

INDS/SPIR 569: Going the Distance John Bunyan's Depiction of the Christian Journey

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May 27 - 31, 2019; 8:30 - 11:30am

1 or 2 graduate credit hours; or 1 audit hour

COURSE DESCRIPTION

John Bunyan's great classic, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, was written in two parts, both of which must be read in order to grasp Bunyan's depiction of the Christian life. In this course, we will read both parts of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, considering the allegorical mode and dialogical meditative practice behind the story. In a world of increasing individualism and isolation, our goal will be not only to read Bunyan better, but also to engage the Christian pilgrimage more robustly, seeing it as occurring not only individually and inwardly but also communally. The study of this great work should lead us to live as Christians-in-community, our lives marked by the three great virtues of faith, hope, and love.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon the successful completion of this course, students should have a clearer understanding of:

1. Read John Bunyan's great works with some approximation of the 17th Century Protestant method of reading at two levels, the literal and the figural, with the whole person—body, mind, and spirit—engaged in coming to a spiritually-informed understanding of the meaning of the text.
2. Recognize the continuity of Bunyan's work with a deep and ancient Christian tradition of allegorical thought, while at the same time gaining an understanding of the ways in which Bunyan's post-Reformation appropriation of that tradition creates something radically new.
3. Renew and deepen their understanding of the importance of community to a Christian life.
4. Focus on the relationship of faith and hope to a life of Christ-like love through seeing the two parts of *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a prolonged reflection on the three primary virtues of faith, hope, and charity.

COURSE OUTLINE

Day 1 Understanding Allegory as a Mode of Thought; The Dialogue between the Soul and Christ, the Bible and Life, & between Bunyan's Margins and Narrative

Day 2 Bunyan's Characters: Strengths & Limitations of the Allegorical Model//The Limits of Personification

Day 3 Episodes, Structures, and Dominant Metaphors: Beyond Embellishment to Embodiment

Day 4 Relationship between Part 1 & Part 2 of *TPP*: Expanding the Pilgrimage to include the communal experience of sanctification

Day 5 *TPP* as a theological, spiritual & intellectual primer// Tensions between community and individuality in the shaping of a reading culture

Conclusion: Themes and Issues for today's church

REQUIRED TEXTS

Bunyan, John. *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Ed. and intro, W. R. Owens. Oxford World's Classics, Oxford: Oxford University Press, paperback, 2003.

Note 1: Students are encouraged to read as much as possible of both parts of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in preparation for this course. In this one-week course, we will necessarily be moving very quickly through the text, so a good basic knowledge of it will be an asset to the student individually and to the class as a whole.

Note 2: Please do not substitute another edition, as many printings of *TPP* lack the original marginal notes, or have inadequate scholarly apparatus (e.g., introduction, explanatory notes). There are very many editions of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in circulation. Please note that the Oxford World's Classics edition we have chosen to use is an inexpensive paperback with excellent scholarly notes and a text based on the 1960 Clarendon Press (Oxford) definitive edition which is standard for all scholarly discussion.

Please Note: This Course Information Sheet is meant to assist in selecting courses. The official syllabus should be consulted for more detailed information. A full syllabus with drop deadlines, policies, and course assignment details is available on Moodle for registered students: moodle.regent-college.edu/login

