Description
This course deals with the virtues of evangelical life according to Francis of Assisi and his followers. How are the virtues – moral traits necessary for and flowing from the life in the footsteps of Jesus Christ – described and prescribed in the Franciscan tradition? How are they acquired, kept, or lost? And how do the practice, development, and application of virtue shape “perfect” individuals as well as the “good” of the community? We will study virtue discourse from the perspective of Medieval history, Minorite spirituality, and Christian morality. By exploring historical contexts, discussing theological themes, and reading source texts, we will examine how the virtues functioned in early Franciscan life and literature, and how they constituted a moral spirituality relevant for today’s world.

Goals and objectives
Students will learn to:
- Describe basic elements of Franciscan virtue discourse (material object).
- Critically analyze various (interdisciplinary) approaches to Franciscan virtue discourse (formal object).
- Contextualize Franciscan virtue discourse within the medieval period.
- Discuss contemporary moral issues and problems in the light of Franciscan virtue discourse.

Required text

Recommended texts
Syllabus

Week 1

M June 29
1 Theoretical Considerations + Medieval Morality
READ:
Pansters, *Franciscan Virtue*, 2-4; 24-44

T June 30
2 Dynamic Morality + Franciscan Virtue
READ:
Pansters, *Franciscan Virtue*, 170-192

W July 1
3 Franciscan Virtues + Poverty (Agamben)
READ:
Pansters, *Franciscan Virtue*, 4-23; 137-152

R July 2
4 Identity + Spirituality
READ:

F July 3
5 Carthusians + Comparison
READ:

Reflection 1
Week 2

M July 6
6 Love + Faith (Spiritual Text Reading)
READ:
Pansters, *Franciscan Virtue*, 45-68; 99-111
Assisi Compilation 53
Celano, *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* 2, 22

T July 7
7 Love + Faith (Mystical Text Reading)
READ:
Jacopone da Todi, On the Heart’s Jubilation (Lauda 76)
Jacopone da Todi, Silent Love (Lauda 77)
Jacopone da Todi, In Praise of Divine Love (Lauda 81)
Clare of Assisi, First Letter to Agnes of Prague, 6-10
Clare of Assisi, First Letter to Agnes of Prague, 30-32
Clare of Assisi, Fourth Letter to Agnes of Prague, 15-17

W July 8
8 Sustainability + Virtue Ethics
READ:
L. van Wensveen, “Virtues and Ecology in World Religions” (https://independent.academia.edu/LoukevanWensveen)
L van Wensveen, “Virtues and Vices” (https://independent.academia.edu/LoukevanWensveen)

R July 9
9 The Commune + The Cross
READ:
Pansters, *Franciscan Virtue*, 112-126
**F July 10**
10 Virtue Discourse + Discussion

READ:
Pansters, *Franciscan Virtue*, 161-169; 192-204

**Reflection 2**

**Course requirements**

- Reading and participation (30%): attendance at class; completion of assigned reading for class. All students are required to complete the reading indicated after READ and be prepared to discuss it in class. Students will be provided with select texts in class. Active participation in class is expected and encouraged!

- Reflection papers (20%): 2 reflection papers of 1-2 pages each will challenge you to reflect upon the content of the classes and the assigned readings.
  
  **Reflection 1 (Friday 3 July):**
  Describe your understanding of Franciscan virtue(s) in relation to your personal and/or professional experience (1-2 pages)

  **Reflection 2 (Friday 10 July):**
  Select a Franciscan text (± 10 lines) to explain and discuss (1-2 pages)
  one Franciscan virtue
  * from your idea and perspective of Franciscan virtue
  * and from what you have learned in this course:
    a) Why *this* virtue? b) Why is this a virtue? c) Historical meaning: Why *Franciscan?* d) Actual meaning: Why relevant for today’s world?

- Final paper (50%): Reflection 1 and 2 form the basis for your final paper, which should be 10-12 pages long and use at least 1 Franciscan primary source and 3 secondary scholarly sources. The paper is graded as follows:
  - Structure (introduction - method and perspective - theoretical/empirical paragraphs - conclusion) & formal aspects (description - analysis - comparison - etc.) (30%)
  - Argumentation; articulation of ideas; consistency of thought (40%)
  - Originality; ideas in relation to theoretical background and literature (30%)

The paper is due by **July 30, 2015**.

**Grading**
A Range: Excellent work for Graduate School
B Range: Very Good, Good work for Graduate School
C Range: Inadequate work for Graduate School
F: Failure
Krijn Pansters, Tilburg University, Utrecht (NL)

Krijn Pansters, Ph.D. (2007) in History (Radboud University Nijmegen), M.A. in History, M.A. in Theology, is an assistant (tenured) professor at the Franciscan Study Centre (School of Theology, Tilburg University) in Utrecht, NL. He has published extensively on medieval mentality and religious culture. His latest publications include *The Carthusians in the Low Countries. Studies in Monastic History and Heritage* (Peeters, 2014); (on Franciscan leadership:) *De volgeling die voorgaat. Leiderschap in het licht van Franciscus van Assisi* (Valkhof, 2014); and *Franciscan Virtue. Spiritual Growth and the Virtues in Franciscan Literature and Instruction of the Thirteenth Century* (Brill, 2012).

Tilburg University
School of Catholic Theology
Franciscan Study Centre
Nieuwegracht 65, 3512 LG Utrecht- Netherlands
Tel.: 00 - 31 - (0)77 - 8504339 (home)
E: k.pansters@tilburguniversity.edu
https://tilburguniversity.edu/webwijs/show/k.pansters.htm