What is College For?
POSC / THEO 4055
An Interdisciplinary Capstone Course
MR 4-5:15 pm, Duane 353

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What is college for? Most parents and students expect college to prepare young people to start a career and, if they wish, a family. Yet institutions of higher education, particularly Jesuit ones, expect students to do more, to think about philosophy, deepen one’s religious commitments, serve the community, participate in civic life, and so forth. These questions have added urgency today as people wish to hold colleges accountable for outcomes and religious institutions grapple with the problem of how to maintain their traditions in a secular age.

In this course, Professor Charlie Camosy (Theology) and Nicholas Tampio (Political Science) draw upon their respective disciplines to think about the past, present, and future of college.

The course begins with a history of American higher education and Catholic higher education in particular. We will study the origins of liberal arts college, the emergence of land grant and research universities, the growth and popularization of American higher education after World War II, and the current education landscape that includes community colleges and online options. The section will discuss the history of Catholic higher education and Fordham.

In the second part of the course, we will consider how John Henry Newman defends theology and the liberal arts in the Idea of a University, consider a critique of this worldview made by Bryan Caplan and then consider how Martha Nussbaum’s reply in turn in Not for Profit.

In the final and largest part, we will discuss controversies in higher education, including about free community college, online learning, US News & World Report college ratings, Title IX, affirmative action, and the theology requirement in the Fordham core.

Required books:

Grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response papers</td>
<td>30 (5 papers, each worth 6 points)</td>
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The midterm exam will be on March 2nd. We will distribute 6 questions 1 week before and you will have one hour to answer two questions.

Students will be assigned to groups to write 3000-word research papers (including bibliography) on their questions. Papers should present facts of the issues, have sections considering different sides to the issue, and a conclusion presenting the student’s thoughts. Good papers will have at least 10 sources including newspapers, academic articles, and books. Students will present a PowerPoint as a group but write their papers individually. Students should send the professors electronic copies of their papers the night before the presentation; students may submit revised papers up to one week after the professor returns the first draft with comments.

Students will write 5 response papers to the policy questions starting on March 5th. You will write one paper a week, rotating between “group A” (surnames A-L) who will be first to turn in on March 5th and “group B” (surnames M-Z) who will have it due the next class. Then A, then B and so on until the end of the semester. We will begin each class after the midterm exam by meeting in small groups of 4-5 in which at least two of you will informally share your work in these papers as a way of facilitating discussion. Please print out these papers and have them ready to refer to during the small group meetings. Here are some other requirements for these papers:

1. They should be single-spaced and be 500 words in length. (Please turn in only one piece of paper to the GTA, who will be grading them. Print on the reverse side if necessary.)
2. At the top of the paper put your name, date, and a critical question you had about a central point from the readings due that day. The best papers will engage multiple readings.
3. Each paper should have three paragraphs. The first paragraph should be your response to the critical question, the second paragraph should be what you imagine a strong opposing view to your opinion would be, and the third paragraph should be your response to this opposing view. (A word to the wise: it is always better to give the best opposing argument you can and possibly struggle with the response than to give a ‘straw man’ argument in the second paragraph which can be knocked down easily.)
4. There should be at least one cited quote from the readings in each paragraph. To cite a quote, “Use the format used in this sentence.” (Book or article title here, 106) No need to give a full bibliography of the text cited. No need for a page number if it is an internet article without such numbers.
5. Each paper should show at least two things. First, show that you have done the reading and have a basic grasp of the major points which relate to the topic given. Second, show critical thinking—both of the reading you do did and with regard to your own views.

6. Please take the time to carefully proofread your paper. You will be graded down for typos and grammar mistakes.

COURSE POLICIES

1. You must attend class. Discussion (in both small and large group) is a major part of this course.
2. Dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, is totally unacceptable and will be dealt with in the most serious way possible under university regulations.
3. Late work will not be accepted unless you have made previous arrangements.
4. Laptops and mobile phones are not permitted. Use of a mobile phone during class will result in a lower participation grade. A tablet, used only for reading electronic texts, may be used without a keyboard if it is flat on your desk.
5. You may have something to drink in the classroom, but eating is not permitted.

OFFICE HOURS

Professor Charlie Camosy: Duane 139; Thursdays 2:30pm-3:30pm and by appointment
Professor Nicholas Tampio: Faber 665; Mondays 1:00pm-2:00pm and by appointment
GTA Srdjan Maksimovic: Duane Lobby; Thursdays 12:30pm-1:30pm and by appointment

Class Schedule

1. January 13 – What is a Jesuit education? How is it under threat?

  https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/resources-by-theme/documents/GegerCuraPersonalisIgnatianInspirations2.pdf
  https://www.fordham.edu/info/20057/about/2997/mission_statement
HISTORY

2. January 16 – Colonial colleges

3. January 20 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day (No Class)


5. January 27 – Land grant universities, 1890-1945

6. January 30 – The GI Bill and the mid-twentieth century

7. February 3 – The Higher Education Act until the present

8. February 6 – Catholic higher education: Looking at the Past and Anticipating the Future

PHILOSOPHY


10. February 13 – What is Fordham’s Mission?


11. February 17 – Presidents’ Day (No Class)

12. February 18 – The role of the liberal arts in a Catholic university

- Newman, The Idea of a University, Discourse V
- Recommended: John Henry Newman, The Idea of a University, Discourses Lecture IV

13. February 20 – The role of professional training in a Catholic university

- Newman, The Idea of a University, Discourse VII

14. February 24 – A rude critique

15. February 27 – A Democratic Defense of the Humanities
   • Nussbaum, Not for Profit (entire)

16. March 2 – Midterm

POLICY

17. March 5 – Should community college be free?
   • Goldrick-Rab, S., & Kelly, A. P. (2016). Should community college be free? Education Next, 16(1), 54-60. (link)

18. March 9 – How can Catholic higher education reach out to Latinos/Hispanics?
   • "Catholic School Advantage // ACE at Notre Dame". Alliance for Catholic Education. 2020. https://ace.nd.edu/catholic-school-advantage/

19. March 12 – Did Title IX work?

20. March 16 – Spring Recess (No Class)

21. March 19 – Spring Recess (No Class)
22. March 23 – Should traditional colleges embrace online learning?


23. March 26 – Should Catholic schools try to raise their US News & World Report college rankings?


24. March 30 – How Do European Universities Differ from American


25. April 2 – How can institutions of higher education prepare for the “looming demographic storm?


26. April 6 – Should college athletes be paid?


27. April 9 – Easter Recess (No Class)

28. April 13 – Easter Recess (No Class)

29. April 16 – Should Jesuit universities require all students to take 2 theology courses?

30. April 20 – Should Fordham provide students with contraception and anti-abortifacient drugs?


31. April 23 – Are income share agreements a good idea for students?


32. April 27 – Does higher education still need affirmative action?


33. April 30 – Is there free speech on American college campuses?
