

TESP 4 : The Christian Tradition

William J. Dohar – Fall, 2008, TR 1:45 – 3:30

Course Objective: This is a foundations course in Christianity; its aim is to introduce students to Christianity as a global religion, a force of history, and a distinct (if remarkably varied) religious tradition. While many students at Santa Clara University may self-identify as Christians of one denomination or another, the objective in this course is to examine Christianity not from a faith-perspective, but as a **subject of intellectual inquiry**.

Course Readings: The main text for the course is *Introduction to Christianity*, ed. Mary Jo Weaver and David Brakke, 4th edition (Belmont, CA, 2008; the 3rd edition is acceptable). We'll also read a novel early in the course, Walter Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1961). This will be supplemented by a wide variety of other readings mainly excerpted from larger works of poetry, biography, treatise, law, saints' lives and spiritual writing. (These sources appear in ANGEL along with daily announcements and reading questions. All students need to have an ANGEL account and consult ANGEL on a regular basis in order to participate in this course. The ANGEL pass code is **tarsus**.) We also read as 'texts' images and themes in art, architecture, and film which will serve as the bases for written efforts and discussions. There will be regular brief reading assignments from the Christian Scriptures (the Bible); students may consult a printed copy or find pertinent passages online at: <http://www.usccb.org/nab/bible/>

You need to bring to class all sources assigned for that particular day; failure to do so hobbles the student's ability to participate and will result in some reduction of participation credit.

Course Requirements: Examination: Three short quizzes and a comprehensive final exam will chart retention of readings, class discussions and lecture materials. **Writing** occurs in several forms here: a few in-class paragraphs, online discussions, and **two** two-page papers chosen from a list of topic questions; all students have to write at least one of these papers by 4/23. Although the class is large at 40, **participation** is a central component of the learning process.

Credit Profile:

Essays:	30%	Quizzes:	25%
Participation:	20%	Online Disc:	10%
Final Exam:	15%		

Due dates, late submissions, plagiarism, etc.: All assignments—reading and writing—are due the day assigned. Extensions are rare but possible, depending on justifiable circumstances and consultation with me. For the sake of fairness, some **grade reduction results with later submissions**. The key here is to plan ahead and meet the deadlines as best you can. Avoid reaching a crisis situation; if in doubt (about this or any other requirement), **see me** and we can work things out. Any student with a learning disability should see me immediately with paperwork from the Drahmann Center so that we can work out necessary accommodations. **Plagiarism in any form** will result in certain failure of the project in question and may result in a failing grade for the entire course according to University policies and procedures (please see: <http://www.scu.edu/studentlife/resources/academicintegrity/>).

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

I. Origins and Foundations

- T 3/31 Introduction to the Course
- R 4/2 Worldview and Religion
Weaver and Brakke, ch 1
Begin *A Canticle for Leibowitz*
- T 4/7 Beginnings of Christianity and Approaches to Jesus
Weaver and Brakke, ch 2
Mk 1; Mt 11:25-30; Lk 11:37-54; Jn 1:1-18
- R 4/9 Passover / Holy Thursday (no class)
Complete first section of *Canticle*

II. Christian Beginnings

- T 4/14 Christianity and Paul
I Corinthians 12
Weaver and Brakke, ch 3
Paper Option 1
- R 4/16 Early Christianity, Gospel Ideals and the 'Perfect Life'
Lk 15; Acts of the Apostles 2: 42-47
Quiz 1
- T 4/21 Christianity and Love
Jn 15:9-17; I Corinthians 13: 1-13
*Christian Love
Complete second section of *Canticle*

III. Redemption in a (New) Dark Age

- R 4/23 East is East and West is West...
Weaver and Brakke, ch 4
*The Wisdom of the Desert: the Story of Syncretica
Paper Option 2
- T 4/28 Mary and the Saints
*The Immaculate Conception of Mary
*Sandra Cisneros, "Little Miracles, Kept Promises"
- R 4/30 *A Canticle for Leibowitz*
- T 5/5 Theology and Science Fiction: Christianity in Miller's Novel
A Canticle for Leibowitz
- R 5/7 Online Discussion of *A Canticle*

IV. Christian Expansion

- T 5/12 Christianity, Reform and Lost Unity Quiz 2
Weaver & Brakke, chs 5-6
- R 5/14 Christian Time, Christian Space
*How to Read a Church
- T 5/19 Christian Prayer Wild Card Due
Weaver & Brakke, ch 8
*Forms of Christian Prayer
- R 5/21 Christianity as a Global Religion Paper Option 3
Weaver & Brakke, ch 9
Mt 28: 19-20

V. Aspects of Contemporary Christianity

- T 5/26 Christians and Conflict Quiz 3
Weaver & Brakke, ch 11
*A Christian Map of the U.S.
*Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail"
- R 5/28 Christians and War Paper Option 4
Weaver & Brakke, ch 12
- T 6/2 Christian Endings
Weaver & Brakke, pp 219-25
Rev. 12-13
- R 6/4 The Christian Tradition in Retrospect

Grading Scale:

A	100-95	exceptional
A-	94-90	excellent
B+	89-87	very good
B	86-83	good
B-	82-80	solid performance
C+	79-76	average
C	75-72	
C-	71-69	
D	68-64	
D-	63-60	
F	< 59	

Contact Info:

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