**Montserrat Divine Cluster 2019-20: *Hear Now***

The theme for the Divine Cluster in 2019-2020 is *Hear Now*. In our seminars, cluster events, and the many ensuing conversations, we will focus on the radical act of listening and its pressing importance. The practice of listening is central to multiple prayer traditions, and together we will explore the challenges and possibilities that come with focused listening.

Engaging with this theme from a variety of disciplinary approaches, we will ask: What choices go into the listening process? What degree of agency exists in this process? How can we engage in responsible listening, which might require risk but also takes the consequences seriously? How have different humans understood listening as a way of getting closer to others, and closer to the presence of the divine? How do we observe — in the texts, artwork, and cultures we study and in our own experiences — its consequences and benefits?

Addressing these questions will lead us to reconsider our engagement not only with others but also with music, and, we hope, to approach the very act of speech from different points of view. Co-curricular and cluster events will complement the cluster’s seminars, as we explore together the process and possibilities of hearing now.

**Faculty and Seminar Titles for the Fall**

* Prof. Timothy Joseph: *Greek Gods and Mortals* (2 sections)
* Prof. Frances Maughan-Brown: *Freedom of Speech: Listening* (2 sections)
* Prof. Virginia Ryan: *Exploring Differences* (2 sections)

**Affiliated Cluster staff**

* Janis DesMarais, Cluster Librarian
* Thaline Rodene, Community Development Coordinator, Hanselman Hall
* Christine Dapaah-Afriyie ’22, Montserrat Student Ambassador
* Catherine Hodgens ’22, Montserrat Student Ambassador

**Common Texts**

* David Wallace-Wells, *The Uninhabitable Earth*
* David Grossman, *Falling Out of Time*
* St. Augustine, *Confessions*

**Required Common Events**

\*Mon., 9/2, 4:15-5:15 in Hogan 401: Cluster Meet & Greet

\*Sun., 9/8, 2-3:30 p.m. in Hogan Suites B/C (4th floor): Discussion of *The Uninhabitable Earth*

\*Tues., 9/24, and Wed., 9/25: Silkroad Ensemble in-class workshops on “What Happens When Strangers Meet?” (see your instructors for details on times)

\*Wed., Oct. 30, 7:30 p.m. in Brooks Music Hall: Silkroad Ensemble performance of *Falling Out of Time*

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**Exploring Difference (MONT 102D)**

**Divine Cluster, Fall 2019**

**Yearlong Seminar: Identity, Diversity and Community**

Tu/Th 9:30-10:45 (01)

Tu/Th 11:00-12:15 (02)

Hanselman Seminar Room

Prof. Virginia M. Ryan (she, her, hers pronouns)

[vryan@holycross.edu](mailto:vryan@holycross.edu)

Office: O’Kane 454, 508-793-3467

Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:00-3:00; Wednesday, 1:00-3:00 & by appointment. Office hours may be changed occasionally and students will be notified by email. You are welcome to drop in too!

*“To participate in the life of Holy Cross is to accept an invitation to join in dialogue about basic human questions:*

*What is the moral character of learning and teaching? How do we find meaning in life and history? What are our obligations to one another?*

*What is our special responsibility to the world's poor and powerless?”*

*(College Mission Statement)*

**FALL SEMINAR DESCRIPTION:**

One of the most important tasks for the human person as a moral being is to come to “know thyself,” as the ancient philosophers recommend. But how do we do this? The African ethic of Ubuntu suggests that persons come to know themselves through other persons, that is, through relationship within diverse communities. Our willingness to place ourselves “outside our comfort zone” and compassionately encounter difference, disability, and “otherness” may paradoxically lead us to a more honest and merciful knowledge of self. Through film, readings in theology and literature, and Community Based Learning (CBL) we will consider diversity and disability and how such encounters with others in their “otherness” bring us to a more challenging and deeper knowledge of ourselves. Methods of assessing the progress of students will include papers and a final presentation as well as weekly integrative journals that reflect on the student’s CBL experience and its relationship to overall class themes.

**SEMINAR OBJECTIVE:**

This course seeks to foster a critical relation between reflection and action and to introduce theological and ethical insights that have arisen from the experiences of others, past and present. You will learn *about* theology and ethics but you will also *do* theology and ethics. The College of the Holy Cross is a Roman Catholic, Jesuit institution and the readings will draw primarily on Christian theology, and particularly Catholic social ethics. There is no expectation or presupposition that students share a set of religious beliefs or practices. The only presumption and expectation is that you are committed to engaging in a deeper understanding (and the multiple ways in which understanding is enabled) of the “big questions” and of the relationships between reflection and action, and beliefs and social practices, and the impact of these on your own life and larger society.

**REQUIRED MATERIALS:**

* *The Confessions*, St. Augustine. Vintage; 1st edition (December 29, 1998), ISBN-13: 978-0375700217
* Eiesland, Nancy. *The Disabled God*: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability, Abingdon Press, 1994. ISBN-13: 978-0687108015
* Grossman, David. *Falling Out of Time*, Vintage, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-0345805850
* Solomon, Andrew. *Far from the Tree: Parents, Children and the Search for Identity*, Scribner, 2012. ISBN 978-0743236713

Please note: It is expected that Holy Cross students will have textbooks and other required class materials in order to achieve academic success.  If you are unable to purchase course materials, please go to the Financial Aid office where a staff member will be happy to provide you with information and assistance.

**GENERAL SEMINAR EXPECTATIONS:**

Much of what we learn and how we understand particular issues and questions will come about through thoughtful and careful discussion in class. **I expect that each of you willcome to class, having read the texts closely, having attended your CBL site, and prepared to engage in critical reflection and conversation.**

Through respectful, attentive, mature, and intentional engagement with each other, a learning environment that is welcoming of all members of our classroom community can be achieved, inclusive of diversities of sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, economic status, ability, religious background and identification, and other defined ways that we humans create and then often use to separate ourselves from and devalue each other. To advance learning, we have the responsibility to listen to each other. We also have the responsibility to take risks and to treat others with respect, honoring their dignity as human beings. We aim to become a community of learners who are in solidarity with each other and with the world.

**CLASSROOM RULES:**

* We are all here to learn, listen, discuss and think. This is possible only when you have thoughtfully read the assigned readings.
* ***Always* bring the readings to class in paper or digital format.**
* Arrive on time for class.
* Give your full attention to the professor and your peers. Put away (out of sight) cell phones or any other texting devices. If you use a digital device for seminar readings, I expect that you will not use the device for other purposes.
* Use the restroom before class when at all possible – leaving in the middle of class is disruptive. If there is a reason to leave the class, be as discrete as possible.
* If a problem arises during class and it goes beyond what can be addressed in the classroom setting, see me after class so that we can set up a time to talk. We are sometimes engaged in difficult conversations and if you find yourself feeling overwhelmed or unable to participate, you have permission to leave class but I expect you to contact me as soon as possible after class.

**STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:**

Given the sensitive and challenging nature of the material discussed in class, it is important that there be an atmosphere of trust and safety in the seminar. I will attempt to foster an environment in which each class member is able to hear and respect each other. It is critical that each class member show respect for all worldviews expressed in class. It is expected that some of the material in this course may evoke strong emotions, please be respectful of others' emotions and be mindful of your own. Please let me know if something said or done in the seminar, by either myself or other students, is particularly troubling or causes discomfort or offense.

While our intention may not be to cause discomfort or offense, the impact of what happens throughout the course is not to be ignored and is something that I consider to be very important and deserving of attention. If and when this occurs, there are several ways to alleviate some of the discomfort or hurt you may experience:  
1. Discuss the situation privately with me. You can see me after the seminar, come to my office or send an email. I am always open to listening to students' experiences, and want to work with students to find acceptable ways to process and address the issue.  
2. Discuss the situation with the class. Chances are there is at least one other student in the class who had a similar response to the material. Discussion enhances the ability for all class participants to have a fuller understanding of context and impact of course material and class discussions.  
3. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable discussing the issue directly with me, I encourage you to seek out another resource on campus, such as a chaplain, counselor, academic advisor, or class dean.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Attendance and participation are significant components of the final grade. I regularly keep attendance, and missed sessions will figure into the final participation grade. Each student may miss, without penalty (but your contribution will be missed), three regular class sessions during the semester. Additionally, lateness or early departure from either a regular class or required cluster event will be treated as half of an absence. Please note that there is an “Excused Absence” policy that can be found here: <http://www.holycross.edu/sites/default/files/files/registrar/excused_absence_policy.pdf>

**ACADEMIC SERVICES AND LEARNING RESOURCES**

The office of Academic Services helps Holy Cross students make the most of the academic opportunities at the College. There are many resources such as workshops, peer tutoring, and individual learning assistance for reading, studying, research and writing.

**Disability Statement.**  All academic accommodations for students need to be approved through the Office of Disability Services (<http://www.holycross.edu/health-wellness-and-access/office-disability-services>).  Any student who feels the need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services to discuss support services available. Once the office receives documentation supporting the request for accommodation, the student would meet privately with Disability Services to discuss reasonable and appropriate accommodations. The office can be reached by calling 508-793-3693 or by visiting Hogan Campus Center, room 215A. If you are already registered with Disability Services, please be sure to get your accommodation letters and deliver them to your instructors in a timely fashion. Instructors need 4-5 days advance notice to be able to facilitate the process of receiving testing accommodations.”

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

Each student is responsible for knowing what constitutes violating the policy.  The policy is in the College Catalog and can be accessed at this link: <https://catalog.holycross.edu/node/1381#AHP>. Please note that for an initial violation of the policy, in addition to being placed on academic probation for two semesters, students must also participate in a workshop on academic integrity.  The Center for Writing and Library Services will conduct the workshop (organized through the class dean).  Second, in addition to referring to hardcopy handbooks for citing sources, the policy now includes the link for information on the Library’s website.  Finally, the appeal for a penalty for dismissal that is upheld by the Committee on Academic Standing will now go to the Provost and Dean of the College.

Other helpful definitions/guidelines can be found at the History department website: <http://www.holycross.edu/departments/history/website/academichonesty.htm>

**HELPFUL WRITING WEBSITES:**

* College of the Holy Cross Writer’s Workshop home: <https://www.holycross.edu/academics/support-and-resources/center-for-writing/writers-workshop>
* Additional online writing resources:
  + Princeton: <http://web.princeton.edu/sites/writing/Writing_Center/WCWritingResources.htm>
  + Harvard: [http://www.fas.harvard.edu/%7Ewricntr/resources.html](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/resources.html)
  + Colorado State University: <http://writing.colostate.edu/index.cfm>
  + Purdue University (OWL): <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:**

**ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Attendance at class sessions is a *minimum* requirement. Frequent unexcused absences will have a negative impact on the final grade. Students will also be evaluated based on their ***active participation*** in the seminar. Active participation involves frequent contributions to class discussions that demonstrate familiarity and critical engagement with assigned readings and a willingness to discuss your CBL experience. Respectful attention and responsiveness to the contributions of other class members is also expected. Active participation in the seminar will account for 30% of the final seminar grade. ***See the Class Participation Rubric at the end of the syllabus to review expectations.***

Additional requirements**:**

* During the semester students will be required to present research on a section of the text *Far from the* Tree or present responses and questions to other texts. There will be other opportunities besides classroom discussion to raise your active participation grade both in and outside the classroom. Overall, the goal is to create a seminar atmosphere where people are free to voice their thoughts. ***See “A Comparison of Dialogue & Debate” at the end of this syllabus.***
* Engaged participation in **cluster events** is also figured into the final academic engagement grade.
* Co-curricular (BLUE) Events**:** During the semester, you are required to attend *at least* **TWO** recommended (Blue) co-curricular events and write a response 150-250 words for each that provides a sufficient overview of the event and discusses the intersections between the event and your seminar and placement learning. The response must be submitted as a **hardcopy within one week** of your attendance at the event. You may suggest a program to attend that is not on the syllabus but you get pre-approval from me if you want to include it as a **BLUE EVENT**. You are obviously encouraged to attend as many co-curricular events as you can during the semester and additional **BLUE EVENT** responses will be factored into the final participation grade.
* Taking advantage of **office hours** is an essential element of achieving success in college. Three things happen when you make it a priority to visit your professor on a regular basis: 1) you might gain an important insight into an assignment or something related to class 2) you demonstrate to your professor that you take the class seriously 3) you and your professor get to know each other better, creating the opportunity to develop a beneficial mentor-mentee relationship. So, I urge you to take advantage of office hours in this and all your classes at Holy Cross. To encourage this practice, I require all students to stop in during office hours (or at an appointment you have arranged with me) **at least once** during the semester. All you need to do is poke your head in the door or you are welcome to stay and visit.

**WRITTEN AND ORAL FORMAL ASSIGNMENTS:**

* Three papers, including a final presentation and paper. The Writer’s Workshop will very, very helpful to you as you begin your college career. In order to encourage you to visit the Workshop at least once during the semester, **a visit to the Workshop for any paper will raise your grade**. If you bring your paper to a Writing Consultant, he/she/they will send me a note letting me know what you discussed. This will serve as a record of your visit.
* Occasional reading quizzes and pre-class and in class discussion questions.

Please note that unless you have discussed with me (and have a serious reason) submitting a paper after the due date, there will be a deduction of half a grade for each day the paper is late.

**CBL ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:**

“CBL” stands for “Community-Based Learning.”The College’s Donelan Office for Community Based Learning [<http://academics.holycross.edu/cbl>] describes its mission this way: “Community-based learning (CBL) is a teaching approach that connects classroom learning objectives with civic engagement.  Civic engagement occurs through service that meets community-identified needs or through research and experience that holds promise of social or scientific value to the community.  In this mutually beneficial process, students are able to gain a deeper understanding of course content by integrating theory with practice, while communities gain access to volunteers, resources, and the wide-ranging research and scholarly expertise housed in the College's many disciplinary departments.  Consistent with the Holy Cross tradition of preparing students for a lifetime of learning and moral citizenship, CBL students at Holy Cross are invited to reflect upon moral and ethical questions of social responsibility while considering how to live purposefully in a manner that enables one’s unique gifts to positively contribute to society.”

Engaged and intentional participation in the CBL site is a very important aspect of the seminar and will be evaluated with the help of your own self-reporting and journaling, and input requested from on-site coordinators. This on-site participation is understood in community-based learning as another kind of “reading” – the “text” in this case is the community and its activities, which we can learn to “read” by using the various analytical tools examined in the course. Because of the time dedicated to community engagement with this goal of deeper understanding, *traditional reading assignments* are fewer. Readings still play a crucial role in the course, however, in several ways: they will prepare you for the on-site experiences, they help to shed light on experiences once they have occurred; and they provide important background concepts that form the intellectual context of the course and the basis for our seminar discussions. The classroom discussions and the CBL placements are intended to complement each other in leading students to reflect upon the meaning of difference and diversity for themselves and the society in which they live. In your CBL placement, you will undoubtedly encounter people, places and situations that will cause you to wonder about much that you had previously taken for granted about yourself and your social world. In the class readings, we will engage the writings of people who have also wondered about their social world and its problems. The goal of the CBL placement for this seminar is to help you reflect on the readings and your experiences in your CBL placements and to raise further questions about what constitutes human fulfillment and happiness within the human community, and authentic ways to learn from one another and contribute to social justice.

**Some important information regarding CBL:**

* **CBL Student Handbook**—Refer to this handbook for questions regarding your CBL placement or expectations for the CBL component of this seminar: <https://www.holycross.edu/sites/default/files/cbl_handbook_final.pdf>
* **The CBL Fair will be held on Tuesday, September 10th, 4:30 pm to approximately 5:45 pm in Hogan Suite A. This is a reqired event.** The fair will then continue with the opportunity for students to meet with CBL Interns (in various rooms throughout Hogan) and fill out relevant paperwork
* **You will sign up for your CBL placement site at that time. Bring your ID and schedule.**
* **Out-of-class** **reflective dialogue sessions** offered by the CBL Interns and Donelan Office staff.  Note that attendance at one of these reflection sessions may be considered a (**BLUE Event**) with the submission of a 150-250-word response within one week of attendance. This semester’s reflection sessions include:

a) “Toxic Charity”/Preparing to Serve on Tuesday, September 24th at 7pm

b) Where Do we Go From Here?/Preparing for What Could Come Next on Tuesday, December 3rd at 7pm.  Both sessions will take place in Hogan 320.

* **CBL** **Assessment**--Active, engaged and demonstrable involvement in the CBL placement, journaling, and class discussions regarding one’s CBL experience will account for 20% of the final seminar grade. Students are required to attend their CBL site for approximately **two hours per week** throughout the semester. Each site has its own requirements for attendance and the expectation is that students fulfill their commitment to the site. Students are expected to visit their site **every week** **(totaling *at least* six times)** during the semester and **write a journal for each visit** (see **CBL Integrative Journal Directions** below).
* **CBL Integrative Journal Directions—**Your journal for this seminar is an important tool for the *integration* of your thoughts, feelings and responses to the course materials, discussions and your CBL placement. While journals can be used in multiple ways in college, for this class, I am looking for you to identify the issues you observe and reflect upon in the readings and your CBL placement and then comment on those issues in some way that is *integrative*.  You may focus on a particular reading, class discussion or CBL placement site experience in one journal entry one week and then focus on another area the next week. However, the goal is to bring together all the *academic* and *experiential* learning in this journal. Notice the word *integration* in the first sentence. That’s the key to this assignment. At the end of this semester, you should have a record of what’s happened to you over the semester. It should be an artifact that reveals a wholehearted, mindful response to your Montserrat experience.

Your journal grade will be based on writing quality, writing mechanics and integration and application of readings and seminar themes and discussions to your CBL experience. For some journal assignments, you will be given some direction or prompts but for others it is expected that you will follow your own direction. It is important that you stay close to your experience at your site as well as your reactions and responses. **Don’t write a journal for your professor but rather write to understand and deepen your engagement with the people and the surroundings.** I can’t emphasize this enough!

**Journal Directions: A journal entry should be written for each visit to your CBL site and submitted as a hard copy.** I will collect the journals **three times throughout the semester** and read all of them but grade only one of the journals each time. You will be able to choose the journal to be graded by place an asterisk at the top of the page. There is journal rubric (see Moodle “Course Information” section) from which your entries will be graded.

The CBL Interns are invaluable resources for you in terms of understanding the journal assignment. If you feel stuck on “what to write about” or simply want to talk through your CBL experience, visit one of the CBL interns during his/her/their office hours or send them an email to set up an appointment. **If you have sought help from the interns, they will send a quick email to me and that will be figured into your journal grade as extra credit.**

**Journal Guidelines**

* Write as soon as possible after visiting your site. Don’t procrastinate!
* Observe what surroundings and your response to what you see, hear, smell, and touch.
* Throughout the semester, reread your journal entries to see what themes are emerging as your site visits continue. This will help you begin to address the integration and application aspects of journaling.
* Think about how your CBL experiences, seminar readings and discussions might be related.
* Be willing to challenge your ideas and assumptions.
* Be willing to be vulnerable.
* Observe basic rules of grammar and punctuation
* Remember that the quality of your work is more important than the quantity.
* A journal is not the same as a personal diary. The main focus should be on what you are learning in class and how this connects to your CBL site and vice versa. Try not to focus too much on your initial responses, or a kind of Facebook “like” or dislike. Your personal feelings and thoughts are a crucial part of this assignment but ought to be challenged, filtered, and at times suspended for the sake of deeper understanding.

**SUMMARY**:

* Academic Engagement – preparation, attendance and participation (25%)
  + Attendance at Divine Cluster required events. (A response paper will not be required unless your professor assigns one).
  + **Two** **BLUE EVENTS** with a written event response of 150-250 words.
  + **One** (at least) visit to professor’s office (O’Kane 454) during the semester.
  + Informal class writing, and research will be included in this grade.
* Written and Oral Formal Assignments (50%) (Extra credit will be given for attending the Writer’s Workshop for help with a paper as well as attending one of the 30-minute group writing workshops sponsored by the Center for Writing)
* CBL Engagement (CBL response journals, CBL reflection and other informal assessments will be a major parts of this grade) (25%)
* Extra Credit will be given for up to four additional (**BLUE**) events including written event responses (150-250 words)

**CLASS PARTICPATION RUBRIC**

EXCEEDS STANDARDS (A range)

* Prepares for discussion with notes, ideas, questions, and supportive passages
* Contributes thoughtfully to discussion by building on own ideas and ideas of others with questions and clarifications
* Initiates discussion topics
* Invites quiet students into discussion with softball questions
* Makes significant connections beyond text

MEETS STANDARDS (B range)

* Prepares for discussion with notes, questions, and ideas
* Presents own ideas
* Supports point made with explanations, examples, and/or textual references
* Builds discussion on ideas of others by raising questions and making clarifications
* Does not dominate discussion
* Listens actively

BELOW STANDARD (C range)

* Appears not to be prepared for discussion
* Responds to other’s ideas only when asked
* Contributes ideas only when prompted
* Inattentive listener

FAILURE (D range and below)

* Absent
* Did not participate in discussion
* Participation off task
* Insensitive or disrespectful toward others or their ideas



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