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DAYTON, Ohio, July 30, 1968 — Is theology relevant to today's Educational crisis? Can an academic interdisciplinary course, aimed toward the faith conflicts and value questions of the present age, answer that question? Can the course be successfully accomplished by forming learning teams of students where the professor serves only as a resource person?

Mr. Douglas Gasper, a professor of theology at the University of Dayton, hopes to answer these questions through a summer course, "Faith Crisis in Culture," begun at the University on June 21 and continuing until August 2. The course is supported by the Consortium for Higher Education on Religion Studies in cooperation with the Danforth Foundation and embraces the academic disciplines of theology, philosophy, psychology, art, literature and film.

"We can't say we have definite results as yet," says Mr. Gasper, "but we are, in part, learning what happens to students when you put them in a situation where they educate themselves. We have also come to realize that interdisciplinary action in this manner is more difficult than we felt it would be.

"These learning groups have literally created their own course while having at their disposal a resource faculty consisting of an artist, a psychologist, theologian, philosopher, film expert, and a professor of literature. These men serve as consultants and have been going into group meetings when called upon. Each group also has one member who experienced a week of group dynamics training, a process whereby people get to know one another better and learn how to facilitate group learning.

"Naturally, we've had some crises on both sides during these past four weeks," he continued. "Some students have found themselves at a loss as to what to do. We've found others rebel against all structure and authority in the course and refuse to admit that other people know more than they do.

"There are some who have come to realize that structuring, or organization, is necessary if anything is to be gained through learning."

Mr. Gasper went on to point out that since students come from both the University of Dayton as well as Antioch College and consist of both graduate and undergraduate students, philosophies of education have frequently clashed.
"In any event," he went on, "they are seeking their identities as learners. We feel now that the students will have to give us more the next time."

The faculty, too, has experienced its crises, according to Gasper. "We have had our share of crises," he says. "At first some of the faculty were not extensively utilized by the students and this is potentially ego-shattering. Faculty are not paid to sit in a lounge and discuss the dynamics of a course while it is in session. Yet these people have at times been thrown into this role.

"Additional crises have arisen around the faculty's attempt to relate their disciplines to one another. This again has been a very threatening experience. As a theologian I have tried to gain insights into each discipline; to see if, or where, they overlap."

"The psychologist and I have worked best together," he continued. "In one session, concerning views on morality we each gave a presentation to a group and then opened our views to discussion. It was a successful experience. However, it is still apparent that we need more work, or experiences, to realize the full value and achieve better understanding in interdisciplinary action. We must find a common ground.

"We feel also we have to explore interdisciplinary action more thoroughly by including other areas in our course. For instance, it would have been nice this year to have included sociology, anthropology and business in the current course, but our budget couldn't carry the expense.

"But then this is a research program in the learning process," he concluded, "and we are learning that we will have to make some changes in our next effort."

The faculty includes Mr. Gasper, Dr. Joseph Rosa of Psychology, and Mr. F. Anthony Macklin, all of the University of Dayton; Mr. Al Denman of Antioch College and Mr. Gene Chute, who is the artist. Mr. Macklin handles literature and film, and Mr. Denman, philosophy and religion.