

MIGUEL A. VENCES

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EDUCATION

Master of Arts in Philosophy (MaPhil) 24 Graduate Credit Hours in Philosophy Houston Baptist University	Expected graduation: May 2019 Completed: Dec 2018 Houston, Texas
Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies University of St. Thomas	May 2000 Houston, Texas
Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy I.F.S.A.M.	May 1995 México City, México
Seminar on Holocaust Studies for Educators from Abroad Yad Vashem. The International School for Holocaust Studies	June 1999 Jerusalem, Israel
English Proficiency Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México	November 1996 San Antonio, Texas

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Faculty, Philosophy Lone star College Cy-fair	August 2018 - Present Cypress, Texas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson planning and teaching of Introduction to Philosophy (PHIL 1301) courses (scheduled to teach Introduction to Ethics -PHIL 2306-)• Administrative duties required of Adjunct Faculty	
Adjunct Faculty, Humanities San Jacinto College	August 2018 - Present Pasadena, Texas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson planning and teaching of Introduction to Humanities (HUMA 1301) courses• Administrative duties required of Adjunct Faculty	
Director of Religious Education St. Ambrose Catholic Church	August 2002 – June 2018 Houston, Texas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson planning and teaching of basic level courses on all the subjects necessary for children, adolescent and adult sacramental preparation and Continuing Christian Education (Sacred Scripture, Church Doctrine and History, and spirituality, human growth and development, morality, etc.)• Planning, coordinating, and supervising of the following educational programs for children, adolescents, young adults, and adults: R.C.I.A., Confirmation, Continuing Christian Education, First Reconciliation/Communion. All of these programs both in English and in Spanish• Recruiting, training, nurturing, and supervising of volunteers. Mentoring volunteers of all educational levels and ages to become effective teachers and caring mentors to children, adolescents and adults	

- Collaborate with the Pastor and the staff in the organization of other programs and activities of the Parish.
- Administrative duties needed as department director (budget planning and management, employee supervision, record keeping, etc.)

Instructor of Adult Theological Formation Programs

August 2002-Present

Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Houston, Texas

- Instructor of Catechetical Certification Modules: Basic Lesson Planning, Age appropriate Lesson Planning, Human development, Different Learning Styles, The Vocation of the Catechist, Cultural Perspectives in Catechesis, Human Sexuality, and others
- Instructor of Theological Content Courses: Introduction to Sacred Scripture, Old Testament, New Testament, Christology, History of the Church, Morality, Genesis, Exodus, Prophets, The book of Revelation, Pauline Literature, and biblical study programs on each one of the four gospels

Religion Teacher

August 2006– May 2008

Resurrection Catholic School

Houston, Texas

- Part time position
- Planned lessons and taught Religion Classes to grades 6th, 7th and 8th, in compliance with the Archdiocesan guidelines and approved textbooks
- Planned and coordinated regular and especial religious events, such as weekly mass, penance, and other liturgical celebrations
- Trained and organized the school's liturgical teams (altar servers, readers, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist)

Chaplain

June 2001 – July 2002

Harris County Psychiatric Center

Houston, Texas

- Provided spiritual and emotional care to the children, adolescent, and adult population of the hospital
- Led the spirituality, coping skills, anger management, and management of mental illness groups (both in English and Spanish) for children, adolescent, and adult patients
- Worked individually with patients to build a positive coping system that integrated their own experiences, beliefs, and values
- Evaluated patients when signs or suspicion of hyper religiosity or obsessive religious ideation became an issue for a patient
- Collaborated the hospital's staff in the education of patients and their families as needed

Chaplain (C.P.E. Resident)

August 1999 – July 2001

The Methodist Hospital

Houston, Texas

- Attended seminars and didactic sessions on developmental psychology, personality theories, spiritual development theories, group dynamics, theological integration, spiritual assessment, reflective listening, and integration of personal and pastoral identities
- Provided spiritual care to patients, their families, and hospital staff of assigned clinical areas (dialysis, cardiovascular, psychiatric, among others) in coordination with the interdisciplinary team
- Lead educational support and spirituality groups for patients and their families

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Miguel A. Vences

Teaching is my passion and my vocation. I first started teaching over twenty years ago while I was working towards my BA degree in philosophy and I have continued doing so until the present day. The most important lesson that I have learned from my teaching experience is that every student is unique. Their life experiences have shaped their points of view on many aspects of life. When I accept an offer to teach a course, my mission is to make sure that every one of those students is met where he/she is at, and is offered the tools to grasp the relevance of the course's content for their own personal lives, as well as for the professional circles in which they are hoping to become leaders. My experience has taught me that it is essential to get to know my students so that my lesson planning reflect their diversity and preferred learning styles; this will help them overcome their areas of weakness in learning skills.

Whether philosophy (or humanities in general) is their focus of interest or not, it can make the difference between a person living on the margins of society and academia or being a full, conscious and active participant in one's civic, academic and professional circles. As a teacher, it is my goal to lead my students in developing the ability to consciously re-define their principles and values and to be able to clearly articulate their beliefs, points of view, and opinions. These goals can be achieved only by having and using a varied pedagogical toolbox that challenges students to creatively engage with the content of the course, with their teacher, and with their classmates.

My experience has also taught me that students benefit from first understanding the overall global picture of the course content, then from identifying the parts - their context and the way the parts are interrelated. Once the global picture is understood, students can then be more confident about filling in the details of each of the parts. This deductively inspired approach has served me well in my teaching and is the heart of my teaching style. Clear, systematic and focused learning are the adjectives that I will abide by when planning and teaching every lesson. Interactive, dynamic and open to enrichment are the reviews that I will work to earn from my students. Fairness in grading is an aspect that - as a student myself - I value in my professors. This goal can be accomplished by offering a variety of opportunities for students to showcase their learning achievements through class presentations (audio, video, lecture, etc.) according to the student's own strengths, writing assignments, participation in class, and exams that are balanced and that do not aim to trick.

I once was asked by a friend of mine (a successful sales professional with a pragmatic point of view) to explain to her "the point of philosophy". I explained that the search for wisdom and knowledge is "the best gym for one's mind", and that a mind that is exercised is able to grasp complex ideas more easily, identify and solve problems of any kind with more clarity, and acquire an overall level of serenity and assurance when faced with the challenges that one's civic, professional and personal life presents to him/her. My friend changed her attitude towards philosophy and is now always eager to meet and engage in dialogue about all types of issues and topics, including politics, religion, and philosophy, which she previously preferred to avoid.

I relish the challenge to guide my students to a place where they can change their perspectives about the subject of each class and the course overall. I will work tirelessly to make sure that each one of them gains a renewed sense that the time, effort and money that they spend in taking the course will serve them well in developing their personal and professional lives.