

Jesuit International Summer Seminar on Religion in the Virtual Age
Gonzaga University
July 6- 31, 2020

Tentative Schedule (classes meet 9:00-12:00 weekdays)

Week one: Philosophical Reflections on the Virtual Age

Monday July 6: Introduction;

- Models for understanding technology's relationship to society

Tuesday: Communication technology's influence on culture and identity

- Mimetic and oral culture
- Literate culture

Wednesday: Virtual culture

- Electronic mass media
- online communication: texts vs hypertexts

Thursday: the virtual networked self.

- The virtual self as a networked self, threats to meaning and identity
- Distributed intelligence: Embodied, embedded and extended

Friday: Virtual ontology

- Distributed agency: from networked agency to automation and the internet of things
- life as information flow, gene editing; Reality as networked intelligence

Week Two: Theological Reflections on the Virtual Age

Monday July 13: Religion as refuge:

- Heidegger/Borgmann: instrumental devices vs practices and things
- Spodaro's concerns with Virtual Sacraments

Tuesday: Virtual technologies as foils for religious thought

- Introduction to Transhumanism
- Radical life extension

Wednesday: Transcendence: technological and religious.

- Artificial intelligence and the singularity
- Teilhard and Transhumanism

Thursday: Virtual Theology

- Our Reality as God's Virtual Reality
- Avatar Christology
- Mystical Incandescence

Friday: day off

Saturday: Panel on spirituality and the high tech industry

- Panel discussion with John Hemminson and Bob McCambridge, venture capitalists with experience in investing in internet startups

Week Three: Workshop on Virtual Evangelization

Monday July 20: introduction to the second axial age

- Inter-religious dialogue as a model for evangelizing a secular and pluralistic digital culture.
- Laudato Si's critique of technology and adding ecology to faith and justice.

Tuesday: evangelizing digital natives

- Lessons from megachurches' use of digital media
- Virtual ecclesiology, online churches and prayer apps.

Wednesday: High school and college demographics

- Christian Astran: Campus minister, Loyola High, LA
- Luke: director of University Ministry, Gonzaga University

Thursday: young adults digital ministry

- Young adult ministry in Boise and Spokane
- Martinez: Youtube evangelization.

Friday

- Digital evangelization in India, Africa and Latin America

Week four: Student presentations

Seminar Tracks:

The seminar will have two tracks to choose from:

- You could sign up for a graduate-level course in the Philosophy of Religion or the Philosophy of Technology. The seminar would end with a research paper/class presentation. There will be an opportunity to present your paper at a conference on virtual religion the following winter at Gonzaga.
- If you do not need or cannot use the credit, you could also simply attend and participate in the seminar without credit. In this case you would still be expected to have a research project to present to the class and would have the opportunity to present at the conference the following year.
- In either case afternoons and weekends would be free to pursue research and enjoy the natural beauty and recreational opportunities afforded by our location in the Pacific Northwest interior.

Costs:

Gonzaga charges \$2,500 per 3 credit graduate course. Per diem in the Jesuit community is \$40 per day, or \$1,000 for the four weeks. Thus total cost would for taking the seminar for credit would be \$3,500. If one elects to take the seminar without credit, the seminar cost drops to \$1,000. For international students, we have scholarship money available to cover per diem. For those traveling from abroad we may also be able to help cover travel costs as well.

Relationship to US Jesuit Formation Learning Outcomes:

This summer seminar addresses several of the learning outcomes identified by the June 2014 document on the initial intellectual formation of Jesuit Brothers and Scholastics.

Regarding the study of the context of mission:

- The seminar will enable an understanding and appreciation of the complexities of the human condition
- It will provide an analysis of structures and developments in society and culture, especially those relevant to faith, justice, religious pluralism and ecological issues.
- Scholastics will encounter important texts illustrating how thinkers and cultures have sought to respond to fundamental questions and dimensions of human and social existence.
- It will offer a methodology for continually reflecting on changing contexts of mission.

Regarding the content of the faith:

- Scholastics will be introduced to a systematic understanding of how the mysteries of faith relate to human existence and history
- It will open a dialogue with the secular world and mindset.

Regarding pedagogy:

- The seminar seeks to cultivate an appreciative and critical appropriation of scholastics' own cultural, intellectual and religious tradition with a respectful openness and humble attentiveness to the Other.
- The seminar will be interdisciplinary, with ongoing interaction and dialogue between experience and reflection, theory and praxis.
- It will employ academic rigor and clarity while stimulating the imagination and creativity
- The seminar would form a community of learners and stimulate among scholastics ongoing searching, inquiry, reflection and study on the many pressing current issues it raises. It will marry philosophical, social scientific and theological analysis to pastoral discernment and spiritual practice.

For more information:

If you are interested in participating in this summer seminar on Religion in the Virtual Age or would like more information feel free to email clancy@gonzaga.edu. Hope to see you this summer!