

TESP 125 Winter 2008 Belief and Unbelief: Solidarity

Section # 38189

M/W, 3:30-5:15 p.m., Daly Science 201

Instructor

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Office Hours

Tuesday, 1:30-3:30; Friday, 11:45-1:00; and by appointment

TextsAlbert Camus, 3 novels: *The Fall*, *The Plague* and *The Stranger*

Albert Camus, select essays: "The Myth of Sisyphus", "the Non-believers and Christians", "Neither Executioners nor Victims"

Greg Mortensen *Three Cups of Tea*Selections related to religion and solidarity from *Peter Hans Kolvenbach*, *Martin Luther King*, *Hans Kung*, *Flannery O'Connor*, and *Oscar Romero***Background, Description and Objectives**

Several years ago the Religious Studies Department at SCU decided that the last of the three courses in religious studies in the University Core should:

...[1] model on-going intellectual engagement with difficult questions and issues involving religion...[2] be organized around problems, issues, or controversies that require students to explore and assess multiple positions and then make intellectually defensible, integrative, and nuanced decisions...and [3] [give] students the opportunity to bring together their core and disciplinary knowledge, their acquired analytic skills, the intellectual challenge of current issues, and the "meta-questions" that will invoke ethical and ontological concerns.

This course is designed to meet these objectives. We focus on the "standard" for Jesuit education proposed by Peter Hans Kolvenbach, S.J. in an address at Santa Clara in 2000: "to educate the whole person of solidarity for the real world." The ideas, questions and concerns with which he developed this standard—human suffering, spirituality inequity and injustice, globalization and economics, virtue, oppression, rights, the promise of liberation through Christ, preferential option for the poor, etc.—indicate Kolvenbach's intention was not to provide a quotable sound bite but rather to challenge members of the University community intellectually, morally, and personally.

The course meets that challenge by creating an extended conversation with interlocutors who seem to have determined that solidarity with others is a key to authentic living. A "meta-question" or big idea with which we engage the authors we read is whether or not a life of solidarity requires—or implies—a religious commitment. In addition to Kolvenbach, Oscar Romero, Martin Luther King, Flannery O'Connor, Hans Kung, et al appear to find in religion's claims to the transcendent the sustenance for a life of solidarity. Albert Camus, on the other hand, finds those claims empty in the face of the evils that define human existence, and argues that their invocation serves as a justification by which humans endure suffering in isolation instead of combating it in solidarity. The interlocutors from the Silicon Valley's communities we meet in person we invite into this conversation seem to engage in solidarity with another community across the globe along the lines of Greg Mortensen in *Three Cups of Tea*. Whether or not understand themselves and their work in terms of solidarity, and/or whether religion is part of their motivation, remains to be seen.

This kind of conversation advances by questions, insights, and reflection. To lend them both direction and rigor, our conversations engage Kolvenbach's standard as a heuristic by which we move from what we know (or think we know) to engage further questions and ideas we

may not have considered, and it avoids the all-too-familiar conversation stopper--you have your opinion, I have mine... and that's about all there is to say. Our conversations thus require us to take positions, probe for evidence, argue for clarity, etc. and at the same time be open to criticism and correction.

If we do this successfully, by the end of this course we will be able to explain what Kolvenbach intends by solidarity with reference to other thinkers, and to illustrate how that kind of live of solidarity may play out in particular instances around the globe.

Requirements and Grade Weighting

Detailed descriptions of the following are available in the Syllabus folder on Angel. Since there are no exams for this course, this work is the primary means by which students develop and demonstrate their understanding of the material. All students should read and review regularly a document posted on Angel in the Syllabus folder, "Thinking and Writing."

Class Engagement (ongoing) 10%

Reading Reflections (5, per schedule) 10%

Students prepare to discuss the assigned readings assigned on the schedule (and/or added on Angel) and participate in class discussions. Discussion starters include prompts posted on Angel, group discussions, current news items, investigating campus resources, student reading reflections and, after the 4th week of the quarter, meeting with individuals whose interests and/or work relates to communities in other parts of the globe.

Camus Projects (2) 30%

Critical Review of The Fall 10%

Students draw upon class discussions to develop and research a presentation on Camus and solidarity that will add value to current representations of Camus in on-line venues (blogs, YouTube, Wikipedia, etc.)

(Staged) Course Research Project 40%

Students identify and present an individual in the Silicon Valley community whose work in an organization serving a community abroad they argue can be represented to provide insight into Kolvenbach's "person for solidarity in the real world." The model for the third project is the on-line and photo display we visited the first week of class, the *Architects of Peace* exhibition, sponsored by SCU's Markulla Center. This project is developed and evaluated in segments, each one due as follows: *Brainstorming Exercise*, 2/1 (5%), *Project Proposal*, 2/15 (10%), *Rough Draft*, 2/29 (5%), *Poster Session*, 3/12 (10%), *Final Submission*, 3/19 (10%). The Poster Session will include feedback from students and visitors to be addressed in final submission, and decision by the class about whether to present our collective work in public.

Angel Course Management System

This course utilizes the University's course management system, Angel, for announcements, readings, class preparation notes and some discussions. Students are responsible for logging onto Angel regularly. Angel can be difficult, and at times it is down or running slow, but it is not the abyss. (Whether or not the instructor can accomplish the same with a Google Group remains to be seen.)

Academic Integrity Expectations

We should conduct ourselves in accordance with the academic integrity standards and policies articulated in the *University Bulletin* (www.scu.edu/studentlife/resources/academicintegrity).

Disability Accommodations

To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources located in The Drahnann Center in Benson, room 214, (408) 554-4111; TTY (408) 554-5445. Students must register with Disabilities Resources and provide documentation of a disability prior to receiving academic accommodations. I will be happy to meet with students

to discuss this process, but we should do so within the first week of the quarter.

Office Hours

Students are encouraged to visit during regularly scheduled office hours to discuss ideas, questions, assignments, etc. Food is sometimes available, and groups are welcomed. Students may also contact me to schedule an appointment with me for another time.

Additional Materials

The site for this course on Angel will be constructed within the first three weeks of class, and supplemented throughout the quarter. (See above re Google Groups possibility.)

Schedule

The schedule is subject to change by the instructor. Should that happen, students will be notified via Angel and/or class, and a revised schedule will be posted.

ONE 1/7-11	Solidarity in a Global World Introduction
M	Course Overview, Architects of Peace Exercise
W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peter Hans Kolvenbach, "The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education" (2000) http://www.scu.edu/ignatiancenter/bannan/eventsandconferences/justiceconference/nationalconference/kolvenbach.cfm Ignacio Ellacuria, S.J., 1982 (undergraduate) Commencement Address http://www.scu.edu/Jesuits/ellacuria.html Architects of Peace Project (http://www.scu.edu/ethics/architects-of-peace/homepage.html)
TWO 1/14-18	Images of and Narratives about Solidarity Camus' <i>The Stranger</i> and <i>Sisyphus</i>
M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Stranger REFLECTION (practice, not graded)
W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camus, "The Myth of Sisyphus" (Angel; http://dbanach.com/sisyphus.htm) Martin Luther King, "I Have a Dream" Speech (text and video) (Angel)
THREE 1/21-25	Images of and Narratives about Solidarity Greg Mortensen's <i>Three Cups of Tea</i>
M	HOLIDAY: MLK DAY
W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Three Cups of Tea</i> (at least 1st half) Martin Luther King, "I Have a Dream" Speech (text and video) (http://www.usconstitution.net/dream.html)
	REFLECTION
FOUR 1/28-2/1	Images of and Narratives about Solidarity Kung's "Global Ethic" vs. Huntington's "Clash"
M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Three Cups of Tea</i> (complete) Bill Gates' Address, World Economic Forum 2008, "A New Approach to Capitalism in the 21st Century," Davos, Switzerland (Jan. 24, 2008)— (Access text or video through local business reporter's blog, Vindu Goel, "What Bill Gates Should Have Said at Davos," SJ Mercury News, 1/25/08, www.mercextra.com/blogs/vindu/2008/01/25/what-bill-gates-shouldve-said-at-davos/)
	REFLECTION 1 DUE
W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Parliament of Religions, 1993: Hans Kung, <i>Towards a Global Ethic</i> (Angel) Huntington, <i>Clash of Civilizations</i>, "Foreign Affairs (Summer 1993) Selections (Angel) GUEST : Teresia Hinga, Religious Studies (Kenya)
F	Project Brainstorming: Identify at least 5 possible individuals w/ possible connections to

Kolvenbach for each, Draft Thesis Statement (Angel Discussion Forum) (5%)	
FIVE 2/4-2/8	Suffering and Solidarity: Religious Belief as an Impediment or as a Source? Camus, <i>The Plague</i>
M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Plague, Part (Parts 1 and 2) o Albert Camus, Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1957/camus-speech.html (also on Angel)
REFLECTION 2 DUE	
W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Plague</i>, Part (Part 3) o T. Michael McNulty, "Siding with the Victims," (Center of Concern) (Angel) <p>GUEST: Richard Hobbs, Director, Santa Clara County Office of Human Relations</p>
F	CAMUS PROJECT: STRANGER DUE (15%)
SIX 2/11-2/15	Suffering and Solidarity: Representations in the Political Square El Salvador Readings
M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kevin Burke, S.J., "Remembering Oscar Romero" (Angel) • Romero reading, tbd (Angel)
REFLECTION 3 DUE	
W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Religion Project, "El Salvador Martyrs Memorial at SCU" (Angel) • Dean Brackley, "Higher Standards for Higher Education: the Christian University and Solidarity," University of Central America, El Salvador, 1999 (Angel) <p>GUEST: tbd, Kolvenbach Solidarity Program, SCU's Ignatian Center (http://www.scu.edu/ignatiancenter/kolvenbach/)</p>
F	Project Proposal: Individual, Tentative Bibliography, Revised Thesis Statement, and (Confirmed) Timeline w/ explanations (Angel Drop Box) (10%)
SEVEN 2/18-2/22	Suffering and Solidarity and Evil: Religious Belief as an Impediment or as a Source? Camus, <i>The Plague</i> (entire)
M	HOLIDAY—PRESIDENT'S DAY
W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Camus, <i>The Plague</i> (all) o Camus, <i>Neither executioner nor victim</i> (Angel) o Tich Nhat Hanh, "What would I say to Ossama bin Laden" (Angel) <p>GUEST: David Pace, Photographer, SCU's Art Department</p>
F	CAMUS PROJECT: PLAGUE DUE (15%)
EIGHT 2/25-2/29	Solidarity and the Environment Religious Traditions as Resource Readings
M	<i>The Plague</i> , Hollywood film screening
W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o National Religious Partnership for the Environment: Denomination-specific Statements related to regions of interest tbd by class. (http://www.nrpe.org/) <p>GUEST Brother Keith Warner, OFM (Franciscan), Environmental Studies</p>
REFLECTION 4 DUE	
T-F	Project Rough Draft: Final Thesis Statement, Draft Camus Connections, sample media (30 mtg with Professor sometime between Tuesday and Friday) (5%)
NINE 3/3-3/7	Human Frailty and Solidarity Camus, <i>The Fall</i> and/vs./or O'Connor's "fall"
M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Camus, <i>The Fall</i>, entire
REFLECTION 5 DUE	
W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Flannery O'Connor, selections from <i>The Habit of Being: Letters of Flannery O'Connor</i>, and corresponding short story, tbd (Angel)

	GUEST: (open)
F	CRITICAL REVIEW OF FALL DUE (10%)

TEN 3/10-3/14	Human Frailty and Solidarity Camus, <i>The Fall</i> and/vs./or O'Connor "fall"
M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camus, <i>The Fall</i>, cont. • Flannery O'Connor, selections from <i>The Habit of Being: Letters of Flannery O'Connor</i>, and corresponding short story, tbd (Angel) • Project work in-class
W	Project: Poster Presentation In class (10%)

Finals Week	
W, 3/19	Final Project Due (10%)