

Spring 2019

Syllabus — LIST 502

MODERN CATHOLIC FICTION

John Neary

Master of Arts in Liberal Studies – Intellectual History john.neary@snc.edu

REQUIRED TEXTS (date of original publication in parentheses):*The Mystery of Faith*, Michael Himes (2004), St. Anthony Messenger Press*The Power and the Glory*, Graham Greene (1940), Penguin.*The Complete Stories*, Flannery O'Connor (1971), Farrar, Straus & Giroux*Final Payments*, Mary Gordon (1978), Anchor*Selected Stories*, Andre Dubus (1988), Vintage*Charming Billy*, Alice McDermott (1999), Picador**SCHEDULE:**

CLASS 1 (January 26, 9 a.m.-12 noon):

Introduction; Himes: "Finding God in All Things" (PDF)

CLASS 2 (February 9, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.):

Himes: preface and chs. 1, 2, 4; Dinesen: "Babette's Feast" (PDF or digital); Film:

Babette's Feast; Greeley: "The Catholic Imagination and the Catholic University" (PDF);

Flannery O'Connor: "Revelation"

CLASS 3 (February 23, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.):

Himes: ch. 3, 6, 7; O'Connor: "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," "Temple of the Holy Ghost," "The Artificial N---r," "Parker's Back," "The Displaced Person"; Graham Greene: *The Power and the Glory*, Part One, chs. 1-2

CLASS 4 (March 9, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.):

Himes: chs. 5, 8, 9; Greene: *The Power and the Glory*, complete; film: *Dangerous Edge: A Life of Graham Greene**Essay # 1 due electronically, March 16*

CLASS 5 (March 30, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.):

Andre Dubus: Essays (PDF), "A Father's Story," and *Voices from the Moon*; Gordon: "Getting Here from There" and *Final Payments*, ch. 1

CLASS 6 (April 13, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.):

Gordon: *Final Payments*, complete; Alice McDermott: "The Lunatic in the Pew" (PDF) and *Charming Billy*, ch. 1

CLASS 7 (April 27, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.):

McDermott: *Charming Billy*, complete; reread Himes, ch. 9, "Reconciliation"; Film: *Philomena**Essay # 2 due electronically, May 4*

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The “Intellectual History” area in the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies is described this way:

Courses in this area reflect the fact that throughout history people have employed many and varied means to understand themselves and the universe around them and that over time ideas and concepts change, merge, disappear and then sometimes re-appear. Courses are designed to help students appreciate both the diversity and continuity of human thought. Proceeding chronologically, each course in this area follows some of the ways that ideas evolve, exploring the development of faith, reason, imagination or science in the works of authors who have made a mark on civilization.

In light of this description, in this course we will...

...read, understand, converse about, write about, and enjoy some of the best recent Catholic (defined broadly) novels and short stories;

...see these literary works in relation to the evolving understanding of the Catholic tradition over the course of the 20th and 21st centuries, especially marked by the watershed of the Second Vatican Council;

...learn about how literary writers convey theological and cultural insights and experiences in *an imaginative, artistic way*, creating an integrated aesthetic vision—not merely using a literary story to present religious doctrines (so despite our attention to the Catholic imagination, we will be reading this literature as *literature*);

...enter imaginatively into alternate visions and worlds, sharpen analytical skills, and communicate responses and insights both orally and in writing.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Read all assigned materials before the date noted in this syllabus.
2. Attend class and participate in class discussions.
3. Write two two-page journal entries per class: one reflecting on the discussion that occurred during the previous session, and one reflecting on the reading in preparation for the upcoming session. Your journal writing should be informal, personal, even playful—but it should also be engaged with the details of the texts, demonstrating that you’ve read carefully and thoughtfully.
4. Write two essays: first, a medium-sized reflective essay; second, a longer analytical essay, with some research.

GRADE DETERMINATION:

- 40% — Journal
- 30% — Final Essay
- 20% — Mid-semester Essay
- 10% — Participation

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Every student needs to abide by St. Norbert's academic integrity policy. Academic integrity requires that you submit only your own work. Although it's fine to discuss your ideas with your fellow students, and to seek advice and reactions from each other, you cannot submit work written by someone else, edited by someone else, or containing material or information drawn from outside sources that you have not appropriately cited.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES:

The Academic Support office is located in Todd Wehr Hall, Room 211 (403-1321). In keeping with the St. Norbert College mission to help students develop to their full potential, and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the college provides supportive services for students with disabilities. Please visit the website www.snc.edu/academicsupport/accommodation for further information.