
THE POLITICS OF POPE FRANCIS

POLS 3760 / CATH 3760 / PLJ 5930

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Office Hours: F 10:00-11:15am, by appointment

MW 11:00am – 12:15pm
Balthasar Library, Boileau 201

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines Pope Francis' distinctive approach to politics and governance, considering both his own exercise of leadership in Argentina and in Rome and the ways in which he has articulated his political philosophy in articles, addresses, papal documents, and the like. At the heart of his thought stands the goal of reform. How does he understand the process of reform, both of society and of the Church, and the substantive ends to which it is ordered?

MATERIALS TO PURCHASE

Austen Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope* (New York: Henry Holt, 2016). [ISBN: 1250074991]

Austen Ivereigh, *Wounded Shepherd: Pope Francis and His Struggle to Convert the Catholic Church* (New York: Henry Holt, 2019). [ISBN: 1250763657]

Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel / Evangelii Gaudium* (New York: Pauline, 2014). [ISBN: 0819875058]

[Copies of the top two books are on hold at Pius XII Library. All other required reading will be available for download from Canvas.]

LEARNING OBJECTIVES & ASSESSMENT

Upon successful completion of this course, undergraduate students will be able to:

- (1) Identify 2 or more distinctive themes in Pope Francis' political thought and describe their significance in relation to the thought of other Popes. The Short Essay will be graded according to a rubric which specifically addresses this learning objective, and the Midterm Exam will include questions that measure the achievement of this objective.

- (2) Describe at least 3 examples of Pope Francis' exercise of governance and their relation to his understanding of reform. The Cardinal Analysis will be graded according to a rubric which specifically addresses this learning objective with respect to one example, and the Midterm Exam will include questions that measure the achievement of this objective with respect to other examples.
- (3) Explain how Pope Francis uses his international journeys to advance the goals of his pontificate and to apply the major themes of his pontificate to particular social contexts. The Final Paper and Presentation will be graded according to rubrics which specifically address this learning objective with respect to the particular journey chosen by the student.

Evaluations & Grading

(1) Short Essay (15%) Students will write an essay of 1200-1500 words (about 4-5 pp.) on the political engagement of popes prior to Francis, choosing primary texts from any 2 popes in Part I of the course to analyze. The essay should: 1) identify one key theme in each text, 2) cite particular passages in which the popes develop those themes, 3) articulate each pope's argument in the student's own words, and 4) compare or contrast the 2 texts, noting what they reveal about how the political concerns of the popes persist or change over time. The essay is due in hard copy in class on **February 12**.

(2) Cardinal Analysis (15%) Students will write a 1200-1500 word analysis (about 4-5 pp.) of Pope Francis' appointments to the College of Cardinals, choosing any 2 cardinals to profile, provided that at least one of them is from outside the United States and Europe. The paper should: 1) provide relevant biographical details about each of the cardinals, 2) explain the significance of their appointments in light of Pope Francis' theory of governance, 3) cite or describe one or more statements or actions by each cardinal that substantiates the significance of the appointments, and 4) reference 1 source of either scholarly or journalistic analysis. The paper is due in hard copy in class on **March 6**.

(3) Midterm Exam (35%) The exam will cover all the material in the course up to that day, including points raised in class discussions. It will take place during class on **April 3**.

(4) Final Paper (25%) Students will write a paper of 2100 – 2400 words (about 7-8 pp.) on Pope Francis' practice of international diplomacy, choosing one of his journeys outside of Italy to analyze in close detail. Students will 1) establish the context for the trip by describing distinctive cultural / political / religious features of the country visited, 2) identify three or more significant gestures or speeches of the Pope during the journey that correspond to major themes of his pontificate, 3) explain how those gestures and words apply general themes of his pontificate to the particular circumstances of the country or region visited, and 4) support the argument by citing relevant passages from *Evangelii Gaudium* and at least 1 other papal document in which the Pope has articulated the given theme. The paper is due during exam week by the end of the time scheduled by the university for a final exam, which is **10:00am on Monday, May 13**.

(5) Final Presentation (10%) Students will make a 7-8 minute slide presentation on the subject of the international journey they have chosen for their final papers. Since the presentations will be done in class over the final 5 weeks of the semester (and thus in some cases well before the final papers are due), they need not be as detailed as the final papers. The presentation should communicate the core elements of each part of the paper: 1) the context of the journey, 2) the highlights in gestures and speeches, and 3) their significance in light of the Pope's thought. The presentation should also include at least 3 illustrative photos of the journey.



Assignments for PLJ 5930 Graduate students taking the course through Philosophy & Letters will follow the requirements for the **Short Essay** and **Midterm Exam** listed above (#1 and 3). In place of the Cardinal Analysis, graduate students will submit a **proposal** of about 250 words, identifying a question they would like to address in their final paper, subject to the approval of the instructor. The **Final Paper** will be 3600-4500 words (about 12-15 pp.) and should explore in detail a major issue in either the thought or practice of Francis' pontificate, drawing on direct citation of papal documents as well as scholarly and/or journalistic sources. A wide range of topics is possible, and students are encouraged to consult with the instructor early in the semester to begin developing ideas for their final paper. There is no final presentation, and the final paper is due at the same time as those of the undergraduates: 10:00am on Monday, May 13. Evaluation thus consists of the Short Essay (15%), Paper Proposal (5%), Midterm Exam (35%), and Final Paper (45%).

Common Grading Scale for Course Assignments

A: 93-100, A-: 90-92, B+: 87-89, B: 83-86, B-: 80-82, C+: 77-79, C: 73-76, C-: 70-72, D: 60-70, F: <60

Course Schedule

| PART I: Politics of the Popes |

17 January

John Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism, 1914-1958* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014): 264-274, 459-467, 469-470.

Optional: Pope Pius XI, *Mit Brennender Sorge: Encyclical on the Church and the German Reich* (Mar 1937)

22 January

Pope Paul VI, "Address to the United Nations" (Oct 1965)

Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* (Mar 1967): §§1-5, 43-87

24 January

Pope John Paul II, “Homily in Victory Square, Warsaw” (June 1979)

Recommended: Osnos, “Polish Throngs Hail Pope,” *Washington Post* (June 1979)

Pope John Paul II, “Address to the 50th General Assembly of the United Nations” (Oct 1995)

29 January

Pope Benedict XVI, “Address at Westminster Hall, Houses of Parliament” (Sept 2010)

John Allen, “Pope’s bold resignation began Vatican year of change,” *Boston Globe* (Feb 2014)

Pope Benedict XVI, *Last Testament: In His Own Words* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016): selections.

| PART II: Electing a Pope |

31 January

Thomas J. Reese, “Papal Elections,” *Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996): pp. 74-89, 92-100.

Gerard O’Connell, *The Election of Pope Francis* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2019): selections. [Pay special attention to pp. 124-126]

5 February

Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, pp. 1-32, 51-57, 89-123, 129-164.

7 February

Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, pp. 173-197, 224-230, 238-252, 265-272, 302-332.

12 February

Jorge Mario Bergoglio, "Leadership: The Big Picture and the Tiny Detail (1981)," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, vol. 45, no. 4: pp. 17-29.

→ Assignment due in class: Short Essay ←

14 February

Massimo Borghesi, "A Horizon Marked by Profound Contrasts," *The Mind of Pope Francis* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press Academic, 2018): pp. 19-55.

| PART III: Reform of Church Governance |

19 February [Pre-Existing Structures of Church Governance]

Reese, *Inside the Vatican*:

pp. 24-29 (College of Bishops)

pp. 42-45, 60-65 (Synod of Bishops)

pp. 66-74 (College of Cardinals)

pp. 106-125 (Roman Curia)

pp. 140-149 (Vatican Officials)

21 February [Program of Reform – Internal]

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)*, §§ 1-134.

26 February [Program of Reform – External]

Evangelii Gaudium, §§ 176-274.

28 February [Going to the Peripheries]

Pope Francis, "Homily at Lampedusa," 8 Jul 2013.

Ivireigh, *Wounded Shepherd*, chp. 6

4 March [Bringing the Peripheries into the College of Cardinals]

Matthew Bunson, "The College of Cardinals 2023: Global, Diverse, and Unpredictable," *National Catholic Register*.

Ed Condon, "How Pope Francis has remade the College of Cardinals," *The Pillar*, 30 May 2022.

Andrea Gagliarducci, "Analysis: How to interpret Pope Francis' choice of new cardinals," *Catholic News Agency*, 11 Jul 2023.

Pope Francis, "Letter to Those Who Will Be Created Cardinals," 12 Jan 2014.

Pope Francis, "Homily at Mass with the New Cardinals," 23 Feb 2014.

Pope Francis, "Homily at the Consistory for the Creation of New Cardinals," 30 Sept 2023.

6 March [Personal Reform: College of Cardinals / Roman Curia]

→ Assignment due in class: Cardinal Analysis (PLJ 5930: Paper proposal) ←

In-class reading: Pope Francis, "Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia," 22 Dec 2014.

In-class reading: Pope Francis, *Learn to Take Your Leave: Motu Proprio Governing the Resignation for Reasons of Age of Holders of Certain Offices Subject to Papal Appointment*, 12 Feb 2018.

In-class reading: Pope Francis, "Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia," 21 Dec 2020.

11 March + 13 March

// Spring Break //

18 March [Structural Reform: Council of Cardinals / Roman Curia]

Ivereigh, *Wounded Shepherd*, chp. 4

Pope Francis, *Praedicate Evangelium: Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Curia and its Service to the Church in the World*, 19 Mar 2022.

→ Focus on the following sections: **Preamble** (reform rationale), **Principles and Criteria for the Service of the Roman Curia #5** (any member of the faithful can preside over a Dicastery or Office), **Art. 17** (term limits), **Art. 53-54** (Dicastery for Evangelization), **Art. 69 and 71** (Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith), **Art. 79-80** (Dicastery for the Service of Charity)

20 March [Synodality]

Massimo Faggioli, "Synod and Synodality in Pope Francis' Words," *The Way*: Oct 2020.

Pope Francis, *Episcopalis Communio: Apostolic Constitution on the Synod of Bishops* (15 Sept 2018): §§ 1-10.

Pope Francis, "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission," (4 Oct 2023)

25 March [Institutional Crisis: Finances]

Ivereigh, *Wounded Shepherd*, chp. 3

John Allen, "Is the Vatican trial finally over?" *Crux*, 17 Dec 2023.

John Allen, "Beyond the usual suspects, a growing chorus is questioning papal power," *Crux*, 20 Dec 2023.

27 March [Institutional Crisis: Sexual Abuse]

Ivereigh, *Wounded Shepherd*, chp. 5

Pope Francis, "Letter to the Bishops of Chile," 15 May 2018.

Elise Ann Allen, "Top anti-abuse expert sets record straight on resignation from Vatican body," *Crux*, 18 Apr 2023.

1 April

// Easter Break //

3 April

Midterm Exam

| **PART IV: Reform of Civil Society** |

8 April [Displaced Persons]

Joint Declaration of His Holiness Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, of His Beatitude Ieronymos, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, and of His Holiness

Pope Francis (16 Apr 2016)

Pope Francis, "Address to authorities, civil society, and the diplomatic corps in Greece," 4 Dec 2021.

Pope Francis, "Address in the Refugee Camp in Lesbos," 5 Dec 2021.

10 April [Social Friendship]

Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti: Encyclical Letter on Fraternity and Social Friendship* (3 Oct 2020): §§ 1-55, 198-287.

15 April [War & Peace]

Pope Francis, "Urbi et Orbi Message," 25 Dec 2023.

Jason Horowitz, "Pope Francis, in Plea for South Sudan Peace, Stuns Leaders by Kissing Their Shoes," *New York Times*: 11 Apr 2019.

Jason Horowitz, "Secret 'Mission' for Peace in Ukraine May Show Limits of Pope's Influence," *New York Times*: 3 May 2023.

17 April [Integral Ecology]

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si': Encyclical Letter on Care for Our Common Home* (24 May 2015): par. 1-16, 101-136, 137-162, 163-201. [*Pay attention to major section headings to get a sense for the overall argument*]

22 April [A Better Politics: Popular not Populist]

Fratelli Tutti, par. 154-197.

Pope Francis, "Address to the Joint Session of the United States Congress," 24 Sept 2015.

| **PART V: Goal of the Reform: The Church as Joyful Evangelizer** |

24 April [The "First Society": Families and Young People]

Pope Francis, *Amoris Lætitia: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family* (19 Mar 2016): §§ 1-7, 31-57, 313-325.

Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation to Young People* (25 Mar 2019): §§ 1-4, 179-201.

29 April [Mercy and Closeness to All]

Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus: Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Year of Mercy* (11 Apr 2015).

Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Fiducia Supplicans: Declaration on the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings* (18 Dec 2023).

1 May [Liturgy as Place of Encounter]

Pope Francis, *Desiderio Desideravi: Apostolic Letter on the Liturgical Formation of the People of God* (29 Jun 2022).

6 May [Criticism and Opposition]

Ross Douthat, "What will happen to conservative Catholicism?" *New York Times*: 9 Nov 2019.

Gerhard Müller, "A Hostile Takeover of the Church of Jesus Christ...We Must Resist!" (transcript of an interview on *EWTN*), 6 Oct 2023.

John Allen, "Could bevy of new Vatican books betoken not civil war, but synthesis?" *Crux*: 22 Jan 2023.

13 May

→ Final Paper due by 10:00am ←

CORE STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Dignity, Ethics, and a Just Society

This course is part of the Saint Louis University Core, an integrated intellectual experience completed by all baccalaureate students, regardless of major, program, college, school or campus. The Core offers all SLU students the same unified approach to Jesuit education guided by SLU's institutional mission and identity and our nine undergraduate [Core Student Learning Outcomes](#) (SLOs).

Dignity, Ethics, and a Just Society is one of 19 Core Components. The University Core SLO(s) that this component is designed to intentionally advance are listed below:

University Core Student Learning Outcomes

The Core SLO(s) that this component is intentionally designed to advance are:

SLO 1: Examine their actions and vocations in dialogue with the Catholic, Jesuit tradition

SLO 3: Assess evidence and draw reasoned conclusions

SLO 7: Evaluate the extent to which social systems influence equity and reflect innate human dignity

Additionally, the Core Component-level Student Learning Outcomes are listed below:

Component-level Student Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this course will be able to:

- Analyze the cultural-institutional conditions and causes of just and unjust social systems using such concepts as social location, relationships, power, privilege, and vulnerability
- Apply such ethical concepts as human dignity, equity, well-being justice, and the common good to critically evaluate both existing social systems and proposals for social change
- Envision and articulate systemic social changes and other ways to promote flourishing, well-being, equity, justice, and the dignity of the human person

Course Policies

Class Prep. Students should spend 2 hours outside of class preparing for every hour spent in class. Since this course meets for 75 minutes each class session, students should devote **150 minutes** (2 hours and 30 minutes) of quality time preparing the readings and other materials for each meeting. For students who have not yet mastered this discipline, the instructor recommends setting a timer to help work up to the habit.

Attendance. See the University-wide policy on class attendance:

<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/academic-policies-procedures/attendance/> Students with 5 or more unauthorized absences should speak with the instructor about withdrawing in order to avoid failure of the course.

Electronic Devices. All cell phones and other devices used for social media must be turned off before class begins and remain off for the duration of class.

Written Work. All written work submitted for a grade in the course should be formatted as follows: double-spaced in 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides. A word count must also be included on the final page. Students are responsible for retaining copies of all submitted work and for reproducing any work that may fail to be transmitted in the course of submission.

Late Assignments and Make-up Exams. Since students are made aware of assignment deadlines at the beginning of the semester and have months to prepare them, the instructor does not, as a rule, grant extensions. Written material submitted within 48 hours of the deadline will be accepted with a 10% grade reduction for every 24 hour period the assignment is late. Written material will not normally be accepted more than 48 hours after the deadline without specific authorization.

Revisions to Syllabus. The instructor reserves the right to make adjustments to the syllabus as necessary throughout the semester and will make students aware of any changes far enough in advance for diligent preparation.

Completion of All Assignments. Failure to submit any assignment worth at least 20% of the course grade is grounds for failure of the course as a whole.

University-Wide Regulations

Academic Integrity. Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is “the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity.” Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service through which SLU fulfills its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern. The full University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be found on the Provost's Office website at: https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy_academic-integrity_6-26-2015.pdf. Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites.

Student Success. In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center assists students with academic and career related services, is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331) and the School of Nursing (Suite, 114). Students can visit www.slu.edu/success to

learn more about: Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor. University-level support (e.g., tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, academic coaching, career services, and/or facets of curriculum planning).

Disability Accommodations. Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must formally register their disability with the University. Once successfully registered, students also must notify their course instructor that they wish to use their approved accommodations in the course. Please contact Disability Services to schedule an appointment to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Most students on the St. Louis campus will contact Disability Services, located in the Student Success Center and available by email at Disability_services@slu.edu or by phone at 314.977.3484. Once approved, information about a student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors by email from Disability Services and within the instructor's official course roster. Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one also are encouraged to contact Disability Services. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Title IX. Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, stalking, domestic or dating violence, we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident that involves a Title IX matter, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX Coordinator and share the basic facts of your experience. This is true even if you ask the faculty member not to disclose the incident. The Title IX Coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

Anna Kratky is the Title IX Coordinator at Saint Louis University (DuBourg Hall, room 36; anna.kratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886). If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK or make an anonymous report through SLU's Integrity Hotline by calling 1-877-525-5669 or online at https://www.lighthouse-services.com/_StandardCustomURL/LHILandingPage.asp. To view SLU's policies, and for resources, please visit the following web addresses: <https://www.slu.edu/here4you> and <https://www.slu.edu/general-counsel>.

IMPORTANT UPDATE: SLU's Title IX Policy (formerly called the Sexual Misconduct Policy) has been significantly revised to adhere to a new federal law governing Title IX that was released on May 6, 2020. Please take a moment to review the new policy and information on the following web address: <https://www.slu.edu/here4you>. Please contact the Anna Kratky, the Title IX Coordinator, with any questions or concerns.