C–672: THEOLOGY AND THE ARTS—
Spring 2013 (Wednesdays, 2:00–5:00 PM, off campus & #161)

Frank Burch Brown, Professor
Office #218; phone (317) 931-2343
Email: fbrown@cts.edu

Faculty Secretary:
Joyce Krauser, 931-2350
Meetings by appointment

Course Description

The aim of this course is to understand more fully the most important connections between theology and the arts, both past and present. We will explore various ways in which the making and experience of artistry becomes theologically/spiritually significant, not only in theory but also in cultural forms, personal experience, and worship.

Examples will be drawn from specific art forms, styles, and artists (from popular arts as well as those often labeled “high arts”). We will also examine the theories and interpretations of selected theologians of art, aesthetics, and culture. Some of the art we consider is designed for church use; much comes from outside the church; and other works have no direct ties to formal religion of any kind.

The course will combine presentations (from professor and students) and “mini lectures.” We will also plan to take advantage of local arts events, visiting artists, and the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

Regarding student presentations and papers, students will have the option of making their own selections, in consultation with the professor, as to which artistic or theoretical work(s) to study. The professors will provide sample or suggested topics. There will also be some opportunity for artistic creativity on the part of students who are so inclined.

Readings


Handouts will be distributed via internet or print-out. Distribution of other materials (audio and visual) will be arranged ad hoc.

Recommended:
Simon Schama, The Power of Art—BBC DVD (list price $49.98); an accompanying book (Ecco, list price $55.00). We will view possibly 4 segments of this video in class.

Requirements
(1) Reading and viewing/auditioning of material by the date for which it is assigned
(2) Active participation in class (attendance plus apt—if not rapt—discussion)
(3) One 20-minute (max) presentation to class, followed by 10 minutes of class discussion.
(4) One formal paper, 10-12 pp. (including bibliography), double-spaced, 12-pt. font size. Follow style guidelines in the Chicago Manual of Style or else in Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. The paper involves both research on and interpretation of a topic pertinent both to the matter of theology and the arts—e.g. an important issue (such art and Incarnation), a particular theologian of the arts, or a significant artist, work, or style of theological significance—showing an awareness of theological issues and resources, and relevant controversies.
(5) Final Exam (essay format; take-home)

Grades
Class Participation 10%
Presentation in Class 20%
Paper 50%
Final Exam 20%

An “A” will be given for outstanding work; a “B” for work that is commendable overall; a “C” for work that is acceptable but somewhat deficient; a “D” for work that is marred by serious flaws; an “F” for work that falls far below acceptable standards for graduate work. Grading will conform, overall, to standards agreed upon by the CTS faculty. Keep in mind that all professors have been encouraged to avoid “grade inflation.”

Late Work
Late work, unless excused by the professor, is penalized at the rate of five points per day. If you need an extension, you must have a good reason and must talk with the professor ahead of time. No grade will be given for work handed in after the end of the semester, apart from work done to satisfy an official incomplete.

Format
Normally the class will include relatively brief lectures and periodic comments from the professor on portions of assigned material. It will also include attention to, and discussion of, writings in theology, and artistic examples. This class is intended to be less a “spectator” event than a participatory one. It can function well, therefore, only when attendance is regular and when students are prepared. As a matter of courtesy, you are asked to notify the professor when an absence is anticipated. It is also helpful to contact the professor (normally by email) when an unanticipated absence has occurred.

Electronic/Digital Devices
In keeping with CTS policy: No cell phone calls or texting or unauthorized use of internet & electronics in class, please. You are asked to silence all cell phones.
TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE (2-19-2013)

Note: many of the artistic examples presented in class do not appear on the syllabus

Jan. 23  Introduction.
          Video—Creativity: Touching the Divine

Jan. 30  Pope John Paul II, Letter to Artists (PDF file via internet)

Feb. 6  FBB, Good Taste, Bad Taste, Christian Taste, p. ix-25; music, continued

Feb. 13  FBB on music, continued (with examples from Mary Lou Williams and Arvo Pärt)

Feb. 20  FBB, 26-61; Viladesau, 123-164; Gorringe, 1-71; sacrament and art; Schama on Rembrandt

Feb. 27  READING WEEK

March 6  Gorringe, pp. 73-103; Thiessen, 203-22; Yohana Junker on her own art, as related to themes of tragedy and transcendence

March 13  Gorringe, 104-39; FBB, 95-127; Schama on Picasso’s Guernica and related works

March 20  Gorringe, 141-93; FBB, pp. 160–198; Schama on Rothko’s Tate Modern paintings and related works

March 27  EASTER RECESS

April 3  Thiessen, Theological Aesthetics: A Reader 223-252; FBB, 217-270; film, Tree of Life

April 10  Thiessen, 253-308; film, Life of Pi

April 17  Student Presentation 1; Thiessen, 309-367
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>Student Presentation 2; Thiessen, cont.</td>
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<td>*May 1</td>
<td>Final Papers/Projects due; Auditing Student Presentations (optional); tba</td>
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<td>**May 8</td>
<td>**Final Exams Due; trip to IMA</td>
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