

DETAILED COURSE DESCRIPTION

Camino Ignaciano | Spring and Summer 2015

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To confront the globalization of superficiality in Jesuit higher education today, Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, has called for “depth of thought and imagination”¹ to be promoted in Jesuit higher education today. As a response to Father General’s call, the Camino Ignaciano Project is designed to explore the ways in which introducing and applying personal biography as a spiritual exercise can promote such increased depth of thought and imagination in an ecumenical, interreligious, and interfaith context.

To be a “pilgrim” remains at the core of Ignatian spirituality. When reminiscing about his life experiences, Ignatius of Loyola referred to himself as a *peregrino* fifty-five times.² Both the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Constitutions* of the Society draw on the importance of pilgrimage as an essential component of formation. Grounded in the rich tradition of Jesuit formation, the Camino Ignaciano Project aims to extend the grace of the Ignatian pilgrimage to students of all faiths and Christian denominations at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, and in particular, to those at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University in Berkeley.

To attain its objectives, the Camino Ignaciano Project integrates academic with experiential and interactive learning to engage students in (1) critical study and analysis of foundational Ignatian texts such as St. Ignatius’ *Autobiography*, his *Spiritual Exercises*, the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, and some of Ignatius’ letters, and (2) concrete experiences of immersion in the culturally and religiously diverse settings in which these texts were composed. While studying Ignatius’ texts and immersing themselves in the contexts of these texts, students will be asked to study their own pilgrimage of life thus far and to reflect on their journeys, both individually and in groups. Students will also be responsible for participating in and leading daily reflections, prayers, and sharing communally.

Following the directives of the *Spiritual Exercises*, this project aims to establish a “composition of place” where personal experience is stressed, and personal encounter with the Divine is sought. Thus, such a composition of place consists not only of reading and studying Ignatian texts in the classroom without imagining what a place might look like, but also of wrestling and engaging them at a more practical and concrete level of culture and history. In entering into this composition of place, students will make a pilgrimage at various historical sites where Ignatius himself traveled and was graced. In turn, the grace that students receive in these historical sites will inspire and re-energize them in their “pilgrimage” into their vocations in the world today.

According to J eronimo Nadal, Ignatius’ designated interpreter of the Jesuit *Constitutions*, the grace that Ignatius received was not meant for him alone, but rather for all those who engage in the spirituality that bears his name. It is this essence that is shared by the Bannan Institute and the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley within the mission of

Santa Clara University. It is our way of proceeding, *nuestro modo de proceder*, applied to cultivate Ignatian leadership grounded in the fundamental values of Jesuit education: academic excellence, searching for truth, goodness and beauty, engaged learning, commitment to students, service to others, and community and diversity as stated in the mission of the university.

Additionally, the project will allow participants to meet with faculty and Jesuits at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University in Berkeley and those of the Universidad Pontificia Comillas and the Society of Jesus in Spain. As a result, they will be enriched with first-hand experiences of collaboration with Jesuit institutions and an Ignatian network both nationally and internationally, all of which would allow them invaluable opportunities to be formed and grow towards becoming future Ignatian leaders.

Methods that will be used to measure the success of the Camino Ignaciano Project

The four-week course will be divided into three different stages. For each of the three stages, students will live an intentional, simple lifestyle striving to be in solidarity with the poor and marginalized in our surrounding community.

The first stage will take place in Berkeley. Classes will be conducted once every two weeks in seminar style to encourage open discussion. This stage will also include an introduction to group dynamics and community forming. Daily journaling, reflection, examination of conscience, and communal sharing will be required. An openness to attend the Eucharist will be highly recommended.

The second stage consists of the physical walk following the footsteps of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. Students will fly to Spain and walk the Camino Ignaciano. As established during the first stage, students will be required to continue their daily journaling and engage in daily silent reflection and examination of conscience. In addition, every day each student will be expected to take turns leading the group's spiritual conversation and sharing.

The third stage will take place back in Berkeley. Students will be required to process their reflections both individually and communally. In addition, students are required to make a formal presentation to the school community or other venues of their choice. Materials for presentation will then be integrated into a ten to fifteen page reflection where they will further reflect on, and analyze their experience through the lens of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Both the class presentation and the paper will be discussed individually with the professors.

While individual journaling is un-gradable, each students' final grade and evaluation will be based on the quality of their participation in the group, leading of theological reflections, final formal presentation, and written paper. Peer evaluations will serve as a valuable tool for assessment.

The instructors will review students' reflection and journaling over these stages, their participation and their responses regarding spiritual growth to determine the overall effectiveness of the course, particularly concerning cultural and spiritual awareness individually and communally as a measure of spiritual growth in the process. In this evaluation, the instructor will evaluate the ways in which using personal biography as a

spiritual exercise throughout the four weeks has been successful, and will determine areas of growth for the course structure in order to improve future course design.

Suggested future work of the Camino Ignaciano Project

Based on the anticipated positive results, the project could continue in the future through support or sponsorship of benefactors to provide a framework for structuring future formation and development of Ignatian character and values. The project can easily be adapted for use by faculty, staff, and board members across Jesuit higher education.

Outlines dissemination plans (research) or scope of audience and impact

As part of the course requirements, students will present not only among their peers in the course, but also to the school community in the fall semester after they complete the course. Students will also have the opportunity to share their written reflections in various publications of Santa Clara University or the Graduate Theological Union.

My role and contribution

As one of the two instructors of the Project, I will guide students in their study and critical analysis of foundational Ignatian texts and the latest research and criticism of these texts. Having earned my STD in the area of Ignatian Spirituality, I will offer students not only my knowledge and insights in our discussions, but also guidance in their academic studies and on their spiritual journeys. In addition, as a graduate of the Universidad Pontificia Comillas de Madrid, I have the resources to introduce students to Ignatian scholars, Ignatian resources, and the Jesuit network at the university and of *El Camino Ignaciano* in Spain for their future endeavors as Ignatian leaders.

Prof. Kathryn Barush, who is co-instructor, will bring her own skills and abilities to the table, particularly in the realm of pilgrimage studies and the visual culture of religion which will provide the students with insight into historical context. Prof. Barush has a D.Phil. in History of Art from the University of Oxford where she completed a dissertation (now a book) on the topic of *Art and the Sacred Journey in Britain, 1790-1850* (Routledge, 2016). Barush is on the advisory network for the Yale University Center for the Study of Material & Visual Cultures of Religion, an academic advisor for the British Pilgrimage Trust, and a member of the Centre for Pilgrimage Studies, University of York, UK.

¹ Remarks for “Networking Jesuit Higher Education: Shaping the Future for a Humane, Just, Sustainable Globe” in Mexico on April 23, 2010 by Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, SJ, Superior General of the Society of Jesus.

² *An Ignatian Concordance*, edited by Ignacio Echarte, (Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero, 1996), 946 – 7.