

## GEN 460 Course descriptions

Spring 2012

### **General course description for *all* GEN 460 courses**

This seminar explores what it means to think and live faithfully in our world by undertaking an in-depth study of an important issue. Each class will engage with the richness and complexity of its subject by considering diverse viewpoints and multiple academic disciplines and exploring their interconnections. Each class will also be challenged with some of the best Christian thinking about the issue. The class will maintain an atmosphere of open inquiry and discovery, and provide occasion for each student to reflect on God's call on his /her life. Prerequisite: senior standing, or junior standing and completion of all other general education requirements.

### **Course descriptions for *specific sections***

#### **GEN 460-1: Love, Sex & Marriage**

**Instructor:** Shawn Floyd

**Meets:** Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00-3:15 pm

The course will help students (1) attain some conceptual clarity about the ongoing controversies related to love and sexuality and (2) appreciate the Christian tradition's hard-won wisdom about monogamy, chastity, contraception, homosexuality, and the sacramental nature of the marriage.

#### **GEN 460-2: Film and the American Dream**

**Instructors:** Jay Case and Andrew Rudd

**Meets:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00-2:15 pm

This course is an examination of film in the US between 1945 and the present, thematically linked to the concept of "the American Dream." Through those films we hope to give students the critical equipment for encountering artistic materials and sustaining critical dialogue. We also hope that through these films students might better understand the ways that historical context shapes conceptions of the American Dream and ways that conceptions of the American Dream have driven thematic content in film. As an organizing framework for the course, we will explore the concept of the American Dream through the themes of the Material Ideal, the Civic Ideal and the Ideal of Individualism. Through this process, we intend students to become more thoughtful and mature people of faith.

#### **GEN 460-3: Globalization and the Christian Year**

**Instructors:** Jane Hoyt-Oliver and Scott Waalkes

**Meets:** Tuesdays 6:00-8:30 pm

This seminar confronts central questions for Christians living in the twenty-first century: What does it mean to live in a global village and also be Christian? How do we respond as Christians to the economic, ecological, political, and cultural integration of our world (even as we feel busier and more disconnected)? Since this is a seminar, both faculty members and students will explore these questions of discipleship together through the framework of the Christian liturgical calendar, from Advent through Pentecost. Students should leave the course thinking about living more deliberately out of the Christian story.

#### **GEN 460-4: Energy Culture**

**Instructor:** Earl Rodd

**Meets:** Mondays and Wednesdays 4:00-5:15 pm

This course considers the following topics through the lens of culture: Christian approaches to technology and the environment, the idea of alternative energy, energy reserves and prices, the question of imports and export, possible future energy sources, atomic and nuclear energy, global warming debates, and Christian faith perspectives.

#### **GEN 460-5: Living Well in a Car Culture**

**Instructors:** Matt Phelps and Scott Waalkes

**Meets:** Mondays and Wednesdays 3:00-4:15 pm

In this seminar, we will explore a host of psychological, social, political, economic, and ecological issues related to cars and car-related phenomena. Sit back, buckle up, and enjoy the ride! You'll never think about your car the

same way again. Some of the questions we will explore in this seminar include: Why do we love cars, car racing, road movies, and road trips? Is the car a source of identity, freedom, and status? Is it a deadly machine that puts our lives and the lives of others at risk each time we sit behind the wheel? Should we talk on the phone or “text” while driving? What kind of a public space is the highway? Do we treat others well as we drive, or is “road rage” a serious social and ethical problem? Should cars be designed to get better gas mileage or use alternative fuels? How does our extensive use of automobiles relate to other issues, such as U.S. dependence on foreign oil supplies, land use/sprawl, pollution, and climate change? And, the most important question of all: *How do we best love God and neighbor while living in a car culture such as ours?*

### **GEN 460-6: Christianity and Psychology**

**Instructor:** David Entwistle and Steve Moroney

**Meets:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30 am-12:45 pm

Over the last two thousand years, Christianity has reacted in complex and contradictory ways in its encounter with what we would today call “mental illness.” While terms such as “mental illness” and “psychological well-being” have decidedly controversial and modern overtones, they are topics that have been of enormous interest to Christians. In this course, we will explore the historical interactions of Christianity and mental illness, including current research and controversy regarding religion and mental health.

### **GEN 460-7: Immigration**

**Instructor:** Julia Villaseñor

**Meets:** Thursdays 4:00-6:30 pm

Debates over immigration are in the news these days. To gain some perspective, we will look at why migration to industrialized countries occurs worldwide, as well as look specifically at the history of immigration to the United States and historical responses to immigration over the centuries. In addition, we will consider the current situation, focusing on Latino immigration and border control in the Southwest United States and ending with readings on a Christian response to immigration.

### **GEN 460 8: The Spirituality and Ethics of Food and Eating**

**Instructor:** Joel Soza

**Meets:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00-10:15AM

*The Spirituality and Ethics of Food and Eating* provides students with a deeper understanding of Christian faith, one that will help them learn to think about their food choices as not merely a physical act, but as a spiritual, devotional, and ethical exercise. Students will become more aware of world need and preference for others while also learning to improve their all-around health, control their own weight, and develop greater spiritual awareness and sensitivity in the daily and routine activity of eating. Finally, students will encounter Jesus’ invitation to think about food in spiritual ways, gaining an understanding as to what it means that Christianity is a movement with table fellowship at the forefront of its faith expression