

Mark W. Roche

## **Faith, Doubt, and Reason**

### Brief Description

#### **Spring 2021**

“Faith, Doubt, and Reason” explores scholarly questions of great existential interest. What various forms of faith exist? What obstacles exist to faith? What thoughts and experiences trigger doubt? In what ways do doubt and reason undermine or reinforce faith? How might we distinguish and evaluate different forms of reason? How far can reason take us? The seminar explores these three concepts 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.

When students leave home for college, questions about the relation of faith and reason arise naturally. As students gain new knowledge, they are confronted with challenges to the unity of faith and reason. Doubt is as essential to college education as the harmony of faith and reason is to Catholicism. This course seeks to provide a context where students can explore religious and existential puzzles in an atmosphere of trust and support, maturity and mutual respect. The link between the student’s search for meaning and intellectual refinement and rigor will be a guiding principle.

Readings will be taken from, among others, Plato, the Bible, Lessing, Feuerbach, Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Freud, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI. We will also analyze a selection of films and visit the Snite Museum of Art.

The course is designed as the second semester of a year-long seminar for Glynn sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Juniors who would like to take the spring semester course but who spent the fall abroad may, with the permission of the instructor, sign up for the spring continuation. “Faith, Doubt, and Reason” satisfies the University Requirements in either Second Philosophy or Catholicism and the Disciplines. For students majoring in German, the course can also be counted as an English elective for the German major.