internet:

- Christian Classics Ethereal Library (CCEL) is a good internet source: <<http://www.ccel.org>>.
- The Vatican is an excellent internet source at <<http://www.vatican.va>>.
- Describe and discuss the factors that contributed to Saint Augustine's conversion, as recounted in his *Confessions*.
- Describe the stages of love in Bernard of Clairvaux in his *On Loving God*. Compare and contrast with your own understanding of love or that of any other author.
- Describe in detail what kinds of positive language God Thomas Aquinas notes in his *Summa Theologiae* (also spelled *Summa Theologica*), and comment on the value of the idea of analogy.
- Explain the different paths to God found in Bonaventure's *The Soul's (or Mind's) Journey to God* <<http://www.franciscan-archive.org/bonaventura/index.html#writings>>.
- Show how the dignity of the human person is at the heart of Catholic teaching on social justice in *Pacem in Terris*.
- Discuss John Paul II's criticisms of socialism and capitalism in his *Centesimus Annus*.
- Pope Benedict XVI criticizes consumerism (see Vatican website); what does he mean by this?
- Compare and contrast the positions of Stark's *The Victory of Reason* with Freeman's *The Closing of the Western Mind* concerning Christianity as help and or hindrance to the intellectual development of the West.
- Give a history of the Catholic Church on the death penalty and note how it has changed over time.
- Recount the Catholic Church's responses to Nazi anti-semitism.

Possible Topics with Resources found in the Saint Leo Library:

- Discuss the meaning of mystery, especially as used by Karl Rahner (see Rahner's *Theological Investigations*, vol. IV, pp. 37-47, 54-55, 71-73 or McCool's *A Rahner Reader*, pp. 108-120).
- What does Augustine mean by saying the human being is an image of God? (See Augustine's own writings, plus secondary sources.)
- Explain the meaning of the soul as image of God according to Bernard of Clairvaux? (See his own writings, plus secondary sources.)
- Describe the stages of love in Bernard of Clairvaux in his *On Loving God*, and the descriptions of love in Erich Fromm's *The Art of Loving*; comment on the differences.
- What does Bonaventure mean by saying the human being is an image of God? (See Bonaventure's own writings, plus secondary sources, especially by Ewert Cousins and E. Gilson.)
- Describe and discuss the factors that contributed to Augustine's conversion in his *Confessions*.
- Explain what Bonaventure means when he speaks of God as self diffusiveness of the Good. (See E. Cousins and Bonaventure's own work.)
- Describe and discuss the factors that contributed to Thomas Merton's conversion in *The Seven Storey Mountain*.
- Discuss the meaning of "anonymous Christian" according to Rahner (see Rahner's *Theological Investigations*, vol. V & VI, and/or *The Rahner Reader*).

- Discuss the meaning of Christ for Teilhard de Chardin. (See his *Christianity and Evolution*.)
- How does Teilhard justify placing God/Christ in evolution?
- Discuss Teilhard's contribution to tensions between science and religion. (In addition to Teilhard's writing, see Impey, C. and C. Petry's *Science and Theology* from the University of Notre Dame Press.)
- Is chance compatible with the notion of Divine Providence? (See E. Johnson's "Does God Play Dice? Divine Providence and Chance" *Theological Studies*, 57 (1996), 3-18, and Haught, John's *Science and Religion: from Conflict to Conversation* (Paulist, 1995).)
- Discuss the theory which sees Christianity as the fulfillment of non-Christian religions (see Knitter and Vatican II).
- What are the two types of suffering described by J. Dunne in his *The Way of All the Earth*?
- Discuss Panikkar's *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Mankind*. (In addition to this book see also the article on him in Karkkaine's *Trinity and Religious Pluralism*. Ashgate Publishing.)
- Discuss the factors contributing to the relativizing of religious statements as noted by Swidler in his *Toward a Universal Theology of Religion*.
- Discuss the positions on, or implications of, inter-religious dialog as described in Swidler's *Toward a Universal Theology of Religion*.
- Apply the criteria of a just war from Catholic documents to the war in Iraq.
- Show how the dignity of the human person is at the heart of Catholic teaching on social justice in *Pacem in Terris*. (See *Pacem in Terris* and Hollenbach's *Claims in Conflict*.)
- Discuss Rahner's understanding of revelation, and its applicability to non-Christian religions. (See his *Foundations of Christian Faith* and Dulles' *Models of Revelation* (Doubleday, 1983).)
- Discuss the meaning of revelation in the *Documents of the Second Vatican Council* (see original documents and commentaries).
- Discuss how the Bible is a norm for the Christian faith. (See G. Baum's *New Horizons*, pp. 35-50, and/or G. O'Collins' *The Bible for Theology*.)
- Explain what Dulles means by "the Symbolic Structure of Revelation" in the article of the same name in *Theological Studies*, vol. 41, pp. 51-73.
- Discuss the meaning of God as treated in the Old and New Testaments (see biblical dictionaries and K. Armstrong's *A History of God*).
- Discuss the meaning of the word of God as treated in the Old and New Testaments (see biblical dictionaries).
- How does historical awareness affect the interpretation of the Bible and church teaching? (See Brown's *Biblical Reflections on Crises Facing the Church*, and the writings of B. Lonergan.)
- Why does M. Fox want to de-emphasize the historical quest for Jesus while emphasizing the cosmic Christ in *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*?
- Was Jesus of Nazareth omniscient? (See Brown's *Jesus God and Man*; O'Collins' *Interpreting Jesus*; Gutwenger's article in *Who is Jesus of Nazareth*; and *The Rahner Reader*.)
- Was Jesus an apocalyptic teacher? (See Schillebeeckx's *Jesus*, or N. Perrin's *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus*).
- How may a theologian justify referring to Jesus as an ethical liberator? (See O'Grady's

Models of Jesus, and perhaps Sobrino's *Christology at the Crossroads*.)

- Discuss whether Christ is the symbol of the self, or the self a symbol of Christ. (See Jung's *Collected Works*, vol. 9, part II, and vol. 17, ch. VII.)
- Why, according to H. Balthasar's *Prayer*, is contemplation necessary?
- Compare and contrast the understandings of vocation according to Fowler (in *Becoming Adult Becoming Christian*) and Jung (in his *Collected Works* vol. 17, ch. VII).
- Describe the method(s) of inner healing found in Linns' *Healing Life's Hurts*.
- Is Thomas Berry's notion of "new story" a threat, challenge, or enhancement to Christianity (see his *Dream of the Earth*)?
- What is the neglected virtue that Matthew Fox wants to highlight for contemporary Christianity in his *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*?
- Does Christianity have an answer to suffering according to Schillebeeckx's *Christ*?
- How might one decide which theological models are better than others? (See McFague's *Metaphorical Theology*.)
- Is God the Father a model or an idol according to Sallie McFague?
- Was Jesus a Revolutionary? (See Cullmann's *Jesus and the Revolutionaries*, and Nolan's *Jesus Before Christianity*, or Boff's *Jesus Christ Liberator*.)
- Discuss Thomas Merton's view of the roots of war.
- Show how Catholic Christianity contributed to the development of capitalism (see R. Stark's *The Victory of Reason*).
- What is Christian and Biblical fundamentalism? (See Kung's *Fundamentalism and Ecumenical Challenge*, and B. Lawrence's *Defenders of God and/or Martyr's Fundamentalisms Observed*.)
- Show how Christianity, in the middle ages and beyond, both supported and retarded the development of western science and technology. (See Rodney Stark and Thomas Woods.)

Continue to next page for grading information.

Grading Rubric

Paper 1, 100 points, 30%

Paper 2, 100 points, 30%

GRADE A PAPER:

1. Accurate use of English including careful documentation and good organizational plan.
2. Adequate research including use of primary source(s)
3. Ability to paraphrase and use quotation.
4. Accurate and complete reflection of material read for assignment.
5. Creative application of material to some other reading, to some problems, and/or critical questioning in reasoned manner.

GRADE B+ PAPER:

1. Accurate use of English including careful documentation and good organizational plan.
2. Adequate research including use of primary source(s)
3. Ability to paraphrase and use quotation.
4. Accurate and complete reflection of material read for assignment.

GRADE B PAPER:

1. Generally accurate use of English, including careful documentation and good organizational plan.
2. Adequate research including use of primary source(s)
3. Ability to paraphrase and use quotation.
4. Generally accurate use of English, including careful documentation and good organizational plan, but less-than-accurate reflection of material read.

GRADE C+ PAPER:

1. Not completely accurate use of English and/or less unified organization.
2. Adequate research including use of primary source(s)
3. Ability to paraphrase and use quotation.
4. Either not completely accurate or less-than-complete reflection of material read.

GRADE C PAPER:

1. Poor English usage and poor organization.
2. Less than adequately researched.
3. Ability to paraphrase and use quotation.
4. Not completely accurate or less-than-complete reflection of material.

GRADE D PAPER:

1. Poor English usage, poor organization poor documentation.
2. Inadequate research.

GRADE F PAPER:

1. Failure to meet requirements of assignment through poor English usage, poor organization, poor documentation, poor research and poor reflection of material read.