Faith, Doubt, and Reason

Mark W. Roche

Course Description

The College Seminar on “Faith, Doubt, and Reason” will explore questions of both existential and scholarly interest. What are the varieties of faith? What obstacles exist to faith? What thoughts and experiences trigger doubt? In what ways do doubt and reason undermine faith? In what ways do they reinforce faith? How might we distinguish and evaluate different forms of reason? By which criteria might we determine the validity of conflicting faith traditions? What roles do faith and doubt play in the diverse disciplines of the College of Arts and Letters? What are the roles of faith, doubt, and reason in the conduct of discussion? The seminar will explore faith and doubt not only in relation to God and religious questions, but also in relation to one’s sense of self, trust in other persons, belief in institutions, and identification with values and ideas.

The works that will guide our discussions will come from each of the College’s divisions. Readings in the humanities will be taken from such works and authors as Plato, Lessing, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Weil, Jonas, and John Paul II. Readings from the social sciences will include classical authors such as Freud as well as contemporary writers. The arts will include visits to the museum or the Basilica, theater and dance performances, and films by directors such as Alfred Hitchcock and Woody Allen.

The course will be student-centered, with considerable focus on discussion. In addition to various writing assignments, the course will include student-led discussions, classroom debates, oral interviews, and oral exams, all of which will be designed to help students develop the capacities to formulate clear questions, listen carefully and attentively, explore ideas through dialogue, argue for and against differing positions, and express their thoughts eloquently and persuasively. If the course brings as many questions as answers, another course goal, helping students recognize nuance and complexity, will have been met.

College Seminar

The College Seminar is a required course for all sophomores majoring in Arts and Letters. Each College Seminar has four essential components: (1) a focus on great questions and topics; (2) an introduction to the College and its diverse ways of approaching issues by including material from the arts, humanities, and social sciences; (3) an introduction to a selection of major works, including at least some works from earlier eras; and (4) an emphasis on discussion and other activities that help students develop their capacities for oral expression and intellectual agility.

Learning Goals

1) Students will gain familiarity with a major question appropriate for emerging intellectuals, especially at a Catholic university: what are the complex relationships among faith, doubt, and reason? In so doing, they will learn to enjoy the life of the mind and to value complexity.
2) Students will learn the diversity of ways in which the various divisions of the College—the arts, the humanities, and the social sciences—approach a challenging issue, and they will advance their skills in evaluating the tenability of various kinds of arguments.

3) Students will gain insight into a selection of classical works and will advance their skills in interpreting cultural documents, e.g., in asking pertinent and interesting questions of works and arguing for and against various interpretations.

4) Students will learn to become more adept in intellectual discussion, improving their capacity for empathetic and thoughtful listening as well as for articulate precision and persuasive argument; they will also discover how much they are able to learn from one another.

5) Students will advance in their mastery of the English language, both spoken and written, and they will improve their basic communication skills insofar as they accompany the organization and communication of their thoughts.

6) Students will develop their own positions on faith, doubt, and reason, and they will be able to describe them and defend them in the light of alternative positions. They will become more articulate in speaking about their own faith and the complexities of faith, doubt, and reason. At the same time, they will become more conscious of the mysterious and inexhaustible nature of these categories. In relating to these issues in a personal way, they will also recognize a strong relationship between their academic work and their personal lives.

Student Contributions to Learning and Assessment Guidelines

Prerequisites: at least sophomore year status in the College of Arts and Letters and a willingness to carry out the assignments below in order to engage deeply the meaningful and profound questions of the course and to meet or exceed the learning goals.

1) **Class Contribution**: 40%;

Students will be expected to contribute regularly to discussion and to adopt various facilitative roles during the semester, including leading or co-leading class discussions. Class contribution is not equivalent with the quantity of class participation; instead both quantity and quality will be considered. Feedback, including suggestions for improvement, will be given to students multiple times during the semester. Because student learning is aided by active student participation in the classroom, students will want to prepare well and contribute regularly and meaningfully to group discussions.

2) **Regular Assignments**: 20%;

On a regular basis, assignments will be given in which students practice their capacity for oral expression, for example, by winding the telling of a parable into a conversation and reporting on its success, by conducting an oral interview, by engaging in a group discussion outside of class,
or by analyzing a videotape of their own capacity for oral performance. Assignments also involve answering central questions on the reading. These assignments will be designed not only to aid understanding but also to help initiate and facilitate discussion. Some of the questions will be focused on the texts; others will go beyond the texts and invite students to develop their own thinking on the subject. The total number of obligatory written assignments is likely to be between 20 and 25. Each assignment is expected to be approximately one page (double-spaced), with a font size of 12; it should not be more than 1 ½ pages. In addition, at least two optional assignments will be offered as possible substitutions or as possible extra credit.

You will also be asked to play a leading role in some of the discussions and may in that context be assigning study questions to your colleagues.

At one point well into the semester I will ask you to share some peer evaluations with one another. I will ask you to identify one strength and one recommendation for each student in the class besides yourself.

Please note that at the end of the semester I will collect all of your short papers a second time. They will be returned to you after the grades are finalized.

3) **Mid-term Oral Examination**: 10%;

Each student will have a mid-term oral examination of approximately 30 minutes, during which questions specific to the works discussed in class as well as related questions of a broader interest will be engaged. Because each examination is individualized, it should be an excellent opportunity to develop one’s ideas in conversation and to assess one’s learning to date.

4) **Final Oral Examination**: 20%;

Each student will also have a final oral examination of approximately 45 minutes.

5) **One 5-10 Page Paper**: 10%.

This longer written assignment will allow students to engage some aspect of faith, doubt, or reason in greater depth.

The goals of each assignment and of all evaluation are to improve understanding and performance. For more detailed comments on these assignments and on assessment guidelines, see below.

**Logistical Information**

**Class**: Tuesdays and Thursdays mornings from 11:00 to 12:15; 335 Edward J. DeBartolo Hall

**Office**: 349 Decio Hall
Office Hours: Office hours will be of three kinds: regularly scheduled office hours on Tuesdays from 9:30 to 10:30 and from 2:00 to 3:00 and on Thursdays from 2:00 to 3:00; occasionally scheduled office hours, which will vary during the semester and which will be announced to students via e-mail; and office hours by appointment (to be scheduled in person or via e-mail). Impromptu meetings can also often be arranged before or after class.

Phone: (574) 302-1813 (office and cell); (269) 683-8857 (home)

E-mail: mroche@nd.edu; Web: http://mroche.nd.edu/

Essential Reading

Plato, *Five Dialogues* (Hackett)
Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Penguin)
Lessing, *Nathan the Wise* (Bedford / St. Martin’s)
Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* (Penguin)
Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ* (Penguin)
John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* (Pauline)

E-Reserve and Reserve

The following materials have been placed on electronic reserve in the Library:


The materials can be accessed by going to https://www.library.nd.edu/eresources/ereserves//course.cgi?course=2010F_CSEM_23101_27,
or you may go to the University Libraries Website at http://www.library.nd.edu/ and click on the Reserves link under Services.

Each of the three films we will be viewing has also been placed on reserve.

**Recommended Reading**


**Calendar of Classes and Readings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 24, 2010</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 26, 2010</td>
<td>Read syllabus and Simone Weil (syllabus plus 9 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 31, 2010</td>
<td>Plato, <em>Euthyphro</em> (20 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2, 2010</td>
<td>Plato, reread <em>Euthyphro</em> (20 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 7, 2010</td>
<td>Benedict XVI (42 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 14, 2010</td>
<td>Lessing, Introduction and Acts I and II (58 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 16, 2010</td>
<td>Lessing, Act III (16 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 21, 2010</td>
<td>Lessing, Acts IV and V (37 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 23, 2010</td>
<td>Kierkegaard, 41 to 66 (25 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 28, 2010</td>
<td>Kierkegaard, pp. 66-108 (42 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 30, 2010</td>
<td>Kierkegaard, pp. 109-147 (38 pages)</td>
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Students will be expected to attend a performance of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* on Wednesday, September 8, at 7:30 p.m., in Washington Hall. Tickets will be provided. If you are unable to attend the performance on September 8, please let me know.

Practice oral examinations will begin September 15. These will include three or four students in a group for up to 30 minutes; they will not be graded, but will instead be sessions solely for your experience and development. Practice oral examinations are required in this class.
Please note that mid-term oral examinations will begin October 2 and conclude before Fall Break (October 16-24). You will be offered a choice of individual 30-minute slots.

You will be attending a performance by Pomerium on October 1 at 7:00 in the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center. See <http://performingarts.nd.edu/index.php?page=detail&event=1236>. Tickets will be provided. Assigned readings will be determined at a later date.

October 5, 2010  Pomerium

A screening of The Mission (125 minutes) is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday evening, October 6, at 7:15, in Room B043 (in the basement) of the Marie P. DeBartolo Center for the Performing Arts. Alternatively, we could schedule the film in the Browning Cinema but not until 9:15. Please note that all three films are also available to students through a course-specific Website: <http://tinyurl.com/csem23101>. Your NetID and password are required. Please see the “instructions and tips” link before you report any problems. We will discuss to what extent we want to arrange a public showing or simply allow for more private showings. Students are in either case encouraged to watch the films with other students in the course.

October 7, 2010  Roland Joffé, The Mission

October 12, 2010  Tentative Visit to the Snite Museum or the Basilica

October 14, 2010  Hösle (17 pages)

October 19, 2010  Fall Break (no class)

October 21, 2010  Fall Break (no class)

October 26, 2010  Preparatory discussion for the dance performance of “Left Exit” later this week. Assigned readings will be determined at a later date.

On October 27 at 7:00 (or alternatively October 28 at 7:00 or October 29 at 8:00), you will be attending (the world premier of) “Left Exit,” by the Seán Curran Company. Tickets will be provided. Tickets have already been secured for October 27. Changes are in principle possible, but any requests for alternative dates must be given to me by October 1 and will be subject to availability.

October 28, 2010  Büchner (24 pages)

November 2, 2010  Jonas (13 pages)

November 4 is the final day for submission of proposed paper topics; students are strongly encouraged to discuss with me their proposed topics in advance of this date.
A screening of *Shadow of a Doubt* (108 minutes) is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday evening, November 3, at 7:15, in Room B043 (in the basement) of the Marie P. DeBartolo Center for the Performing Arts. Alternatively, we could schedule the film in the Browning Cinema but not until 9:15. See also the comments above concerning *The Mission*.

November 4, 2010 Alfred Hitchcock, *Shadow of a Doubt*

November 9, 2010 Nietzsche, pp.123-162 (37 pages)

November 11, 2010 Nietzsche, pp. 163-199 (36 pages)


A screening of *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (104 minutes) is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday evening, November 17, at 7:15, in Room B043 (in the basement) of the Marie P. DeBartolo Center for the Performing Arts. Alternatively, we could schedule the film in the Browning Cinema but not until 9:15. See also the comments above concerning *The Mission*.

November 18, 2010 Woody Allen, *Crimes and Misdemeanors*

November 23, 2010 Gross and Simmons (28 pages)

Optional: If you wish to submit a draft version of your paper by November 23, 2010, it will be returned with comments during the following week. More advanced papers will receive more sophisticated comments. Any submitted draft should include a cover sheet in which you briefly answer the following question: What would I do to improve this paper if I had more time?

Optional: If you wish to make any substitutions for the final oral examination (see below), you will need to inform me by November 23.

November 25, 2010 Thanksgiving (no class)

November 30, 2010 Christian Smith (53 pages)

December 2, 2010 John Paul II, pp. 7-65 (58 pages)

December 7, 2010 John Paul II, pp. 66-131 (65 pages)

Final oral examinations will be scheduled at your discretion between Monday, December 6 and Friday, December 17. These will be individual 45-minute slots. Everyone seeking an examination time before the scheduled date for our examination will receive one. Papers are due at the time of our scheduled written final examination, Monday, December
13, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m, and should be submitted during that time. We will meet as a group during that time for an informal wrap-up session.

We may decide to spend more time with one work or another. Should this occur, we will cut elsewhere. However, we shall do our best to keep to the schedule.

We will try to find a day when everyone can come to my home for dinner. In addition, on a few occasions during the semester I would like to join smaller groups of 4-7 students for lunch in one of the student cafeterias.

**Policy on Attendance**

One unexcused absence will be integrated into the class contribution grade. Two unexcused absences will lead to the reduction of the final grade by one partial unit, for example, from a B to a B-. Three unexcused absences will lead to the reduction of the final grade by two partial units. More than three unexcused absences will lead to failure of the course.

In the unlikely event that a student misses a scheduled oral examination without having a legitimate excuse, a make-up examination will be arranged, but the student’s grade will be dropped by one partial unit.

**Final Oral Examination**

Each student will be allocated an individual slot of 45 minutes according to the guidelines above. The examination will cover the entire course, with slightly more focus on the material covered since the midterm oral examination. The final oral examination may also include some questions on the topic of your paper. You may, if you would like, drop one of the works we read or discussed in class and substitute one of the works below. You may be especially drawn to this option if one of the works below is central to the topic of your final paper. You may also be drawn to this choice if you would like to select a work together with another student or group of students and prepare for the oral examination by discussing the work or works with one another. Any substitutions should be communicated to me in writing by November 23.

**Arts**

Molière, *The Misanthrope*

Alfred Hitchcock, *I Confess*

Woody Allen, *Zelig*

Harold Ramis, *Groundhog Day*
Humanities

Nicholas of Cusa, On the Peace of Faith

Franz Kafka, The Trial

Flannery O’Connor, Wiseblood

George Marsden, The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief

Social Sciences

Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience

Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions


Criteria for Grading Oral Performance

Criteria for a Grade of B

The student ...

prepares well for each class by completing all assignments; rereading or reviewing, when appropriate; making appropriate notes; and discussing the works outside the class with students from the class and students and others not from the class;
makes contributions that show thorough familiarity with the assigned reading and thoughtful reflection on the material;
asks good, searching questions that spark discussion;
listens well and participates in the give-and-take of discussion, for example, by asking clarifying questions of other students, offering evidence to support positions, or proposing alternative perspectives;
is willing to engage an issue from multiple points of view;
is able to make connections across the works of the semester;
can draw interesting comparisons;
is willing to draw on real-world observation and personal experience as well as scholarly authorities;
can recognize strengths and weaknesses in an argument;
demonstrates the capacity to think on his or her feet;
is willing to think through an idea even when it is in the end abandoned;
is willing to recognize, investigate, and, where appropriate, question his or her own assumptions
and accepted ideas and develop alternative positions;
shows the humility to withdraw an idea from discussion in the face of decisive counter-arguments;
exhibits the confidence to retain a position when counter-arguments fail;
speaks with clarity and engagement;
is able to marshal evidence in favor of a position;
helps the group explore one aspect thoroughly, but then can also move on to the next topic when appropriate;
is more interested in the group dynamic of truth seeking through dialogue than in demonstrating his or her own excellence;
exhibits respect, tact, and diplomacy in debate with others.

Criteria for a Grade of A

The student does all of the above and ...

ensures that the group discussion flourishes at the most demanding, and yet also most playful level, helps the entire group find the balance between being alert and being relaxed;
finds and develops meaningful threads, so that the discussion, instead of being haphazard, reaches previously unexplored heights;
exhibits intellectual hospitality, effectively encouraging the participation of others and successfully drawing good ideas out of others;
gives unusually deep and rich responses to interpretive and searching questions;
consistently links the discussion to earlier works and themes as well as issues of existential interest;
helps guide the discussion through occasional summaries and substantial, thoughtful queries that build on earlier comments;
keeps the discussion on track while also encouraging creative leaps and risk-taking, including the development of new insights and perspectives;
asks fascinating and unexpected questions;
exhibits substantial curiosity and creativity and a love of the life of the mind;
brings forth sparkling and deep insights without dominating the discussion;
exhibits a searching mind, the mind of a developing intellectual;
uses increasingly eloquent and elegant language.

Criteria for a Grade of C

The student ...

comes prepared to class;
ocasionally contributes isolated, but thoughtful comments to the discussion;
makes comments that are backed with evidence;
discerns the difference between more relevant and less relevant comments;
understands his or her own assumptions and is willing to question them;
exhibits respect for others and treats all persons with dignity;
seeks truth through dialogue.

Criteria for a Grade of D

The student ...

comes to class, but rarely contributes to the discussion;
makes comments that are without evidence;
makes irrelevant comments and has difficulties contributing to the flow of the conversation;
has little, if any, awareness of his or her biases, prejudices, and assumptions.

Criteria for a Grade of F

The student ...

does not speak at all or makes comments that exhibit a lack of preparation;
disturbs, rather than enhances, the conversation with irrelevant patter;
has no awareness of his or her biases, prejudices, and assumptions;
exhibits little or no respect for the class and its search for truth.

Criteria for Grading Short Papers

Criteria for a Grade of Check

The paper is written clearly. The language is well-chosen, the essay reads smoothly, and the writer avoids grammatical errors. The essay has very few, if any, awkward or wordy stylistic constructions. The paper satisfactorily addresses the question chosen and does so with some level of sophistication and nuance. The response is structured coherently; paragraphs flow appropriately, one to the other.

Criteria for a Grade of Check Plus

The paper integrates the expectations of a B grade, but is in addition unusually thoughtful, deep, creative, and far-reaching in its analysis and evidence. Its language is elegant.

Criteria for a Grade of Check Minus

The assignment is not completed or is completed in a format that is clearly substandard. The essay exhibits little, if any, preparatory reflection or study. The thesis of the paper is missing, unclear, or overly simple. Ideas may be present but are not developed with any attention to detail or nuance. Paragraphs are poorly constructed and contain little supporting detail. Problems in grammar, spelling, or punctuation interfere with the writer’s capacity to communicate.
**Paper**

Students will be expected to write one paper of 5 to 10 pages in length, double-spaced, and typed.

The paper should develop an aspect of the course.

Sample questions to help you focus your ideas, as you select a topic:

What are the various ways in which faith manifests itself?
What are the objects of faith besides simply the existence of God?
How does the encounter with alternative religious traditions affect one’s own faith?
By which criteria might we seek to determine the validity of conflicting faith traditions?
If faith is lost, what tends to fill the void?
Why is it so difficult to speak about faith?
How does a church effectively motivate faith? Through vision? custom? incentives? penalties?
Other strategies? How might we find out what works? Is what works the same as what should be done?

What are the diverse causes of doubt?
What are the diverse ways in which one can deal with doubt?
What triggers the movement from doubt to despair and meaninglessness?
What is the relationship between doubt and anxiety?
In which historical ages and under what historical circumstances have faith or doubt been viewed as forces dominating the spirit of the age?
What value might there be in understanding doubt, even if one has not personally experienced doubt?

What various kinds of reason exist?
How is it that reason seems to be able both to ground legitimate values and to help us achieve unworthy ends?

How do faith or doubt or reason relate to one or more of the specific disciplines in the College of Arts and Letters? For example, what are the respective roles of faith and reason in the discipline of theology? What are some of the visual strategies for conveying faith? What aesthetic genres successfully convey doubt? How does the architecture of a church orient one religiously? What is the place of doubt in the social sciences? How does faith influence political behavior? When did the place of religion in public life begin to become controversial in the United States and how did this controversy manifest itself? What have been the stages along this path and what possible solutions exist to our current difficulties and tensions?

What role does faith, doubt, or reason or a combination of the three play in meaningful dialogue? Does reason alone suffice for persuasion?
What is the relationship between faith and doubt? Can doubt, for example, ultimately strengthen faith? Is doubt in any sense a necessary condition of spiritual striving? And can it be more supportive of meaningful spiritual seeking than certitude?

What is the relationship between faith and reason? What happens, for example, when they conflict, or seem to conflict? Precisely what kind of support does faith give to the intellectual search for God?

What is the relationship between doubt and reason? Do they presuppose one another, or are they in conflict with one another? Could doubt be viewed as a necessary tool of knowledge?

How would you evaluate the three religious virtues—faith, hope, and charity—in relation to one another?

What is the connection between faith and works?

What role does faith or doubt or reason or a combination of the two play in one of the works we are discussing this semester or in one of the works you may have chosen to prepare for your final oral examination? How might a comparison of two works enrich our understanding of one of these categories as well as the works themselves?

What is the role of faith or doubt or reason in analyzing a particular (ethical, social, political, or psychological) problem? For example, what role does doubt play in the environmental debate?

How might different cultures, including developing and developed countries, respond differently to faith and doubt?

Why are Americans more religiously oriented today than Europeans?

How might gender play a role in our understanding of these three categories?

How might age play a role?

What can social scientific data tell us about faith and politics? How might one use such data to advance a campaign strategically?

What is the role of faith in politics?

What should be the role of faith-based initiatives?

What roles do faith and doubt play in psychological difficulties and in psychological flourishing?

What roles do faith, doubt, and reason play in the economic marketplace?

Students are encouraged to discuss their ideas with me at an early date. Students should not hesitate to think out loud with us about various topics before settling on one topic. Given the structure and learning goals of the class, the paper need not be a focused research paper; it could instead be the articulate statement of a complex problem that invites still further study.

**Criteria for Grading the Paper**

**Criteria for a Grade of B**

Clarity
The paper presents a clear, complex, and challenging thesis.

Independence

The paper does not simply restate the obvious or repeat what others have said, but builds on what is known to exhibit the student’s own thinking about the topic. The writer avoids simply repeating plot structures or paraphrasing the ideas of others. The student says something new.

Complexity

Multiple points of view are engaged, and the limits of one’s own interpretation are acknowledged, either through the avoidance of overreaching or through the refutation of alternative arguments. The essay integrates a variety of connected themes and exhibits a curious mind at work.

Structure

The essay is structured logically and coherently. The overall outline or organization makes sense, and the paragraphs flow appropriately, one to the other. The introduction is inviting, and the conclusion is powerful.

Evidence

Appropriate evidence is given for the paper’s claims, for example, a chain of abstract arguments, evidence from the artwork being interpreted, or empirical data.

Style

The language is well-chosen, the essay reads smoothly, and the writer avoids grammatical errors. The essay has very few, if any, awkward or wordy stylistic constructions. Bibliographical and other information is presented in an appropriate style.

Criteria for a Grade of A

The paper integrates the expectations of a B grade, but is in addition unusually thoughtful, deep, creative, and far-reaching in its analysis and evidence. Its language is elegant.

Criteria for a Grade of C

The thesis of the paper is clear, and the paper takes a stand on a complex issue. The writer goes beyond mere paraphrase. The writer exhibits competence in exploring the subject and integrates some alternative perspectives. Most of the essay is well-organized, and the logic is for the most part clear and coherent. Some evidence is given for the points made in the essay. The language is understandable and free of extraneous material. The paper is without basic grammatical errors.
Criteria for a Grade of D

The thesis of the paper is missing, unclear, or overly simple. The writer tends toward paraphrase. The paper includes some arguments, but counter-arguments are not considered in any serious way or are misconstrued. The essay’s structure is not readily apparent. Ideas are present but are not developed with details or examples. Paragraphs are poorly constructed and contain little supporting detail. Problems in grammar, spelling, or punctuation interfere with the writer’s capacity to communicate.

Criteria for a Grade of F

The assignment is not completed or is completed in a format that is clearly substandard. The essay exhibits little, if any, preparatory reflection or study. It contains no serious ideas and lacks an argument as well as supporting evidence. The essay is difficult to read or comprehend. No meaningful structure is discernible. Sentences are very poorly written and riddled with grammatical mistakes.

Guides to Writing


See also the reference above to *The Elements of Style*, which is available at the campus bookstore and is recommended for purchase.

Academic Code of Honor

This course will be conducted in accordance with the Academic Code of Honor of the University of Notre Dame, which stipulates: “As a member of the Notre Dame community, I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty.” The code is available at <http://www.nd.edu/~hnrcode/>. Information on citing sources is available at <http://www.nd.edu/~writing/resources/AvoidingPlagarism.html>.

Students are encouraged to discuss readings and films with one another outside of the classroom and should feel free to discuss assignments with one another, but the source of all ideas must be revealed fully and honestly. Whenever information or insights are obtained from secondary works, students should cite their sources.
Students are encouraged to prepare for class discussions and for oral examinations by discussing the class content with one another outside the classroom. However, students are not permitted to discuss any aspect of the midterm or final oral examination with one another until all students have completed their examinations.

**Useful Web Sites**

http://www.thearda.com
American Religion Data Archive

http://dictionary.reference.com
Dictionary.com

http://inauguration.nd.edu/ceremonies/inaugural_address.shtml
Inaugural Address of Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.

www.idebate.org
International Debate Education Association (IDEA)

www.imdb.com
The Internet Movie Database

www.youthandreligion.org
National Study of Youth and Religion

http://pewforum.org/
The New Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life

http://www.saturdayscholar.nd.edu/
Saturday Scholar Series at the University of Notre Dame. (Please note that the topics listed for September 9 and October 30 may interest students in this class)

www.spirituality.ucla.edu
Spirituality in Higher Education

http://www.npr.org/thisibelieve/about.html
This I Believe

www.toastmasters.org
Toastmasters International

http://www.usccb.org/fb/vaticanfilms.htm
Vatican Best Films List

**Leading a Discussion**
Study Questions

You will be asked to lead the discussion usually together with one other person. Normally you will lead the discussion for almost the entire class, depending on the flow of the discussion. In leading a discussion, you will want to keep in mind that a good discussion is determined as much by the preparation of the discussants as it is by the actual dynamics at the time of the discussion.

To that end it is almost always important for students to have a few study questions that will help them focus their reflections on the material for discussion. You will want to speak with me about strategies well in advance of your actual discussion date.

If you intend to offer study questions, please keep the following in mind. If you will be leading a Tuesday discussion, you should submit draft questions to me by Friday at noon. If you will be leading a Thursday discussion, you should submit draft questions to me by Monday at noon. Please send me your draft questions as an attached file in either WordPerfect or Word. I may add a question or two or edit a question slightly, after which I will send the questions to the class. Often the list of questions will include a brief written assignment from me. Please do not prepare any more than ten study questions.

Discussion Format

A default form of discussion leadership is that two students lead the discussion, with study questions in advance. Your task would be to ask questions of the group; get them speaking, ideally to one another and not only through the discussion leaders; and ask appropriate follow-up questions or offer appropriate synthetic reflections that help to move the discussion forward.

However, multiple other strategies are possible.

You may wish to break the class into small groups for intensive discussion before opening the conversation to the wider group. This allows everyone to speak and also sharpens the contributions of students. In the past students have discovered that it is normally better for the small discussion groups to be addressing the same questions. Otherwise one falls into the trap of listening to presentations instead of engaging the class in discussion.

You may wish to consider orchestrating a debate. In such cases, your study questions should help students prepare for the debate. You may want to structure the debate so that if, say, two questions are debated, one group defends the author or work on one question and criticizes the author or work on a different question. Debates can also be more interpretive than evaluative in nature.

One of you might lead the discussion, and the other might play a special role, such as devil’s advocate (the person listens carefully for any emerging consensus and then formulates and expresses a contrary view the group needs to counter, or the person listens carefully to challenge the group on its hidden assumptions, which need to be defended).
You could form a panel of two who present their ideas for about five to seven minutes each, followed by questions to the panelists, and then a wider discussion.

You could select a particular scene from a DVD and then focus discussion on that scene.

You could consider some role-playing, in which you play a character or an author or a director, and students must develop questions for you.

Please don’t hesitate to draw on your creativity in trying to craft a meaningful format for engagement with the material.

Some Tips

Formulate questions that are open-ended, questions that encourage perception and analysis, not questions that lead to a one-word response or a simplistic right or wrong answer. However, a simple query of the whole class (for example, does the work define holiness?) can sometimes lead to meaningful follow-up questions.

Speak clearly and loudly.

Call on colleagues by their names.

Be willing to wait for a response. Give your colleagues time to think.

Don’t hesitate to use the blackboard.

Show through your body language that you are listening and that you do not intend to speak until the person is finished speaking. Encourage speakers through your body language, such as, when relevant, by nodding in agreement.

If many persons want to speak, be alert to hands that are raised and the order in which they have been raised as well as the amount of speaking individual students have done thus far. Do not hesitate to say at a given point that now the floor is open only to those who have not yet spoken.

Try to build on the comments of students, or have other students build on the comments of other students. Make comments, for example, that underscore the links between two people’s contributions. Make summary observations that take into account several people’s contributions and that touch on a recurring theme in the discussion. One of your goals is to try to create a coherent discussion instead of a set of isolated comments that simply follow one another without any organic connection.

One way to prepare is to anticipate in advance at least some of the comments that you might expect to hear. Come to class with a bag of ideas and dip into the bag, as needed, depending on what kinds of responses you receive. You will also need to come to class that day in a very alert mode, as much of what you will need to do is think on your feet.
Try to get different views on the table and try to delve into supporting arguments, including specific references to the work in question. Often a discussion is enhanced by specific references to the work.

Ask follow-up questions: To seek clarification, ask: What exactly do you mean when you say ... ? To push for supporting evidence, ask: Why do you think that is so? Where in the text do you find support for that view ... ? Can anyone else find evidence for that view? To encourage connections, ask: How does what you just said relate to ... ? To encourage more complex analysis, ask: Are there any counter-arguments to this position?

Encourage students to talk to one another, not to direct all responses to you. You might ask, who wants to respond to that point?

Do not hesitate to call on classmates, especially if you can build on statements they made earlier in the semester.

Your questions need not be restricted to the texts themselves. You should feel free also to use the texts to develop overarching reflections on faith, doubt, or reason.

You might also review the “Criteria for Grading Oral Performance,” which have some implicit suggestions for what characterize good contributions and good discussions.

Consider strategies for closing the discussion. Do you want to summarize some major points? Do you want to connect what has been discussed with earlier issues? Do you want to link the day’s discussion with future topics yet to be explored?

Enjoy your time leading the discussion. You won’t have this learning opportunity in every class.
Appendix to “Faith, Doubt, and Reason, 2010"
Further Works of Potential Interest for Future Reading

The number of works on the diverse aspects of faith, doubt, and reason is virtually unlimited. Below is a selection of works of potential interest to students whether during the semester or in subsequent years. They represent a combination of classical and contemporary offerings. In the case of foreign works, I have tried to identify the title of an accessible American edition. If you can read the works in the original, that is of course always preferable. They are grouped by division and listed chronologically by the date of their first publication. In a few cases, works could have landed in more than one division. I have limited the list to approximately 25 works each in the arts and the social sciences and 50 works in the humanities; if you would like additional suggestions on a particular subtopic or from a particular discipline, please let me know. Most of the works are chosen for a combination of their intrinsic value, their fit for the topic, and their potential appeal to Arts and Letters students at Notre Dame. A few recent works are listed, independently of quality, to indicate forms of contemporary engagement with the topic. Across the lists I have placed an asterisk before the works of greatest potential interest to those who will have taken this course.

Arts

Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* (c. 427 BC)

Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus* (c. 405-405 BC)

William Shakespeare, *Othello* (c. 1604)

* Molière, *Tartuffe* (1664) and *The Misanthrope* (1666)

Friedrich Schiller, *Don Carlos* (1787)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust* (1832)

Henrik Ibsen, *Brand* (1867)

Carl Theodor Dreyer, *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928)

Leni Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will* (1935)

Bertolt Brecht, *The Good Person of Sezuan* (1941)

* Alfred Hitchcock, *Suspicion* (1941) and *I Confess* (1953)

Jean Anouilh, *Antigone* (1942)

* John Ford, *The Fugitive* (1947)
* Akira Kurosawa, *Ikiru* (1952) and *Dersu Uzala* (1975)

Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *The Visit* (1956)

Ingmar Bergman, *The Seventh Seal* (1957)


* Andrei Tarkovsky, *Andrei Roublev* (1963)


**Humanities**

* Saint Augustine, *The Confessions* (397-401)


Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* (c. 1265-1274)

Ramon Llull, *The Book of the Gentile and the Three Wise Men* (c. 1274-1276)

* Nicholas of Cusa, *On the Peace of Faith* (1453)

Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian* (1520)

David Hume, *The Natural History of Religion* (1757)

Voltaire, *Candide* (1759)
* Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *The Education of the Human Race* (1780)

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) and *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1793)

Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1794-96)

Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hyperion* (1799)

Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* (1799)

* G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (1821-1831)

John Henry Cardinal Newman, *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford Between A.D. 1826 and 1843*

Heinrich Heine, *Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* (1834)

Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (1841)

Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879-80)

Gerard Manley Hopkins, *Poems* (1844-1889)

Arthur Schnitzler, *Anatol* (1893)

Anton Chekhov, *The Student* (1894)

Franz Kafka, *The Trial* (1915)


Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain* (1924)

Herman Melville, *Billy Budd, Foretopman* (1924)

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (1952)

Flannery O’Connor, *Wiseblood* (1952)


*Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (1990)

Religious Devotion (1993)


**Social Sciences**

Karl Marx, *Introduction to Critique of Hegel’s ‘Philosophy of Right’* (1844) and *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845)

* William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902)


Emile Durkeim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912)


Linda Dégh, *Legend and Belief: Dialectics of a Folklore Genre* (2001)


