



**JOHN FELICE  
ROME CENTER**

**THEO 266: Church and Global Culture  
Syllabus**

**John Felice Rome Center**

Spring 2026

Mondays | 6:45-9:15pm

Dr. Andreas Gonçalves Lind

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Office Hours: Mon., 5:00-6:30pm  
(by appointment)

**Course Description**

The primary objective of the course *Church and Global Culture* consists of exploring the connection between Christian churches, particularly within the Roman Catholic tradition, and contemporary Western culture, often referred to as the secular age. This course leads us into the experience of how the Church interacts with and influences modern societal issues through a functionalist approach to religion, examining its role and impact on the lives of believers as citizens. Key topics covered in this course include:

- 1) ***Globalization, Church, and International Politics***: Exploration of the Church's stance and involvement in global political matters, and its diplomatic relations.
- 2) ***Synodality and Exercise of Power in the Church***: An examination of how authority and governance are structured and practiced within the Church. A study of the principles and practices of synodality, emphasizing collective decision-making and communal discernment within the Church.
- 3) ***Culture of Love in Times of War***: Analysis of the Church's teachings and actions promoting love, peace, and reconciliation in periods of conflict.
- 4) ***Church and the Migration Crisis***: A look into the Church's perspective on migration issues, its support for migrants, and advocacy for humane treatment.
- 5) ***Church, Culture of Life, and the Environmental Crisis***: Discussion on the Church's views and initiatives regarding environmental stewardship and the care of our "common home" against a backdrop of climate change.
- 6) ***Church and Ethics in Media***: Examination of the Church's perspective on ethical standards in media, its influence on communication practices, and its role in promoting truthful and responsible journalism.

By focusing on the functionalist approach, the course emphasizes the Church's social and political responsibilities, highlighting how it affects the daily lives of believers and their roles as citizens.

*(This syllabus is subject to change and changes will be announced accordingly to the class.)*



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### Learning Outcomes

Through these topics, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the Church's role in addressing and engaging with major global challenges in the contemporary secular era. In doing so, by the end of the course, students will be able to:

- 1) **Understand the Interaction Between Church and Society:** Analyze the relationship between Christian churches, particularly the Catholic Church, and contemporary Western culture, with a focus on the secular age, especially as described by Charles Taylor.
- 2) **Critically Evaluate Church Governance:** Critically assess the structures and practices of power and authority within the Church, including the principles of synodality and collective decision-making.
- 3) **Examine the Church's Role in Promoting Peace:** From a functionalist approach to religion, understand the Church's teachings and actions in fostering a culture of love and reconciliation during times of conflict.
- 4) **Develop Sensitivity to Ethical Issues:** Recognize the challenges associated with different positions with respect to contemporary ethical questions. Understand arguments from political sectors and appreciate the plurality in religious practices and beliefs.

### Required Text / Materials (Provided on Sakai)

- Baldino, John. 2023. "The Catholic Church and Contemporary Issues of Dignity and Life," in *Charity in Truth* 1/1-4 (2023): 35-41.
- Baum, Gregory. 2010. "The Solidarity Movement in the Church," in *Compassion and Solidarity. The Church for Others*. House of Anansi Press.
- Campese, Gioacchino. 2016. "'You Are Close to the Church's Heart': Pope Francis and Migrants," in *Church in an Age of Global Migration*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Egeris, Jakob. 2021. "The Christian Identity of Diaconal Work in a Secular Age of Authenticity," in *Diaconia* 11/1 (open access).
- Faggioli, Massimo. 2024. "The Synod on Synodality (2021-2024) as an Institution. Historical-Theological Perspectives and Questions," in *Revista Teológica* LXI/143 (2024): 77-96.
- McMahan, David L. 2017. "Buddhism and Global Secularisms," in *Journal of Global Buddhism*, 18 (2017): 112–128.
- McPherson, David. 2018. "Three Rival Versions of the Relationship of Religion to Modernity," in *Journal of Religion & Society, Supplement 17: Religion and Secularism* (2018): 11-31.
- Obama, Barack. "Call to Renewal Keynote Address (Washington, DC, June 28, 2006)," in *An American Story. The Speeches of Barack Obama*. ECW Press: 166-181.
- Ricoeur, Paul. 1965. "The Socius and the Neighbor," in *History and Truth*. Northwestern University Press: 98-109.
- Taylor, Charles. 2012. "The Church Speaks – to Whom?," in *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age*. The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.



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**Attendance Policy**

In accordance with the Rome Center mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, and in compliance with full-time student visa status, all courses adhere to the following attendance policy.

Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student and synonymous with academic success. Attendance is mandatory at every class meeting for each course. Lateness or leaving class early will impact the course grade at the professor’s discretion. All absences, including medical absences, will be treated the same, unless they are documented long-term conditions or emergencies. Such situations will be evaluated case-by-case by the Academic Affairs office.

**Once-a-week classes:**

- After 1 absence, a 2% final grade reduction will be applied for each missed class.
- Missing 3 classes or more will result in an automatic failure (F).

**Twice-a-week classes:**

- After 2 absences, a 2% final grade reduction will be applied for each missed class.
- Missing 6 classes or more will result in an automatic failure (F).

**Three-times-a week classes:**

- After 2 absences, a 2% final grade reduction will be applied for each missed class.
- Missing 6 classes or more will result in an automatic failure (F).

**Assessment Components**

- |                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| • Participation | 15% |
| • Midterm Exam  | 25% |
| • Paper         | 21% |
| • Presentation  | 14% |
| • Final Exam    | 25% |

**Grading**

- 94-100: A  
90-93: A-  
87-89: B+  
84-86: B  
80-83: B-  
77-79: C+  
74-76: C  
70-73: C-



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67-69: D+

60-66: D

59 or lower: F

**Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are unacceptable at the the Rome Center and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago’s guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola’s standards here: <https://catalog.luc.edu/academic-standards-regulations/undergraduate/>. You are responsible to comply with the LUC University Catalog.

**Late or Missed Assignments & Exam Policy**

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. ***As per the JFRC academic policies, students who miss any scheduled exam or quiz, including a final exam at the assigned hours will not be permitted to sit for a make-up examination without approval of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Permission is given rarely and only for grave reason; travel is not considered a grave reason. Make-up exams will only be given for documented absences.***

**Accessibility Accommodations**

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center (SAC) requiring academic accommodations should contact the Academic Affairs office at the John Felice Rome Center during the first week of classes.

**Statement on Title IX**

The Rome Center follows Loyola’s [Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, Retaliation](#) and will comply with those as indicated and instructed.

**Course Schedule**

**Friday Class Days:**

Monday, TBD

**Week One** | *January 19* | Presentation of the course program | Secularization Process: Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, Weber – Prometheus and the Prophecy of the End of Religion | Define the Service-Learning groups

**Week Two** | *January 26* | Discussion of the text “Three Rival Versions of the Relationship of Religion to Modernity,” followed by a debate on the role of religion in society and its significance as a human dimension

**Week Three** | *February 2* | **First Quiz** | Discussion of the “The Challenge of True Dialogue after the Charlie Hebdo Attacks” through a group activity in class



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**Week Four** | *February 9* | Discussion of the text “The Synod on Synodality (2021-2024) as an Institution. Historical-Theological Perspectives and Questions” | **Guest Speaker: Nathalie Becquart** – Discussion on the synodal process

**Week Five** | *February 16* | Discussion of two texts, “The Solidarity Movement in the Church” and “Call to Renewal Keynote Address,” through a debate on whether a politician should be religiously neutral

**Week Six** | *February 23* | Exploration of the text “The Ecological Spirituality of Teilhard,” accompanied by discussions of videos on the Encyclical *Laudato Si’*

**Week Seven** | *March 2* | **Midterm Exam** | Status of the Service-Learning Project | Analysis of Pope Leo’s perspective on Social Catholicism

**Week Eight** | *March 16* | Midterm Exam Corrections | Group activity on the text “Buddhism and Global Secularisms” | Presentations of volunteer experiences

**Week Nine** | *March 23* | **Second Quiz** | Discussion of the texts “Secularism and Islam” and “The Socius and the Neighbor” – Group activity | Presentations of volunteer experiences

**Week Ten** | *March 30* | Discussion of the text “‘You Are Close to the Church’s Heart’: Pope Francis and Migrants,” accompanied by a debate on migration | **Guest Speaker: Alessandro Manaresi, SJ**, Fondazione Astalli | Presentations of volunteer experiences

**Week Eleven** | *April 6* | Discussion of the text “The Church Speaks – to Whom?” | Presentations of volunteer experiences

**Week Twelve** | *April 13* | Discussion of two texts: *Inter Mirifica* and “Power and separation of powers in the Church – Joint participation and involvement in the mission” | **Guest Speaker: Filipe Domingues**, journalist and Director of the *Lay Center*

**Week Thirteen** | *April 20* | Discussion of Theology of Disability | Introduction to *Faith and Light* and presentation of theology based on the reality of people with disabilities | Presentation of volunteer experiences

**Week Fourteen** | *April 27* | **Final Exam** | The Church During the Holocaust: A Documentary