

THE CONTENT OF THIS DESCRIPTION IS NOT A LEARNING CONTRACT AND THE INSTRUCTOR IS NOT BOUND TO IT. IT IS OFFERED IN GOOD FAITH AND INTENDED AS A HELPFUL GUIDE TO THE STUDENT.

**TITLE:** The Spirituality of Thomas Merton

**TERM:** Spring 2024-2025

**PROFESSOR:** L. Roger Owens

**CREDIT HOURS:** 3

**REGISTRATION:** LIMITED TO: \_\_\_\_\_  
# AUDITORS: 2

UNLIMITED X  
NO AUDITORS \_\_\_\_\_

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is designed to allow students to examine aspects of the theology, practice, and influence of Thomas Merton, a significant 20<sup>th</sup> Century spiritual teacher. Merton's work will be considered in ongoing dialogue with the students' own experiences and practice of prayer. In this course students will be introduced to Merton's life, work, and place in contemporary American Spirituality, including his prophetic writings on race and war, along with his interfaith engagements with Buddhism. Readings from Merton will be used to allow students to relate Merton's theology and practice of Christian spirituality to their own lives of faith and the practice of ministry.

### **CLASS OBJECTIVES:**

1. Articulate a clear understanding of several themes in the spirituality of Thomas Merton (MDiv SOL 2; MAPS SLO 1; MTS SLO 1)
2. Articulate clearly about how themes in Merton's spirituality relate to their own understanding and practice of Christian spirituality (MDiv SOL 5);
3. Translate the themes/insights of a Christian writer (Thomas Merton) from a tradition different from their own (Roman Catholic) sympathetically, and with relevance to their own context (MDiv SOL 4; MAPS SLO 3; MTS SLO2).
4. Understand the potential (and limitations) of Merton's writings on race, war, and interfaith dialogue to how those issues can be faithfully addressed today (MDiv SOL 2, 7; MAPS SLO 5; MTS SLO 4)

### **PREREQUISITES: SP110A and B**

### **REQUIRED TETBOOKS/READINGS:**

- Jim Forest, *Living with Wisdom: A Life of Thomas Merton* (Orbis, rev. ed. 2008), ISBN: 978-1570757549, \$32.00
- Thomas Merton, *The New Man* (Farrar, Straus, Giroux, reissue ed, 1999), ISBN: 978-0374514440, \$17.00
- Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New Directions, reprint ed. 2007), ISBN: 978-0811217248, \$11.95
- Thomas Merton, *Contemplative Prayer* (Image classic, 1971), ISBN: 978-0385092197, \$10.99

Additional course material available on Course Portal

### **ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING**

Weekly reflections on reading + attendance/participation: 10%

*The New Man* paper: 20%

OP Ed essay/letter: 20%

Designing and leading a prayer practice based on *New Seeds of Contemplation*: 20%

Final assignment, choice: Integrative paper or retreat design: 30%

**ATTENDANCE:** Required.