**RELG 5559-004—Ethics and Aesthetics:**

**Engaging Religious Aesthetics in Public Life**

University of Virginia, Spring 2016

**Professor:** Nichole M. Flores **Class Meetings:** M 3:30-6PM

**Email:** nichole.flores@virginia.edu **Class Location:** New Cabell Hall 368

**Office Phone:** (434) 243-3937 **Office Hours**: Tuesday 3:15-4:15

**Office:** Gibson S433 Wednesday 1:00-2:00

**Twitter:** @nicholemflores Appointment by email

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

How might aesthetics inform approaches to religious engagement in plural socio-political contexts? After framing the question and exploring philosophical resources for response, the seminar explores contemporary theological and ethical conversations as well as constructive horizons in this vital area of inquiry.

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

* Students are expected to attend each class and come prepared to engage in critical discussion of the assigned text. Students will be evaluated on the overall quality of participation and demonstrated capacity for collegiality and professionalism. – 10%
* **A one page, single-spaced essay discussing the week’s readings will be due via Collab each Monday at 1:00 PM**. All students must submit 9 out of 11 (no papers for weeks 1, 7, or 13; research abstracts due week 15). Essays will be returned on a weekly basis with comments but no grades. Please collect and resubmit the first 4 or 5 essays for grading; follow the same process with the second set of essays. Essays will be evaluated for accuracy, breadth of readings covered, specific references to the texts, and clarity and cogency of argument. – 20%
* **A final research essay of 20-25 pages should be posted to Collab by May 6 at 5pm.** Students will present brief abstracts of their research during the final week of class – 70%

**ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICIES:**

* All written work should be posted to the Collab “Assignments” tab in Microsoft Word format using the following file format: LastName\_Reflection1 (Gonzalez\_Reflection1, Jones\_FinalResearchEssay, etc.)
* Weekly reflections should be posted to Collab by 1pm on Mondays; the assignment will close promptly at 1pm and no late reflections will be accepted.
* Final research essay extensions will be considered under extenuating circumstances, however, **a new deadline will be assigned and enforced.**

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

1. Roberto S. Goizueta, *Christ Our Companion: Toward a Theological Aesthetics of Liberation*
2. Cecilia Gonzalez-Andrieu, *Bridge to Wonder: Art as a Gospel of Beauty*
3. John W. de Gruchy, *Christianity, Art and Transformation*
4. John Dewey, *Art as Experience*
5. Martha C. Nussbaum, *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice*
6. Maureen H. O’Connell, *If These Walls Could Talk: Community Muralism and the Beauty of Justice*
7. Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just*
8. Christopher D. Tirres, *The Aesthetics and Ethics of Faith*
9. Emilie M. Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*

*Book reviews and supplemental texts are available via UVa Collab.*

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Week 1 – January 25**

**(Collab)** O’Connell, “Appendix: Imagining the Signs of the Times”

**(Collab)** Frank Burch Brown, “Rethinking Aesthetics,” excerpt from, “Can Aesthetics be Christian?” in *Religious Aesthetics: A Theological Study of Making and Meaning*

**I. PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS**

**Week 2 – February 1**

Scarry

**Week 3 – February 8**

Nussbaum, Chapter 1 and Parts I & II

**Week 4 – February 15**

Nussbaum, Part III

**Week 5 – February 22**

Dewey

**II. PERSPECTIVES IN ETHICS AND AESTHETICS**

**Week 6 – February 29**

Wolterstorff

**Week 7 – March 7**

**NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK**

**Week 8 – March 14**

De Gruchy

**Week 9 – March 21**

O’Connell

**Week 10 – March 28**

Townes

**Week 11 – April 4**

Goizueta

**Week 12 – April 11**

Gonzalez-Andrieu

**Week 13 – April 18**

**No Class**

**Week 14 – April 25**

Tirres

**Week 15 – May 2**

**Research Abstract Presentations**

**Exam Week – May 6**

***Research Paper Due***