

"The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends towards justice." Martin Luther King, Jr. quoting Rev. Theodore Parker

TESP 46: Faith, Poverty and Justice

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Office Hours 11am- 12 pm Tuesday and Thursday

(earlier by appointment)

Course Description

Through classroom dialogue and a *mandatory Arrupe Center Placement*, this course examines biblical theologies of social responsibility and theological reflection on social justice with particular attention to poverty. The over-arching goal of the course is that students learn the theological reflection about the Gospel's call for social justice as well as current appropriations of these traditions.

Core Objectives:

2a. Students will be able to analyze complex and diverse religious phenomena (such as architecture and art, music, ritual, scriptures, theological systems, and other cultural expressions of religious belief).

Two theological systems are the focus of this course: Catholic Social Teaching and the theological reflection Jon Sobrino to a specific human situation. The mid-term and final exams will be used to assess this objective. The mid-term will consist of short answer questions that will allow students to demonstrate their mastery of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and the Sobrino's Christology. The final exam will focus on "Economic Justice for All" by the USCCB and *The Principle of Mercy* by Jon Sobrino.

2b. Students will be able to integrate and compare several disciplinary approaches to a coherent set of religious phenomena.

The course will focus on three disciplinary approaches: Economics, Politics, and Personal Narrative. We shall use these approaches in order to equip students with knowledge about the underlying causes of poverty. Thus equipped, students will then be asked to engage Catholic Social Teaching and the theological reflection on one selected theologian (Jon Sobrino) who engages these same disciplines in her or his own work. Students will be given weekly writing tasks that require the use of each of these over the course of the quarter. The students' mastery of the comparison and integration of these disciplines will be assessed in a final exam and in a final critical paper.

2c. Students will be able to clarify and express beliefs in light of their critical inquiry into the religious dimensions of human existence.

Students will be given opportunities to address these questions in class discussion and in their individual weekly written assignments. This objective is also addressed in the Working Group Presentation. See below for further explanation.

Religious Studies Course Goals:

1. **Knowledge:** of the relationship between faith, justice, and poverty in the Catholic tradition, current theological expressions of the relationship, and a critical understanding of faith that promotes justice; and of the value of community-based learning.
2. **Skills:** ability to critically read and critique religious and theological statements and articles; ability to extract assumptions; ability to appreciate different points of view; and the ability to apply theological learning to community-based learning.
3. **Sensitivities:** to the subtlety of religious and theological argument; to the requirement of faith to promote justice; and to the socio-historical context of poverty.

Required Texts:

McKibben, Bill. *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*. New York: Henry Holt, 2007.

Krugman, Paul. *The Conscience of a Liberal*. New York: Norton, 2009.

Sobrino, Jon. *The Principle of Mercy: Taking the Crucified People from the Cross*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994.

Pope, Stephen, Ed. *Hope and Solidarity*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008.

Ehn, Erik. *Saints Plays*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

Suskind, Ron. *A Hope in the Unseen: An Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League*. New York: Broadway Press, 1999.

Recommended:

Dionne, E. J. *Souled Out: Reclaiming Faith and Politics After the Religious Right*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Requirements:

25% Weekly critical reflection exercises on assigned readings and class discussion.

Readings Assignments Instructions:

Prepare the assigned readings for a given class day in the following way:

Type ONE PAGE, (single-spaced, with 12pt. fonts and standard margins) that engages the reading(s) with these criteria in mind:

- What ideas are central? Describe the critical claims and any new vocabulary from the text.
- What analysis and critique do you have? Bring critical ideas from your own experience and from your other courses into dialogue with the text.
- What questions do the readings raise for you? These questions may arise as emotional responses. However, I expect you to challenge those responses and engage them at the university level so that they become critical questions.

- What questions would you propose for class discussion? List at least 3 questions that you would use to spark class discussion if you were asked to do so.

These assignments will be collected each day and returned to you with comments each Tuesday.

25% Working group reflection Presentation/Project

Final Workgroup Presentation (25%)

You will be part of a working group based on the focus of your *Arrupe* placement. We shall form these groups in the second week of class. You will be asked to form a "working group" that creatively reflects upon your shared experience of the class and of your similar *Arrupe* experiences. You will prepare a presentation for the class that engages one or more conceptual insights from Catholic Social Teaching and Sobrino's Christology in a dialogue with your *Arrupe* experiences.

The framework for the presentation is:

How would you teach your issue to someone who has not been part of this class?

You might imagine your audience, for example, to be others in your RLC, a church community or group, a political action or grassroots organization or even a group of friends sharing a meal and conversation. Group presentations should run 15 minutes each, with a 5-minute feedback period afterwards.

25% Mid-Term Exam

This exam is a short essay answer and identification questions.

25% Final Exam

This exam is a long and short essay format.

Sample Mid-term Exam Questions:

1. Define the term "Catholic Social Teaching." Be sure to include the types of texts that make up this body of work.
2. Define the term "reception" as it is used in Catholic authoritative teaching.
3. List the 4 periods of Catholic Social Teaching.
4. Explain the significance of the title "*Quadragesimo Anno*" by Pius XI.
5. Describe the biblical foundations of Catholic Social Teaching before Pope John Paul II.
6. Describe the economic principles presupposed by Leo XIII.

Sample Final Exam Questions

1. List the 5 chapters of "Economic Justice for All."
2. Describe and explain the process that was used by the bishops in the formulation of this documents.
3. Describe one example of the "reception" of "Economic Justice for All" by a specific community or organization or religious body.
4. Describe Sobrino's use of biblical reflection upon the character of Yahweh.
5. Explain Sobrino's understanding of "structural sin."

Grading Scale:

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

Organizational Assumptions:

There are three background values that will be operative in this class, especially in the time we spend together. These values take the form of goals.

A. The first goal is to develop university level discourse. By this I mean that the questions and the formulation of arguments should consist of careful critical reflection.

B. The second goal is consistent and dependent upon the first; it is that this is a professional environment. All aspects of the class, from my performance to the student's performance, will reflect this standard.

I expect students to be in class on time and ready to work when class starts. Tardiness is disruptive to the class. I expect students to have an email account that is checked daily. Please make sure your SCU email account is activated. This will be the major way that I communicate with students.

C. The third goal is that this class, and especially the time in the classroom, becomes a learning community. Both the vision and mission of Catholicism as a corporate community and the university embrace and affirm this value.

Theological Assumptions:

Theology is critical reflection upon faith. Because this class is a university class, the critical reflection will be even farther away from catechesis than any adult education or more advanced high school classes you may have attended. At the same time, the subject of this critical reflection engages the deepest questions concerning human meaning. It reflects upon our experience of the Living God and that God's personal presence in each person's inner life and in the corporate life of the community. Therefore, a constitutive part of the critical reflection is the respect for and attention to the various experiences of God that all of us will bring to this study. I shall work to achieve this standard and ask that you do so as well.

Disability Accommodation Policy:

The Office of Disabilities Resources has been designated by the University to ensure access for all students with disabilities to all academic programs and University resources. Types of disabilities include medical, physical, psychological, attention-

deficit, and learning disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are provided to minimize the effects of a student's disability and to maximize the potential for success. Santa Clara University follows the law that states: "Professors cannot change essential course requirements." Any accommodation must be arranged through the Office of Disabilities Resources. From Undergraduate Bulletin: "To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources (408) 554-4111; TTY (408) 554-5445. Students must register with Disabilities Resources and provide appropriate documentation to that office prior to receiving accommodations."

Please visit the Office's Website for more information.

<http://www.scu.edu/advising/learning/disabilities/>

Academic Integrity

Students need to be aware of and follow the university's academic integrity policy. See <http://www.scu.edu/academics/bulletins/undergraduate/Academic-Integrity.cfm>.

Plagiarism will lower your grade and may result in an *F* for the course.

Calendar (FINAL EXAM DECEMBER 8, 1:30- 4:30, 214 KENNA HALL)

Tuesday 9- 22

In class: Introduction to the Course

Reading Assignment: *A Hope in the Unseen*. This text is due October 1. The story of Cedric will serve as our "shared narrative."

Thursday 9-24

In class: Catholic Social Teaching's Background: Economic systems and Political systems

Reading Assignment for 9-28: Prepare for class by carefully reading Krugman pp. ix-36.

Written Assignment for 9-28: Suggested questions to focus your reading:

1. Explain Krugman's notion of "the Long Gilded Age". Include the economic realities that shaped this time period. Include how political leadership and cultural narrative shaped this age as well.

2. Describe the "Great Compression." Include both political and economic features of this period.

Tuesday 9- 28

In class: We will discuss the relationship between *Arrupe* and the course as well as logistics.

Thursday 10- 1

In class: Poverty in 21st century United States

Written Assignment: Suggestions to focus your reading:

Define and give a short explanation of the following:

1. "a new New Deal"
2. "The New gilded Age"

3. the financial protections established by the New Deal
4. monetary policy
5. "the New Economics of Inequality" (Be sure to include the 4 "pieces of evidence".)
6. "the Politics of Inequality"
7. "the Politics of Plutocracy"
8. populism

Second Part: Choose one of the items above and reflect on where it is recognizable in Cedric's narrative.

Reading Assignment: Krugman pp. 37- 100 and Pope (pages TBA)

Tuesday 10- 6 McKibben pp. 1-94

Thursday 10- 8 McKibben pp. 95- 176.

Tuesday 10- 13 McKibben pp. 96- 232.

Thursday 10- 15 Sobrino pp. 1- 26

Tuesday 10- 20 Sobrino pp. 27- 48

Thursday 10- 22 Sobrino pp. 49- 57

Tuesday 10- 27 Saints Plays

Thursday 10- 29 Pope (pages TBA)

Tuesday 11- 3 Pope (pages TBA)

Thursday 11- 5 Sobrino pp. 58- 82. Evening lecture instead of class.

7:30- 9:00 (Reserve your free student ticket at

<http://www.scu.edu/visitors/speakersseries.cfm/index.cfm>)

Tuesday 11- 10 Suskind Discussion in light of Sobrino

Thursday 11- 12 Sobrino pp. 83- 104.

Tuesday 11- 17 Sobrino pp. 105- 172.

Thursday 11- 19 Sobrino pp. 173- 190/

Thanksgiving Break 11- 23- 27

Tuesday 12- 1 Presentations

Thursday 12- 3 Presentations