

CENTER FOR

FAITH & CULTURE

WILLIAM JEWELL COLLEGE

2024-2025 Classes

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

community.

Community Christian Church



Grace and
Holy Trinity
Cathedral



Resurrection
A UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



SECOND
BAPTIST CHURCH



VILLAGE
CHURCH
Presbyterian (USA)

Center for Faith and Culture

2024-2025 Class Schedule

The multi-session classes are \$45 or free for members of sponsoring congregations. See speaker bios and registration info at jewell.edu/faith-classes.

SHAKESPEARE, RELIGION, AND PERSONAL FREEDOM: MEASURE FOR MEASURE

Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure" takes its title from Matthew 7: "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. ²For with the judgement you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get." The logic of this statement informs the play's central questions of justice and mercy, revealing the complications of the State's attempts to legislate morality, which circumscribe personal agency and freedom. In this course, we will read Shakespeare's play, considering the ways in which the issues central to the seventeenth century remain relevant for the twenty-first century.

Sept. 18, 25, Oct. 2, 9 | 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Community Christian Church, Kansas City, MO
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Sara Morrison, Professor of English, William Jewell College

CHRISTIAN DISCUSSIONS ABOUT WHEN PERSONHOOD BEGINS

The question of when we should say human personhood begins has long been important. We have seen startling technical changes in assisted human reproduction. We are all hearing important discussions about crucial legal changes since the end of Roe v. Wade. Missouri may vote on a constitutional amendment in November. This course will survey some important contemporary Christian thinking about personhood. It will use some of the same discussions from Gary Armstrong's Core Curriculum Capstone "Birth By Any Means? The Ethics of Assisted Reproductive Technology" at Jewell. We will explore a seminal analysis from a Roman Catholic theologian who thinks we cannot say personhood begins at conception for scientific and theological reasons and examine an important response. We will follow a Protestant theologian wrestling with classic Scripture passages that bear on abortion while trying to develop a standard about whether Christians can ever cooperate in good conscience with abortion; we will consider applying the same standard to genetic screening of early embryos.

Sept. 18, 25, Oct. 2, 9 | 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, Kansas City, MO
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Gary Armstrong, Professor of Political Science, William Jewell College

NUANCING INTERSECTIONS OF NATIONALISM AND RELIGION

Nationalism is one of the most powerful organizing principles of modern politics. Recent years have seen a renewed sense of nationalism, and it is often tinged with an underlying and powerful religious dimension. This course will explore the intersections of nationalism and religion in various contexts across time and space. The course will be broken down into four movements or patterns in history including the European Reformation, 19th Century Imperialism, Decolonization, and Postcolonialism. Within each context different theoretical frameworks addressing how we should think about and define nationalism will also be considered.

Sept. 19, 26, Oct. 2, 9 | 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Village Presbyterian Church, Prairie Village, KS
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Megan Groninger, Assistant Professor of History, William Jewell College

CHRISTIANITY AND THE VISUAL ARTS

As with science, the church has sometimes struggled with the arts and yet they have been used to teach and portray what the essence of the Christian faith to us through the centuries. Christianity and the Visual Arts will cover the relationship of the visual arts to the Christian faith in a historical context, the Biblical story in the visual arts, a theological reflection on various visual arts and specific visual art works that were pivotal within the story of the Christian faith and the arc of art history.

Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22 | 7-8:15 p.m.

Second Baptist Church, Liberty, MO
INSTRUCTOR: Rev. Connie McNeill, Associate Pastor of Administration

SEEK THE WELFARE OF THE CITY: MAINLINE APPROACHES TO FAITH AND POLITICS

In America, faith and politics have historically intertwined, influencing legislation, social movements, and public policy through the involvement of religious leaders and communities. From the abolitionist movement to the civil rights era and contemporary debates on social issues, religious convictions have played a significant role in shaping the nation's political landscape. At the same time, our diverse country has many religious perspectives, and the civic virtue of separation of church and state seeks to protect political space for these varied spiritual expressions (and for those with none at all). Mainline protestants have a unique viewpoint of how faithful Christians engage our political system to promote "the common good." Centered around a study of scriptural and civic texts, each week this class will explore theological and ethical perspectives about how mainline Christians engage politics.

Oct. 8, 15, 22, 29 | 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Village Presbyterian Church, Prairie Village, KS
INSTRUCTOR: The Rev. Chad Herring, Interim Senior Associate Pastor

WHITE CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM IN AMERICA (ONLINE ONLY)

Concern on the part of white evangelical Christians in America for their continued political, cultural, and social dominance has persisted for centuries, but it is reaching a crescendo that may peak in the presidential election of 2024. In this class, we will explore the history of white Christian nationalism, its current status, and its potential impact on the nation. It seeks to show that this movement is more complex than many would allow. Suggested reading: Tim Alberta, "The Kingdom, The Power, and The Glory: American Evangelicals in An Age of Extremism" (HarperCollins, 2023) – a personal account.

Oct. 21, 28, Nov. 11, 18 | 7-8:30 p.m.

Online Only
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Bryan LeBeau, Georgetown University Adjunct Instructor

HEAVEN AND EARTH: BIBLICAL COSMOLOGY AND THE HUMAN BEING

Exploring the creation account of Genesis and other Biblical accounts of heaven and earth we will reconstruct the ancient Hebrew model for the cosmos and explore the significance of each element, the identity and role of human beings within it, and what ultimate purpose this cosmos serves. There will also be opportunity to compare this ancient account of the cosmos with our own modern understanding of the universe and consider how we might reconcile the two.

Oct. 23, 30, Nov. 6, 13 | 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, Kansas City, MO
INSTRUCTOR: The Rev. James Yazell, Associate Priest

LIFE TOGETHER

"Life Together" is Dietrich Bonhoeffer's exploration of Christian community in an underground seminary during the Nazi years in Germany. Using the classic book as our guide, this class will explore our post-election reality in America. People of faith must help lead the way into creating beloved community after deep divisions and polarization have divided families, churches, and communities.

Nov. 13, 20, Dec. 4, 11 | 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Community Christian Church, Kansas City, MO
INSTRUCTOR: The Rev. Shanna Steitz, Senior Pastor

PICKING UP RICE IN A CHURCH: HOW THE BEATLES CRAFTED SONGS THAT CAREFULLY BLENDED MUSIC AND LYRICS TO REFLECT BOTH INTENSE HUMANITY AND GROUNDED SPIRITUALITY

The British rock band, the Beatles, were famous for many reasons, not least for cheekily claiming to be 'more famous than Jesus' at one point in their meteoric rise to fame in the 1960s. Despite the inevitable tension between rock music and some Christian denominations, the band embraced spirituality in various ways throughout their career. Their songs often reflect the human experience, including religious expression. In this course we will look, in the first session, at some examples of so called "secular" music that has a clear spiritual dimension to it and reflect on the songwriter's art conveying ideas in a way that can be interpreted in multiple ways. In the subsequent sessions, we will analyze musically and lyrically three classic Beatles songs and see how their ability to blend music and story created some unforgettable and deeply moving art.

Jan. 22, 29, Feb. 5, 12 | 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Village Presbyterian Church, Prairie Village, KS
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Ian Coleman, Professor of Music, William Jewell College

BRIDGE BUILDING TOWARD A FLOURISHING LIFE FOR ALL: DEEPENING SOLIDARITY IN THE QUEST FOR SOCIAL AND RACIAL JUSTICE

Does our faith in Jesus Christ have a role in the quest for social and racial justice? Can the church build bridges and deepen solidarity around crises such as poverty, violence, and equal rights for all? And if so, how do we do it? These questions are explored while examining the theological lenses and Biblical interpretive conclusions which shape our Christian witness and guide us in attempting to partner with God in creating a flourishing life for all.

Jan. 22, 29, Feb. 5, 12 | 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, Kansas City, MO
INSTRUCTOR: The Rev. Dr. Vernon Percy Howard, Jr., Senior Pastor, St. Mark's Church

SCIENCE LITERACY FOR RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP

Science and technology increasingly impact our everyday lives, thus responsible citizenship demands basic knowledge of scientific reasoning and results. In response, this course discusses some of the basic tenets of science, explores several important scientific discoveries, and summarizes strategies for staying informed. Implications of science literacy for our health, democracy, economy, and faith are considered, along with how such literacy influences our actions. Major scientific themes include human origins, our place in the universe, and the future of life on Earth.

Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25 | 7-8:15 p.m.

Second Baptist Church, Liberty, MO
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Blane Baker, Professor of Physics, William Jewell College

HARD CONVERSATIONS: WAYS OF HAVING CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE ABOUT THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

In this course, participants will be introduced to some of the major contested issues between Israelis and Palestinians through a historical lens that focuses on both narratives. With this knowledge base, using Martin Buber's "I and Thou" as a framework, we will explore a variety of ways to approach this controversial topic with others in ways that focus on understanding.

Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26 | 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Community Christian Church, Kansas City, MO
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Daniel Kotzin, Professor of History, William Jewell College

PRAYING THE LENTEN GOSPELS: EMBODYING OURSELVES IN THE WILDERNESS

Dean Keyse will lead four Lenten meditations in which participants will listen to the corresponding Gospel for the upcoming Sunday, Year C, and begin to picture themselves within the story. Each meditation will utilize images and music associated with that particular Gospel. With the image before us, we will hear the reading and immerse ourselves within the wilderness of Lent. Time for reflection and discussion will follow. The four Gospels we will use are Luke 13:31-35; Luke 13:1-9; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32; and John 12:1-8.

March 12, 19, 26, April 2 | 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, Kansas City, MO
INSTRUCTOR: The Very Rev. Dr. Andrew C. Keyse, Dean

OPEN MINDS, OPEN HEARTS, OPEN BIBLES

For many Christians with LGBTQ+ loved ones, it can be challenging to know how to best love them, given Christianity's track record of mistreatment towards LGBTQ+ people. Christians may feel ill equipped to advocate for LGBTQ+ people in faith contexts. This course will not only examine the oft-misunderstood "lobber passages" used to condemn LGBTQ+ folks, but will also help Christians to identify how inclusion and liberation for LGBTQ+ people fits within the broader narrative of scripture.

March 12, 19, 26, April 9 | 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Community Christian Church, Kansas City, MO
INSTRUCTOR: Rev. Stephen Underwood, Associate Minister

ARE THESE THE LAST DAYS? CHRISTIANS AND THE END TIMES

Increasing natural disasters, more acts of violence, rising conflicts and wars. The Bible says these and others will be signs that the end of the world is near. On Pentecost, Peter said God will "show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day" (Acts 2:19-20). So, is the second coming of Christ imminent? Eschatology is the study of the end of the world or the end times. Together, we will explore the numerous scriptures that tell us what to look for and how to prepare for the end times and the various eschatologies around the end times. Note: If Jesus comes again before May, this class will not be held.

May 7, 14, 21 | 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Village Presbyterian Church, Prairie Village, KS
INSTRUCTOR: Rev. Dr. Rodger Nishioka, Senior Pastor



The William Jewell College Center for Faith and Culture discerns, articulates and commends visions of the flourishing life in light of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and fosters truth seeking conversations among contending visions in our world today. One of the primary objectives of the Center is to promote and encourage one of Jewell's core values: spiritual exploration. Check out our website to learn more about the Center's educational work on Personal Flourishing, Congregational Flourishing and Student Flourishing: jewell.edu/faith.