There are many types and kinds of vocation, but the core of the experience is always the same: the soul is awakened by it, transformed or exalted, so that instead of dreams and presentiments from within a summons comes from without. A portion of reality presents itself and makes its claim.

--Hermann Hesse, The Glass Bead Game

The English “others” is actually used in opposition to the “self,” and implies the recognition of the self as a separate entity. In contrast kapwa is a recognition of a shared identity, an inner self shared with others.

--Virgilio Enriquez

It is necessary to educate ourselves to endure the unexpected. But it is a terrible thing not to be able to expect. Thus it is necessary to keep together, in one struggling act of the imagination, the expected and the unexpected.

--William Lynch

Seminar Description

How ought we to live in a world marked by suffering and injustice? Where might we find hope in a world that breaks our heart? How does the religious imagination of the people whom we will accompany this semester approach these issues, especially when faced with pain, violence, and disappointment? This course will begin to address these questions by exploring how people try to find meaning in a world filled with both injustice and a sense of the transcendent. Using a variety of sources including philosophical and theological essays, film, and literature, we will examine how one critically engages experiences of interconnection, solidarity, and suffering, and uses such experiences to discern one’s vocation and calling.

The seminar presupposes that students are actively engaged in their praxis communities 14 hours each week, and it seeks to integrate this experience with rigorous philosophical and theological reflection. A central aim of the seminar is to give students the ability to reflect philosophically, theologically, and spiritually on their experience accompanying communities living on the margins of Filipino society, and through this reflection to deepen their understanding of how they might find meaning in life and respond to the call to work for social justice and the common good. A special emphasis will be placed on the Catholic theological tradition since over 80% of the Philippine people identify as Roman Catholic; however, the seminar is designed for students of all backgrounds and faith traditions, and aims to help them bring their own beliefs and perspectives into conversation with the predominantly Christian context they will be encountering in their praxis communities.

Learning Outcomes

The seminar will use a variety of philosophical and theological texts to help students articulate and analyze the central issues that arise in their praxis communities. Through in-class discussions, weekly essays, personal journals, and a final synthesis project, the students will achieve the following learning outcomes:

- Demonstrate an ability to reflect philosophically, theologically, and spiritually on their experience accompanying communities living on the margins of Filipino society, and through this reflection to deepen their understanding of how they might find meaning in life and respond to the call to work for social justice and the common good.
- Be able to articulate coherently central philosophical and theological issues, such as the problem of evil, the existence of God, theories of social justice, and the nature of the self and its relationship to community.
- Demonstrate an ability to identify, analyze, and critique the main arguments found in the writings of philosophers and theologians such as Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, and Karl Rahner.
- Identify the diversity of faith that is found in US and Filipino cultures, and appreciate how these varied spiritual and religious approaches can influence the ways one responds to suffering and injustice.
- Demonstrate an ability to apply philosophical and theological theories to their experience accompanying Filipinos living in poverty, and use this analysis to deepen their appreciation of how scholarly reflection and community engagement mutually support one another.
## Required Texts

| Course Reader | F. Sionil Jose, *Mass* | John L’Heureux, *The Shrine at Altamira* |

## Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Texts and Resources</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 Aug</td>
<td><strong>Engaging Questions</strong></td>
<td>Frederick Buechner, “The Calling of Voices”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Aug</td>
<td><strong>Faith and the Filipino: Opening to the Complexity</strong></td>
<td>Gemma Tulud Cruz, “When Struggle Means Hope” (esp. 213-222)</td>
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</tbody>
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| 1 Sept (1) | **Faith and Imagination: Where is God among the “Poor” and Oppressed?** | Reynaldo Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, “Toward a History from Below” (esp. pp. 8-22)  
William Lynch, *Images of Faith* (esp. 9-24, 36-9, 125-131) |
| 8 Sept (2) | **Filipino Piety and the Suffering God: How Might Faith Help One Engage Reality?** | Virgilio Enriquez, “Kapwa and the Struggle for Justice, Freedom, and Dignity”  
Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (p. 243-278)  
Film: *Red* (Shown Fri 4 Sept) |
| 15 Sept (3) | **Kapwa and the Ontological Mystery: What Shapes Community & Solidarity?** | Gabriel Marcel, “The Ontological Mystery”  
Gerald May, “Willingsness and Willfulness” (esp. 1-7) |
| 22 Sept (4) | **Encountering and Experience: How Does Community Call us Forth?**    | Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, Parts I and II (esp. 3-17, 31-34, 51-54, 59-61)  
Alfeo Nudas, *God With Us*, (selections) |
| 29 Sept (5) | **Calatagan Immersion (30 Sept – 4 Oct): Awareness and the Artificial Obvious** | F. Sionil Jose, *Mass* |
| 6 Oct (6)  | **Light and Brotherhood: What Gives Us the Strength to Sacrifice for Others?** | Reynaldo Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, “Light and Brotherhood” |
| 13 Oct (7) | **Ignatian Discernment: How Do We Discern Where “Reality” is Leading?** | Andre Dubus, “A Father’s Story”  
Dean Brackley, *The Call to Discernment*, pp. 45-54, 78-89, 133-142  
Joan Mueller, *Faithful Listening* pp. 102-107, 113-125 |
Karl Rahner, “The Experience of Grace” pp. 196-199  
Alfeo Nudas, *God With Us*, (selections)  
Film: *The Tree of Life* (Shown Wed 14 Oct) |
| 27 Oct (9) | **Faith in the Face of Suffering: How Do We Reinvest in a World that Breaks our Hearts?** | Gustavo Gutierrez, *On Job* (esp. 67-104)  
Josef Pieper, *On Hope*, Chapters 1, 3, 4  
Film: *The Painted Veil* (Shown Sun 18 Oct) |
| 3 Nov (10) | **Embracing Reality: Can We Trust the Finite to Go Somewhere?**       | William Lynch, “The Definite” pp. 3-18  
William Lynch, “Theology and the Imagination” pp. 66-74  
Tobias Wolff, “In the Garden of the North American Martyrs” |
| 17 Nov (12) | **Hope and Community: How Do Others Help Us Find Freedom and Hope?** | Gabriel Marcel, “Sketch & Phenomenology of a Metaphysic of Hope”  
Alfeo Nudas, *God With Us*, (selections)  
Film: *Blue* (Shown Fri 13 Nov) |
| 21-24 Nov  | **Vacation Break #2: No Class 24 Nov**                               |                                                                                     |
| 1 Dec      | **Evil and Salvation: “from what, the pilgrims wondered, had she been saved?”** | John L’Heureux, *The Shrine at Altamira* |
| 8 Dec      | **Submission of Final Assignment and Closing Reflections: Where Do We Go From Here?** | Dean Brackley, “Expanding the Shrunked Soul” |
Course Requirements

A. **Class Participation, Quizzes and Films:** Active and consistent participation is expected of all students for all class discussions. Active participation requires students to contribute their own thoughtful reflections, to listen attentively and respectfully to the views of others, and to share in the communal journey towards deeper reflection and awareness. Students must read, watch the films, and (most importantly) reflect on how they might relate to their praxis site, **BEFORE** the date they are scheduled for class discussion. Come to class with questions, reflections and examples from your own experience.

   **Quizzes:** Quizzes may be given from time to time at the discretion of the professor. Quizzes need not be announced in advance, and missed quizzes cannot be made up.

   **Films:** Critically watching films is an essential component of this course. Students are expected to view the films before coming to class. Films will be shown on the Friday before they are scheduled to be discussed in class. In addition, films may be viewed on the iMac in the Alingal community.

B. **Weekly Essays:** Class discussions can be less than productive if they are not structured, and the participants are not prepared. To facilitate a fruitful discussion of the texts, each week students will prepare a brief reflection on the readings and turn it in at the beginning of class. Since the purpose of these papers is to facilitate discussion in the seminar, late papers will not be accepted. There will be 12 essays in total (numbered in the course outline), but you will be graded out of 9.

   1) A question will be posed each week in relation to the reading material and films. The thesis and one-page discussion should answer the question posed for the given week.

   2) **Papers must be saved on the house computers by Sunday at 10:00pm with the file name:** Essay#. LastName (e.g. Essay2_Liberatore). Save in .doc,.pdf,.odt format (not .docx).

   3) Aligned to the left margin write your name, two tabs and then the Essay number. Then skip one line.

   4) Begin with a thesis stated in no more than 20 words. The thesis should be centered and isolated from the body of the paper by skipping 1 line after, and typed in bold or italic font. The essay should develop and demonstrate this thesis based on specific references to the text and your experience.

   5) **Format:** Page size: A4, 1” margins all sides, Times New Roman 12 pt, Paragraphs: single-spaced, indent first line of paragraph 0.5”, no space between paragraphs. Use either English or Filipino.

   Maximum length: **one single-spaced typed page**

C. **Journals & Praxis Integration Portfolio:** You are asked to keep a weekly journal to help you connect your praxis experience with course discussions. The journal will consist of weekly entries based on class conversations and your work with the community. You should plan to write your reflections SOON AFTER each class, and I will ask you to type your journals for submission.

   **Praxis Integration Portfolio:** The final submission will be a portfolio that builds upon the weekly essays and journal entries, and provides students an opportunity to creatively synthesize their praxis experience with the course material. Students should meet individually with the professor to develop this assignment. It may build on the students’ work in the Praxis seminar or other Casa classes. Outside research may be necessary depending upon the topic chosen, but this is not required in all cases. You will need to re-submit all your journals and graded weekly essays with the portfolio, so be sure to save all your submitted work, and be sure to type up your journals as you go through the semester.

**Grading**

Weekly Essays 45%
Class Participation/Quizzes 20%
Journal & Praxis Integration Portfolio 35%

Following the University of San Francisco’s grading policy, final grades will be reported as follows:
A – Outstanding; B – Superior; C – Satisfactory; D - Lowest Passing; F - Failing (course not counted toward degree requirement). The grades A, B, C, and D may be modified by plus (+) or minus (–).

Individual assignments will be graded using the following points:
A = 4.0; A- = 3.7; B+ = 3.3; B = 3.0; B- = 2.7; C+ = 2.3; C = 2.0; C- = 1.7; D = 1.0; F = 0.0

**Academic Integrity**

In keeping with USF’s Academic Honor code, students are expected to “demonstrate the core values of the University of San Francisco by upholding the standards of honesty and integrity, excellence in their academic work, and respect for others in their educational experiences.” Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to USF’s Academic Honor Code. A complete discussion of the Honor Code may be found at [www.usfca.edu/catalog/policies/honor/](http://www.usfca.edu/catalog/policies/honor/)