

CORE 320: Transcendence

3 credit hours

prerequisite: CORE 220: Community

Required Readings and Materials

Text

Course Reader

Mission Statements

ACU's Mission – to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

General Education Core Mission — to introduce students to and engage them in the process of thinking critically, globally, and missionally, preparing them for the rigor of academic excellence and university life at ACU.

Course Mission—to equip students with frameworks through which to address issues of identity and the self.

Course Prerequisite and Description

This course is intended for first or second-year college students who are continuing their Core Curriculum requirements.

The purpose of this course is to engage these students in thinking critically, missionally, and globally about the ideas which shape our current and future views of ourselves. Students will be exposed to various historical ideas about the self, consider the differences between human persons and the rest of creation, examine exterior forces that constrain the self, and create a statement of personal identity. This will be done through in-class presentations, mentored class discussion, and personal and collaborative writing to reflect on how individually and as a culture we have come to understand ourselves and how we might change our understanding now and in the future.

Required Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a critical awareness of the main ways human beings create and assign meaning (such as hermeneutics, linguistics, semiotics, natural meaning).
2. Articulate and critically assess various views of order and chaos.
3. Explore the ethical and moral implications of living an integrated, Christ-centered life of faith situated within a continuum of order and chaos.
4. Demonstrate a conceptual understanding of the nature and limits of scientific inquiry.
5. Demonstrate how creative works of art from various time periods have been used to express or reflect meaning.
6. Employ a multidisciplinary approach to analyzing meaning from a variety of approaches, including philosophical, cultural, theological, and aesthetic.

Note: Objectives 1-4 comprise 60% of the class, while objective 5 comprises 40%.

Required Assignments with Suggested Grade Weights

NOTE: Assignments may be used to meet any course objectives, and additional assignments may be added at the professor's discretion.

- *Preparation and Participation (25-40%)*
 - Quizzes: Results on reading quizzes will indicate a working knowledge of term and main concepts from the assigned readings.
 - Discussion: Be prepared and willing to participate in class discussions over the reading and course materials.
 - Course blogs: Create and respond to topical entries as assigned
- Short Reaction Paper (5-20%)
 - a brief essay (1000 words) reacting to a course reading or other prompt as defined by the professor
- *Analytic Paper or Project (20-40%)*
 - an extended analytical essay (3000+ words) or creation of a complex artifact and reflective essay (1750+ words) that critically responds to specific course issues
- *Final Exam (10-20%)*

Course Competencies and Measurements

	Competency	Measurement Instrument	Measurement Standard
1	Demonstrate a critical awareness of the main ways human beings create and assign meaning (such as hermeneutics, linguistics, semiotics, natural meaning).	Class Participation and Preparation Short Paper	1a Participation will be reviewed by professors and measured in terms of how well students support their ideas with specific evidence and how well they respond to and incorporate perspectives from peers and instructors. Scores on brief objective quizzes based on the readings will provide evidence of sustained engagement in the class. 1b. Students will write a short reaction paper after engaging a prompt chosen by the professor. Professors will assess papers based on the thoughtful engagement of the topic, including the thoroughness of personal context provided and the effective use of insights from class discussions.
2	Articulate and critically assess various views of order and chaos.	Analytic Paper or Project	2a. Students will write a medium-length paper or create a multi-media project about a historic or philosophic view of the self chosen by the professor. Professors will assess papers and projects based on the comprehensive engagement of the topic, including proper citation of materials, scope and depth of analysis, and concision and persuasiveness of the argument.
3	Explore the ethical and moral implications of living an integrated, Christ-centered life of faith situated within a continuum of order and chaos.	Class Participation and Preparation Blog Entries	See 1a. 3b. Participation by students in discussion blogs will be reviewed by peers and/or professors for personal application of class material in thoughtful analyses of the self. Creative use of and responses to elements such as literature, images or video clips that relate to the self will also be assessed.
4	Demonstrate a conceptual understanding of the nature and limits of scientific inquiry.	Class Participation and Preparation	See 1a.

	Competency	Measurement Instrument	Measurement Standard
5	Demonstrate how creative works of art from various time periods have been used to express or reflect meaning.	Blog Entries Final Exam	See 3b. Using the designated final exam time-slot, students will respond to a case scenario in a written, aural, or video format. The prompt will be similar to and will build on the prompts used in blog entries. Results will be assessed in terms of students' application of materials covered in class, reflection of critical aesthetic judgments with appropriate specificity for the prompt, and inclusion of appropriate detail.
6	Employ a multidisciplinary approach to analyzing meaning from a variety of approaches, including philosophical, cultural, theological, and aesthetic.	Class Participation and Preparation Blog Entries Analytic Paper or Project	See 1a. See 3b. See 2a.

Grading Procedure

To assign a course grade, the following scale is used: 100-90 = A, 89-80 = B, 79-70 = C, 69-60 = D, 0-59 = F

Course Policies

Attendance

Students are expected to attend each class period. Upon missing 20% of the course (9 absences in a MWF class or 6 absences in a TR class), the student will be dropped from the class with the grade of an F. For any absence, you will be expected to be prepared for the next class. Three tardies will constitute one absence. If you miss a class, you are responsible for the material covered and any assignments made. Ignorance of an assignment will not excuse late work.

Late Work

Work is expected on the date it is due. Should you become ill or having mitigating circumstances arise that impact your performance, please contact your professors immediately so that they can help you.

Academic Honesty

Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating, as defined in ACU's Academic Integrity Policy, involve the intention to deceive or mislead or misrepresent, and therefore are a form of lying and represent actions contrary to the behavioral norms that flow from the nature of God. Violations will be addressed as described in the Policy. While the university enforces the Policy, the most powerful motive for integrity and truthfulness comes from one's desire to imitate God's nature in our lives. Every member of the faculty, staff and student body is responsible for protecting the integrity of learning, scholarship, and research.

The full policy is available for review at the Provost's office web site (<http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/provost>) and the following offices: provost, college deans, dean of campus life, director of student judicial affairs, director of residential life education, and academic departments.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Day	Topic	Reading	Assignment
Unit 1: Foundations of Meaning (required)			
		<i>Note: The focus of this unit is on definitions, frameworks, and tools for thinking about meaning, including the framework for the required portions of the class: truth, beauty, and goodness.</i>	
Week 1	Defining meaning?	Overview of where we have been in the IC courses and where we are going.	
	Foundations of Meaning	The purpose here is to introduce Plato's triad – Truth, Beauty, Goodness – as a basis for the topics of the semester. Plato, Allegory of the Cave and Divided Line	
Week 2	Foundations of Meaning	This introduces a universe filled with meaning and purpose. Aristotle on <i>teleology</i>	
Unit 2: Truth as Revealed in Scientific Practice (required)			
		<i>Note: The focus of this unit is on truth as it is displayed through scientific inquiry and discovery.</i>	
Week 2	What is Science?	Discuss the differences among <i>facts, laws, and theories</i> . Look at an example of the scientific process. <i>Select an example that best fits the professors' strengths</i> <i>Choose from among several modules prepared on the course blog</i>	
Week 3	Scientific Influence	Explore the impact of the success of scientific discovery on the thought of various historical eras. (Influences on the arts, the social sciences, and religion.) <i>Select an example that best fits the professors' strengths</i> <i>Choose from among several modules prepared on the course blog</i>	
Week 4	The Greatest Theories	Explore the development of one of the great scientific theories of the last 200 years and its influence on broader social thought. <i>Examples include evolution, relativity, quantum mechanics, chaos theory</i>	
Week 4	Limits of Science	Discuss "scientism" and the moral issues raised by modern science. <i>Select an example that best fits the professors' strengths</i> <i>Choose from among several modules prepared on the course blog</i>	
Unit 3: Beauty as Revealed in the Arts (required)			
Week 5	What is Beauty?	Consider various definitions of the beautiful and the grotesque from various time periods, cultures, and artistic movements. <i>Select an example that best fits the professors' strengths</i> <i>Choose from among several modules prepared on the course blog</i>	

Day	Topic	Reading	Assignment
Week 6	The Purposes of Art	Explore the functions and forms of art (visual and/or literary and/or musical) in different societies. Why do human beings create artistic works?	
Week 7	Judging Artistic Worth	Explore the qualities of that comprise good art. What separates good and bad art? • <i>Select an example that best fits the professors' strengths</i> • <i>Choose from among several modules prepared on the course blog</i>	
Unit 4: Goodness as revealed by God (required)			
Week 7	Considering God	Examine the characteristics of God, including what limits might God have. • <i>Select an example that best fits the professors' strengths</i> • <i>Choose from among several modules prepared on the course blog</i>	
Week 8	The Existence of God	Consider the historical and technical arguments for and against the existence of God. • <i>Suggestions illustrating the arguments <u>for</u>: "prime mover," ontological, teleological, impulse of the heart.</i> • <i>Suggestions illustrating the arguments <u>against</u>: problem of evil, inconsistencies in scriptures, parsimony (that nature adequately explains development), "who created the creator?"</i>	
Week 9	The Purposes of God	Examine interpretations of the function of God throughout history. Why do human beings believe in God?	
Unit 5: An in-depth exploration of topics chosen by the professors			
		<i>Note: This unit is an open space provided to an instructor(s) for a detailed look at a topic related to meaning.</i>	
Week 10			
Week 11			
Week 12			
Week 13			
Week 14			
Week 15			
	FINAL EXAM		Final Exam