



**RL 236 MYSTICS, PHILOSOPHERS, SAINTS AND SINNERS: STUDIES IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITION**  
IES Abroad Rome

**DESCRIPTION:**

Through a close study of both primary and secondary materials in theology, spirituality, mysticism, and ecclesial history, this course will introduce students to the major forms and institutions of the Catholic tradition from Imperial Rome through the Medieval period. The course begins by studying Christianity's relationship to the Roman Empire and its post-imperial growth and development. This is followed by an examination of the central religious institutions such as the papacy (we will study the historic development of the papacy and attend a Papal Audience), monasticism (we will study the rule of Saint Benedict and visit a Benedictine monastery), and the university (we will study scholasticism and visit a Dominican university). We will also look at medieval religious reform orders, in particular the Franciscans, and we will visit the birthplace of Saint Francis of Assisi. We will explore the theological and philosophical influence of Augustine and Thomas of Aquinas as well as alternative expressions of religious faith in mystics, notably Catherine of Siena.

**CREDITS:** 3 credits

**CONTACT HOURS:** 45

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:** English

**PREREQUISITES:** None

**METHOD OF PRESENTATION:**

- Lecture
- Discussion
- Course-related trips

**REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:**

- Class participation (15%)
- Weekly Reflection Paper (15%)
- Midterm (20%)
- Final reflection paper (20%)
- Final examination (30%)

**\*Details of required work:**

**Grading Rubric for student participation:**

<b>A</b>	<b>Excellent participation</b> The student's contributions reflect an active reading of the assigned bibliography. Skillfully synthesizes the main ideas of the readings and raises questions about the applications and implications of the material. Demonstrates, through questions and comments, that he or she has been capable of relating the main ideas in the readings to the other information discussed in the course, and with his or her own life experience. The student makes informed judgments about the readings and other ideas discussed in class, providing evidence and reasons. He/she respectfully states his/her reactions about other classmates' opinions, and is capable of contributing to the inquiry spiral with other questions. The student gets fully involved in the completion of the class activities.
<b>B</b>	<b>Very good participation</b> The student's contributions show that the assigned materials are usually read. Most of the time the main ideas are identified, even though sometimes it seems that applications and implications of the information read were

	not properly reflected upon. The student is able to construct over others' contributions, but sometimes seems to interrupt the shared construction to go over tangents. He/she is respectful of others' ideas. Regularly involved in the activities but occasionally loses concentration or energy.
<b>C</b>	<b>Regular participation</b> The participant evidences a regular reading of the bibliography, but in a superficial way. He/she tries to construct over others' ideas, but commonly provides comments that indicate lack of preparation about the material. Frequently, contributions are shallow or unarticulated with the discussion in hand.
<b>F</b>	<b>Insufficient participation</b> Consistently, the participant reads in a shallow way or does not read at all. Does not participate in an informed way, and shows lack of interest in constructing over others' ideas.

#### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Define and delimit the historical development of the Catholic tradition from antiquity through the high Middle Ages.
- Illustrate the particular and independent ways in which the Catholic tradition has been shaped by the institutions of the papacy, the monastery, and the university.
- Recognize, compare and analyze the contribution to the Catholic worldview of such figures as Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena.
- Express the above understanding through active class participation, weekly reflections on readings and site visits, written examinations, and a final reflection paper. A weekly reflection paper of one page, single spaced, is due by Sunday at midnight. This reflection paper should be submitted via email.

#### ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance is mandatory for all IES classes, including field studies. If a student misses more than one class, 2 percentage points will be deducted from the final grade for every additional absence. Any exams, tests, presentations, or other work missed due to student absences can only be rescheduled in cases of documented medical emergencies or family emergencies.

#### CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments
<b>Week 1</b> <b>Feb. 7</b>	<b>Introduction and Overview</b> Introduction and Historical Overview <b>Course-Related Trip: Basilica of San Clemente</b>	Reading: González, Justo, <i>The Story of Christianity</i> , pp. 13-39, pp. 105-117.
<b>Week 2</b> <b>Feb. 14</b>	<b>Christianity's Relationship to the Roman Empire</b> <b>Course-Related Trip: Saint Paul Outside the Wall,</b> Piazzale San Paolo , 00146 Roma	Reading: González, Justo, <i>The Story of Christianity</i> , pp. 41-58; 97-10
<b>Week 3</b> <b>Feb. 21</b>	<b>Early Martyrdoms</b> <b>Course-Related Trip: Catacomb of Santa Priscilla</b> Via Salaria 430, 00199 Roma <a href="http://www.catacombepriscilla.com/index_en.html">http://www.catacombepriscilla.com/index_en.html</a>	Selected readings from <i>The Acts of the Martyrs</i>
<b>Week 4</b> <b>Feb. 28</b>	<b>Emperor Constantine and the Transformation of Christianity</b> <b>Course-Related Trip: San Giovanni Laterano and Santa Croce</b> <b>Meeting Point : The Obelisk</b>	Reading: González, Justo, <i>The Story of Christianity</i> , pp. 119-148.

	Piazza di San Giovanni in Laterano, 4 00184	
<b>Week 5 March 7</b>	<b>The Monastery</b> <b>Course-Related Trip: Basilica of Santa Sabina and Sant'Anselmo Benedictine College</b> <b>Meeting point: Basilica of Santa Sabina</b> Piazza Pietro D'Illiria 1, 00153 Roma	Readings: <i>The Rule of St. Benedict</i> , (library reserve shelf), Introduction (pp. 9-39). Chap. 1 (pp. 43-47), Chap. 4-7 (pp. 52-61); Chap. 31-42 (pp. 76-82); Chap. 53-59 (pp. 89-95); Chap. 70-73 (pp. 104-106).
<b>Week 6 March 14</b>	<b>Midterm</b>	
	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
<b>Week 7 March 28</b>	<b>Theological Anthropology: Augustine of Hippo</b>  <b>PAPAL AUDIENCE : WEDNESDAY MARCH 29</b> <b>DAY TRIP TO ASSISI : FRIDAY MARCH 31</b>	Readings: <i>The Confessions</i> , pp. 14-25, 33-49, 55-67, 94-102, 108-114, 125-157.  READINGS: HANDOUT
<b>Week 8 April 4</b>	<b>The University and Scholasticism</b> <b>Course-Related Trip: University of St. Thomas Aquinas, the Angelicum</b> <b>Meeting point: Largo Angelicum 1, 00184</b>	Readings: Barron, <i>Thomas Aquinas Spiritual Master</i> , 13-29; Egan, <i>Soundings in the Christian Mystical Tradition</i> , pp. 122-127; Handout.
<b>Week 9 April 11</b>	<b>NO MORNING OR AFTERNOON SESSION</b> <b>BOOK PRESENTATION : FR. PHILIP LARREY –</b> <b>Tuesday, April 11th at 6.00pm, IES</b>	
<b>Week 10 April 18</b>	<b>The Mysticism of Catherine of Siena</b> <b>Course-related trip – Santa Maria sopra Minerva</b> <b>Meeting point: Piazza della Minerva, 42 00186 Roma</b>	Readings: Saint Catherine of Siena, <i>The Dialogue</i> , pp. 24-47; Egan, Harvey, <i>Soundings in the Christian Mystical Tradition</i> , (Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 2010), pp. xi-11, 208-213.
<b>Week 11 April 25</b>	<b>NO CLASS – NATIONAL HOLIDAY</b>	
<b>Week 12 May 2</b>	<b>CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS</b>	Readings: Pope Francis, <i>Laudato Si</i> , paragraphs 189-246.
<b>Week 13 May 9</b>	<b>FINAL EXAMINATION – MAY 9 - FINAL REFLECTION PAPER DUE</b>	

#### REQUIRED READINGS:

- Augustine, *The Confessions*, Translation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, (Hyde Park: New City Press, 1997 paperback edition).
- Barron, Robert, *Thomas Aquinas Spiritual Master*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996).
- Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York Ramsey Toronto: Paulist Press).
- Egan, Harvey, *Soundings in the Christian Mystical Tradition*, (Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 2010).
- Ehrman, Bart, *After the New Testament, A Reader in Early Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- González, Justo, *The Story of Christianity*.
- *The Rule of St. Benedict*, (Library Reserve Shelf), pp. 9-39, 43-47, 52-61, 76-82, 89-95, 104-106.
- *The Writings of St. Francis of Assisi* (Assisi: Casa Editrice Francescana)



#### INTERNET RESOURCES:

- [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va) (Papal schedule and library of papal writings)
- [www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org) (English translation of the Fathers)
- [www.ccel.org](http://www.ccel.org) (Christian Classics Ethereal Library)
- <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html> (Internet Medieval Sourcebook)