

Theology of Marriage Fall, 2009
Course Syllabus--Tentative

Course Title:

TESP 124 Theology of Marriage

Semester/ Year/Times

Fall, 2009

Tuesday/Thursday, 11:50-1:35

Faculty Name and e-mail Address:

Dr. Jean Ponder Soto

jpsoto@scu.edu

Office Hours: Kenna Hall, Room TBA, TTR 1:45-2:45 pm or by appointment.

Course Description

This 10- week course will consider the developments in the Western Christian theology of marriage and how these changes effect contemporary marital thinking and practices. Within these changes and adaptations, there is a trajectory of theological meanings about marriage that can be found in developments along the axis of horizontal and vertical finality, or the ends and goals of marriage.

The course will also explore the marital theologies of other religions, including, but not limited to, those of Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and Hinduism. We will consider if and how these traditions have responded to cultural changes through interviews with couples and speakers from these traditions. If there is class interest, we will investigate intra and interfaith marriages, that is, between mixed Christian marriages (Methodist and Roman Catholic) or marriages between spouses of different religious traditions.

Topics for all traditions of marriage include:

A brief history of marriage

Theologies and meanings of marriage

Love

Sex and sexuality

The principles, roles and tasks of a thriving marriage

The spirituality of marriage

Some Learning Methods

In order to learn about the different traditions of marriage the class methods include lectures, reading class material, discussions, speakers and presentations, exams, reflection papers, and student interviews of couples and the production of a short digital story. Through the interviews the students question married couples in order to learn and make judgments about the different personal, religious, and social forms that support healthy marriages.

Technological Components of the Class

Student teams will create and present a short (3 minute) digital story of their marriage interview. This project will involve the use of video and still cameras and iMovie. At least three (3) class sessions will be scheduled in the Media lab.

The online class management system (ANGEL) is used to post instructions and assignments, discussion questions, some class material, and to take exams.

Important notice: In order to be current with class assignments, information, and announcements you must check -in with the online ANGEL course!

Class Goals

At the end of the class the students should be able to

- Realize the direction and orientation-vertical and horizontal finalities- of marriage in much of US culture and its relationship to certain Christian theologies of marriage
- Grasp the role that conversion plays in the development of the spouses and their marriage
- Identify the differing and equivalent central components of a good marriage in several religious traditions
- Produce a digital story based on the interview of a couple in a religious tradition other than one's own.

Required Texts:

- *A Marriage Proposal*, C21 Resources, Fall 2007. A Service of Boston College
Copies of this issue (in newspaper format) of C21 Resources may be obtained for free at the SCU Bookstore. Ask a Bookstore staff for a copy. Or you may order a copy to be sent to your address for free from the following:
Eden Prendergast
Church in the 21st Century Center
Boston College Phone: 1-617-552-0470 E-mail: church21@bc.edu

- Don S. Browning et al., *Sex, Marriage, and Family in World Religions*, Columbia University Press, 2009
- John Gottman Ph.D., with Nan Silver, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999.
- Arun S. Roy, *Marriage Customs and Ceremonies in World Religions*, Victoria, BC: Trafford Publishing, 2005
- Kieran Scott & Michael Warren, *Perspectives on Marriage*. 3rd. ed. Oxford Univ. Press, 2007

Expectations for Class Membership:

- The class is designed to encourage collaboration, dialogue and the exchange of ideas. In order to foster this class environment, please observe the following basic rules of good class behavior.
- Hand in all required work in a timely manner, including (when requested) each student's contribution to her or his team's work.
- Be courteous in your class and lab time, and in your online correspondence.
- Refrain from all offensive language.
- Disagree or offer a different perspective in a respectful manner
- Honor your classmates' time (and your own!) by speaking and posting thoughtful remarks related to the class material.
- Chat on your own time.

Teams

- Students are grouped into teams of 4 (or 5) and named for color and or an animal. Teams of 4 work as a group during class discussions and reply to online team discussion questions.
- The Digital Story Telling project is a team project.
- Each student is expected to be a good team player by contributing her or his share of work, by participating in discussions, and by generally helping your team to do well.

Office Hours

Kenna Hall, Room TBA, TTR 1:45-2:45 pm or by appointment.

- You may e-mail me, jpsoto@scu.edu at any time and expect a response within 24 hours-- usually sooner.

Notice: I reserve the right to change course content and requirements in order to serve the educational needs of the class. Any changes will usually be made with ample notice

Exams, Reflection Papers, Team Discussion Posts, Team Presentation

Exams –Midterm & Final 2 X 20 points each	= 40
Reflection Papers 4 X 5 points each	= 20
Team Discussion Posts 2 X 10 points each	= 20
Team Presentation - Digital Story 20 points	= 20

	= 100
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Notice: Three allowed absences, after that, each absence incurs a full 2- point deduction from final grade.

Written Work

The students’ written work (and *PARTICIPATION* in class), with one exception, will be graded under three aspects-- **1. CONTENT 2. EXPRESSION and 3. PARTICIPATION.**

1. CONTENT: this includes the content of all graded work, meaning the Reflection papers, Team Discussion Posts, Team project (Digital Story), Midterm and Final Exam.

Work is graded according to the following scale:

Points	Skill
3-4	Demonstrates excellence in grasping key concepts; critiques* the work of others; provides ample evidence of support for opinions; readily offers new interpretations of discussion material.
2	Shows evidence of understanding most of the major concepts; is able to agree or disagree when prompted; is skilled in basic level of support for opinions; offers an occasional divergent viewpoint.
1	Has mostly shallow grasp of the material; rarely takes a stand on issues; offers inadequate levels of support.
0	Shows no significant understanding of material.

*To “critique” does not necessarily mean, “to criticize.” It means to offer a reasoned analysis that could affirm as well as negate.

2. EXPRESSION: is divided into two kinds--formal and informal.

Informal expression includes on-line discussion in the replies to Team Discussion Posts, and is not strictly graded for grammar and eloquence, but for participation and content. This policy is intended to encourage the free flow of ideas, candor and spontaneity.

Formal expression includes required Reflection Papers, Team Discussion Posts, and Exams, and is graded according to the following scale:

Number of Points Skills

3	Student uses complex, grammatically correct sentences on a regular basis; expresses ideas clearly, concisely, cogently, in logical fashion; uses words that demonstrate a high level of vocabulary; has rare misspellings.
2	Sentences are generally grammatically correct; ideas are readily understood but show signs of disorganization; some transitions between concepts are missing; there are occasional misspellings, especially with homonyms not detected with spelling checks.
1	Poor use of the language, garbles much of the message; only an occasional idea surfaces clearly; language is disjointed; there is overuse of the simple sentence and repetition of words; paragraphs are often unrelated to each other.
0	Writing is largely unintelligible.

3. PARTICIPATION: Includes the required response from the students in all written or class work, both individual and in Teams. It is graded according to the following scale:

Points	Skills
3	Contributions are prompt, timely, relevant, self-initiated; when required remarks are posted freely on all assignments throughout the course; there is no attempt to dominate conversation.
2	Student generally keeps up with the discussion; needs

an occasional prompting to contribute; might participate in some discussions more than others.

- 1 Participation is spotty; picks and chooses topics to get involved in; offers short, perfunctory postings when prompted; takes limited initiative.
- 0 Student rarely participates freely; makes short, irrelevant remarks.

Our Technology Lab Leader: Gloria Hofer is the main instructor for the digital aspects of the class. You may call her Gloria. Contact her at 408-551-1863 or e-mail: ghofer@scu.edu **Please show- up on time for Labs, attendance will be taken**

TENTATIVE