

TESP 77 Encounters of Religion and Globalization (**Honors** [48568])
Religious Studies Department, Santa Clara University
Spring Quarter, 2009
MWF, 1-2:05 p.m. in Sobrato 19

Note, due to low enrollment this course was opened to non-Honors students and I had to revise the syllabus accordingly.

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 2:15-3:30, Wednesday, 2:15-3:30, and by appointment

Angel Password: Encounter

"How do people frame their beliefs and make sense of them knowing that there are others who believe quite differently?"
(Robert Wuthnow, *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity* [2005], xvi)

SCU Core Connections

This course fulfills the second level religious studies requirement in the University Core Curriculum. The goal of courses at this level is to "... broaden and deepen the 'database' that students use to think about religions, religious issues, and all the possible interdisciplinary connections." (www.scu.edu/provost/ugst/core2009/2003-08/theme2/index.cfm). Its primary prerequisite is that students must have already completed the first/introductory religious studies course; the majority of students in this section are in the University Honors Program.

"Is religion the natural enemy of globalization?"
(Mark Jeurgensmeyer, *Religion in Global Civil Society* [2005], p. 3)

Course Interests and Design

As the quotations scattered through this syllabus suggest, people represent the ways religions do or should relate to one another in different contexts and ways. The context can be personal—e.g. a couple negotiating religious difference in a marriage, or an individual deciding to convert to a new faith. Sometimes the context is political or civic—e.g. government analyses of trends in religiously-based discrimination and hate crimes. Philosophers and theologians will work with abstract ideas to argue about seeming incommensurable truth claims while missionaries on the ground will try to make those claims to truth come alive for people in their day to day life. In some contexts encounters are cast as battles and conflicts—e.g. debates about assimilation of immigrant religious communities in secular Europe, or media coverage of Hindu-Muslim clashes in secular India—that fuel critiques and rejections of religion; while in other contexts religious differences are pitched as resources for progress and peace—as in President Obama's inaugural address. And in the minds of those not affiliated with any religion—the fastest growing group in America—religious differences may not even be registered much less discussed.

These different representations function as maps, shaping how people and communities experience, imagine and engage in encounters with religious others. In this course we will examine four such maps—

- the clash of civilization narrative that focuses on religious violence;
- philosophic and theological arguments for how religious others should be understood;
- contemporary retrievals of two historical encounters of traditions--Buddhist-Christian and Abrahamic Religions

--and consider the possibility that the biography Eboo Patel narrates in *Acts of Faith* has led him to construct a new map. By the end of the quarter students will have used our map metaphor to learn how to identify, analyze, compare, and evaluate what is at stake in different representations of the encounters of religion in an era defined by globalization.

To provide focus and direction for our work as a class we will adopt this scenario: we are the research seminar for a Silicon Valley multi-religious group considering an affiliation with the Parliament of World's Religions (www.parliamentofreligions.org/); our charge is to ascertain and evaluate reasons why this is/is not a good idea, and to propose ways for the group to move forward. This scenario will inform the student course research project and to an extent our meetings with individuals from local congregations and organizations.

Our Way of Proceeding: Class Engagement

Students will engage the course topic and readings in different ways throughout the quarter:

- lectures that in broad strokes connect readings to maps we are studying
- student-led discussions of assigned readings and explorations of questions about the maps we are studying
- independent study of readings guided by instructor preparation notes and supplemental material posted on Angel
- a sequenced course research project that starts in the 5th week of the quarter
- (tentative) in class sessions with individuals from different congregations and organizations in the Silicon Valley

Student progress in mastering this material through these different activities will be evaluated through midterm exams, my observation of their informed leadership and participation in class discussions and (tentative) sessions with community guests, one essay on Eboo Patel's book, and the course research project. There is no final exam.

"Bapus Gandhi said, 'All religions are true.' I just want to love God,' I blurted out." (The main character in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi: A Novel* [2001], p. 61, justifying his decision to become—simultaneously--a Hindu, a Muslim and a Christian.

Course Texts

Two recently published texts have been ordered for this course—

- Eboo Patel, *Acts of Faith* (Beacon Press, 2007)
- Thich Nhat Hanh, *Living Buddha, Living Christ* (10th anniversary edition, Riverhead Books, 2007)

We will also read the materials referenced in the course schedule below that are available on-line and/or on Angel.

"...the central tenet of every religious tradition is that all others are mere repositories of error or, at best, dangerously incomplete. Intolerance is thus intrinsic to every creed."

(Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* [2004], p. 13)

Angel Course Management System

This course utilizes the University's course management system, Angel. Students are therefore required to register for this course on Angel (password Encounter) and are responsible for resolving difficulties using the site during the first week of the quarter.

Requirements, Grade Weighting, and Final Letter Grades for the Course

Additional information about requirements 3, 4, and 5 will be provided later in the quarter.

1. Class Engagement: see above, *Our Way of Proceeding* (10%)
2. Midterm Tests: two as indicated on the schedule (30%)
3. Class Discussion Leadership: each student (some in teams) will design and lead a discussion for one of our Wednesday class sessions, and prepare a report (to be published on Angel) on what we should take away from our consideration of a particular map through the assigned readings and any additional materials introduced in the class session. (15%)
4. Patel's Map Essay: see above, *Course Interest and Design* (15%)
5. Sequenced Course Research Project: this will start in the 5th week of the quarter, include library *and* field research, require presentations to the class, and will culminate in a proposal to the Silicon Valley multi-religious group for moving forward on the Parliament of World's Religions affiliation idea. Students may elect to work on this in teams. (30%)

Throughout the quarter students receive numerical scores on each piece of work they complete. Students who wish to do so during the quarter can use this **rough guide** to transpose those scores (as percentages) to a letter grade (and descriptors, from the *University Bulletin*, p. 345): 90-100=A grades (excellent); 79-89=B grades (good); 67-78=C grades (adequate), 60-66= D grades (barely passing). (Earning a grade of F is difficult but not impossible.) **However**, the letter grade for the course will not be assigned until the end of the quarter, at which point the weighting provided above will be factored in, *and* these ranges may be adjusted by a curve that takes into account the distribution of percentage scores across the entire class.

"...interreligious understanding is not merely an intellectual or academic or 'objective' question; it is also a religious question. To ask about other men's faith is in itself to raise important issues about one's own."

(Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Faith of Other Men* [1962], p. 82)

Disability Accommodation Policy

To request accommodations for a disability, or to obtain information about this process at SCU, students should contact Disability Resources, located in the Benson Center, 2nd floor: (408) 554-4111 (TTY (408) 554-5445), www.scu.edu/advising/learning/disabilities/index.cfm

Academic Integrity Expectations

We should conduct ourselves in accordance with the University's academic integrity standards

and policies as outlined on the Provost's home page (www.scu.edu/provost/policies/) and in the *Undergraduate Bulletin* (2008-2009), pp. 353-355.

Course Sections and Reading Schedule

This schedule below covers reading assignments by week, as well as **dates** for the two midterm exams, the Patel "map" essay, and the completion of the course research project.. (Further dates and details for the course research project, class discussion leadership, and course guests will be provided in separate documents). Each week will typically have one lead or main reading, supplemented by a variety of other sources to provide additional context or perspective. Discussion leaders may also add materials for their sessions. Preparation notes for a given week will generally be posted by the preceding Friday. Students should complete the readings for a given week prior to our **Monday** class session. This schedule is subject to change; all changes will be noted on Angel and a portion of the schedule that is revised will be added to the appropriate folder.

Week One (3/30-4/3)

ORIENTATIONS

*Terry Eagleton, "Culture & Barbarism: Metaphysics in a Time of Terrorism," *Commonweal: A Review of Religion, Politics and Culture*, Volume CXXXVI, Number 6 (March 27, 2009), pp. 9-14

(http://www.commonwealmagazine.org/article.php3?id_article=2488)

*Walter Russell Mead, "Born Again," *The Atlantic Monthly*, March 2008, vol. 301, n. 2, pp. 21-24

(www.theatlantic.com/doc/200803/evangelicals)

*Robert Wuthnow, "Introduction," from *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity* (2005) (Angel)

* American Religious Identification Report (ARIS 2008) (Angel)

*PBR, "Glocalization: Religious Demographics and Globalization in Silicon Valley" (Angel)

Week Two (4/6-4/10)

GLOBALIZATION NARRATIVES: CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS FOCUSING ON RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE

* Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1993) (Angel)

* Religiously-Based Civil Unrest and Warfare," (www.religioustolerance.org/curr_war.htm), selections in Preparation Notes

*"With God on our Side": excerpts on religion as a source of violence (Angel)

*Excerpts from "Towards a Global Ethic," World Parliament of Religions, 1993 (Angel)

*Parliament of the World's Religions, "About Us" (Opportunity, Mission, Vision, History),

www.parliamentofreligions.org/index.cfm

FRIDAY—ACADEMIC HOLIDAY

Week Three (4/13-17)

THEORIES ABOUT AND RATIONALES FOR CONSTRUCTIVE ENCOUNTERS:

* John Hick, selections from *God Has Many Names* (1982) (Angel)

* Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., "The Service of Faith in a Religiously Plural World," *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education* (Fall 2007, n. 32), 44-52

(www.marquette.edu/library/collections/archives/Conversations/No32_2007/32_kolvenbach.pdf or http://groups.creighton.edu/sjdialogue/documents/articles/2006_kolvenbach_xavier.html)

*Francis Clooney, "Goddess in the Classroom: Is the Promotion of Religious Diversity a Dangerous Idea?" (http://groups.creighton.edu/sjdialogue/documents/articles/goddess_in_classroom.html)

*Select Catholic Church Official Statements Encounters of Religion (Angel)

*Diana Eck, "Pluralism," *On Common Ground* (2000) (Angel)

Week Four (4/20-24)

HISTORIC ENCOUNTERS OF RELIGION (1): Thich Nhat Hanh's Buddhist Encounter With Christianity

*Thich Nhat Hanh, *Living Buddha, Living Christ*, Foreword, Introduction, chs. 1-4

*C. Amore, excerpt from *Two Masters, One Message* (Angel)

*Selections from the (Gnostic) *Gospel of Thomas* (Angel)

FRIDAY: MIDTERM ONE (in class or on Angel, tbd)

Week Five (4/27-5/1)

HISTORIC ENCOUNTERS OF RELIGION (1): Thich Nhat Hanh's Buddhist Encounter With Christianity

*Thich Nhat Hanh, *Living Buddha, Living Christ*, chs. 6-8

*Catherine Cornille, excerpts from "Double Religious Belonging: Aspects and Questions" (Angel)

*Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Letter on "Some Aspects of Meditation" (1989) (Angel)

Week Six (5/4-5/8)

HISTORIC ENCOUNTERS OF RELIGION (1): Thich Nhat Hanh's Buddhist Encounter With Christianity and HISTORIC ENCOUNTERS OF RELIGION (2): Judaism, Christianity, Islam as "Abrahamic Religions" or "Religions of the Book"

* Thich Nhat Hanh, *Living Buddha, Living Christ*, chs. 9-10

*"A Common Word Between Us and You," October 2007 (www.acommonword.com), selections tbd

Week Seven (5/11-5/15)

HISTORIC ENCOUNTERS OF RELIGION (2): Judaism, Christianity, Islam as "Abrahamic Religions" or "Religions of the Book"

*"A Common Word Between Us and You," October 2007 (www.acommonword.com), selections tbd

*Fetullah Gulen, TBD

*<http://www.coexistfoundation.net/> specifically Home (Welcome), About the Foundation, Projects: St. Ethlberga's Center (The Tent (opening page description), Our vision: read at least the message of support from Bono)

*"A Blessing to One Another: Pope John Paul II & the Jewish People" (www.blessingexhibit.org), selections tbd

*L. Swidler, excerpts from "The Jewishness of Jesus: Some Religious Implications for Christians" (Angel)

Week Eight (5/18-22)

MAPPING EBOO PATEL

*Patel, *Acts of Faith*, chs. 1-5

FRIDAY-SATURDAY: MIDTERM TWO (on Angel)

Week Nine (5/25-29)

MAPPING EBOO PATEL

MONDAY, MAY 25 ACADEMIC HOLIDAY

*Patel, *Acts of Faith*, ch. 6—Afterword

FRIDAY: PATEL ESSAY DUE

Week Ten (6/1-6/5)

ADVANCING SILICON VALLEY'S WPR AFFILIATION DELIBERATIONS

*Course Research Project Presentations

FRIDAY: GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT FINAL SUBMISSION