

PMIN 214

Sacramental Theology

Term: Spring 2026

Credits: 4

Course Day & Times: Wednesday Evenings, 6:00–9:00

Location: TBD

Instructor Information

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Office Hours: Mondays, 1:00–2:00pm; Wednesdays, 11:30am–12:30pm; and by appointment.

Course Description

An exploration of the history and development of sacramental theology with emphasis on contemporary pastoral issues. We will primarily explore the role that symbols and rituals play in Christianity; how they shape Christian lives and renew our faith. On a second level, we will explore the ways that Christians have described the role of symbols and rituals in their lives and how those symbols and rituals aid in their salvation. Put another way, we will look at how human beings are symbolically-constructed creatures, and the way in which God communicates Godself to us through the symbolic order, and especially through the Church's seven sacraments. A foundational Sacraments & Liturgy course; formerly PMIN 293

Mission and Goals of the Graduate Program in Pastoral Ministries

The Graduate Program in Pastoral Ministries, rooted in the Jesuit tradition, provides theological and pastoral formation for a variety of ministries. Students are inspired to serve effectively in their diverse ministry settings as they deepen their call of service to the Church and the wider world.

Engaging the church’s mission of lifelong ministerial formation, the program seeks to instill commitments to justice and to human flourishing in friendship with God and companionship with one another in service of all creation. The program cultivates this charism through a critical and sympathetic engagement with the Catholic theological tradition in dialogue with a constantly changing world.

GPPM Program Learning Goals (PLGs)

By completing a Master of Arts Degree in Pastoral Ministries, students will demonstrate:

1. **Theological Foundation:** Knowledge of the broad intellectual foundation for ministry in the areas of scripture, systematic and contextual theology, and spirituality; and incorporate theological reflection to enrich their ministerial practices across varying contexts. Foundational areas are Fundamental Theology, Christology, Ecclesiology, Hebrew Bible, New Testament, Theological Ethics, and Sacraments and Liturgy.
2. **Pastoral Proficiency:** Familiarity with ministerial practices in various manifestations of church life, expressed in concrete pastoral applications which include discernment, compassion, and ministries of accompaniment.
3. **Servant Leadership:** A commitment to identify injustices and developing skills to work individually and in collaboration with other ministers in accompanying those in need and in service to the poor, the marginalized, and the alienated, both within and outside the Church.
4. **Diversity Fluency:** Awareness of and critical engagement with how one’s own culture influences ministry, and then be able to engage in ministries that build the community of Christ and are sensitive to and respectful of all cultures and traditions, and individuals who vary by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and dynamics of wealth, poverty, and power.

Course Objectives

This course will develop students’ knowledge of or skills related to:		Program Goals Addressed
1	The theological foundations of the Christian sacraments and their relation to other theological loci (e.g., Trinitarian Theology; Christology; Ecclesiology; Soteriology).	1

2	Theological, liturgical, and canonical details about each of the seven sacraments.	1
3	Pastoral implementation of the church's sacramental rites.	2
4	Issues surrounding the inculturation of sacramental and liturgical worship.	1, 2, 4

Required Resources (Textbooks and Course Readings)

- Empeureur, James and Eduardo Fernández, *La Vida Sacra: Contemporary Hispanic Sacramental Theology*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2006. ISBN: 978-0-7425-5157-2 (This ISBN is for the paperback edition. There is also a more expensive hardback and a less expensive E-book edition. Any of these options is acceptable.)
- Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ: Sacrament of the Encounter with God* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1987). 978-0934134729
- Lawrence E. Mick, *Understanding the Sacraments Today* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2006). ISBN: 978-0-8146-2925-3
- *The Rites of the Catholic Church, Volume 1*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990. ISBN: 978-0-8146-6015-7¹

Supplemental reading materials for this course will be available on Camino. To access course materials and participate in on-line activities, please be sure to review Camino. Reminders, tools, readings and assignment descriptions will be made available through this on-line course management system. Students must use their SCU username and password to access Camino.

The instructor retains the right to make changes, additions, or deletions to the syllabus, course outline, and schedule throughout the course. Any changes will be communicated through in-class announcements, Camino notifications and/or email.

¹ This volume is an excellent resource, containing most of the sacramental rites we'll be considering (the Rites of Initiation, Marriage, Reconciliation, Pastoral Care of the Sick). We will be reading the introductory material for all of these rites and doing some consultation of the rites themselves in class. This volume is the simplest and most economical way for you to get your hands on all of the material we need. However, you may, if you wish, substitute individual editions of the rites, such as the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults*; *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum*; the *Order of Penance*; and the *Order of Marriage*. What you lose in affordability by purchasing individual rites, you gain in portability, which can be very helpful in actual ministry. **A new edition of the rites with an updated translation will be available partway through the term (April 15).** Students may wish to pre-order that edition instead, and are, in fact, encouraged to do so.

Graded Assignments

Assignment Title	Due Date	Points or %	Program Goal Addressed
Class Participation	NA	15	1, 2
Reading Responses	Weekly on Wednesdays by Class Time	15	1, 2
Sacraments of Initiation Paper	May 13	15	1
Sacramental Celebration Plan	May 31	15	1, 2, 4
Final Project	June 8	40	1, 2

Note: Descriptions and rubrics for major course assignments can be found on Camino.

Students are welcome to submit written work in English, Spanish, or French.

Grading Criteria

Letter grades are assigned based on overall percentage, as follows:

A	94-100%	4.0	C+	77-79%	2.3
A-	90-93%	3.7	C	74-76%	2.0
B+	87-89%	3.3	C-	70-73%	1.7
B	84-86%	3.0	D+	67-69%	1.3
B-	80-83%	2.7	D	63-66%	1.0

Your grades will be visible in Camino.

All assignments are expected to be submitted on their due dates. Unless we have made special arrangements beforehand, late assignments will be docked 5% for each day past the due date that they are submitted. They will not be accepted if more than a week late excepting major personal emergencies, which must be documented. Extensions are given only in the most exceptional of circumstances. If it's a circumstance that's happening, it's unlikely to be exceptional.

I do not normally allow for work to be revised and resubmitted. So it is important for you to follow all assignment instructions the first time around.

Course Outline

Week (Date)	Topic	Readings & Activities	Assignments
April 1	Introductions and the Foundations of Sacramental and Liturgical Theology	Schillebeeckx, Introduction through Chapter 2 Empereur and Fernández Introduction	Weekly Reading Response
April 8	No Class	N/A	N/A
April 15	Sacraments and Liturgy in General	Schillebeeckx, chapters 3–4 Empereur and Fernández, Chapter 1	Weekly Reading Response
April 22	Baptism and Confirmation	Schillebeeckx, chapter 5 Empereur and Fernández, Chapters 2-3 Mick, Chapters 1-2 Christian Initiation – General Introduction, nos. 1–17 (The Rites, 3–8) Christian Initiation of Adults – Introduction, nos. 1–31 (The	Weekly Reading Response

		Rites, 35–44).	
April 29	The Eucharist (Real Presence)	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> 3.51.1; 3.76.1–6 Council of Trent,, Session 13	Weekly Reading Response
May 6	The Eucharist (Sacrifice)	Council of Trent, Session 22 Williams, <i>Eucharistic Sacrifice: The Roots of a Metaphor</i>	Weekly Reading Response
May 13	Matrimony	Empereur and Fernández, Chapter 4 Mick, Chapter 6 Rite of Marriage (<i>The Rites</i> , 720-24)	Weekly Reading Response Sacraments of Initiation Paper Due by 11:59pm
May 20	Sacrament of Order	Empereur and Fernández, Chapter 5 Mick, chapter 7 Schillebeeckx, Chapter 6	Weekly Reading Response
May 27	Reconciliation	Mick, Chapter 4 Empereur and Fernández, Chapter 5 Rite of Penance, Introduction (<i>The Rites</i> 525-44)	Weekly Reading Response
June 3	Anointing the Sick	Mick Chapter 5 Empereur and Fernández, Chapter 7 Pastoral Care of the Sick, General Introduction (<i>The Rites</i> 778–89)	Weekly Reading Response Sacramental Celebration Plan due May 31, 11:59pm Final Projects Due June 8, 11:59pm

Professional Conduct Expectations

Attendance & Punctuality

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Whether or not the assignments were announced during an absence, students are accountable for all course assignments. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences (though I am committed to working with you if circumstances arise that interfere with attendance). I will overlook one absence each quarter. Absences beyond the first may result in a half letter grade reduction of your course grade (not just participation). If circumstances like university mandated travel, or jury duty, or bereavement, or serious illness wind up pushing you past your allotted limits, I'm willing to work with you, but a turn of events significant enough that you're missing 20% or more of class likely means you're not in a position to succeed in this class anyway (through no fault of your own). Students in the Dioceses of San Jose, Oakland, and San Francisco are expected to attend class in person.

Participation Active participation is essential to this class. Weekly class sessions will involve some presentation from the professor, but will mainly be an opportunity for student discussion of issues that are raised by the week's readings. Each student should come to class sessions with one to three questions (from the readings, or just germane to the week's topic) that he or she would like to be sure we discuss.

Communication

Email using our SCU email address will be our primary means of communication outside of class. You must check your SCU email and our course's Camino site every day to ensure you maintain a connection with the course content, your classmates, and your instructor. While you are welcome to use the phone number provided on this syllabus to reach me, you will be much more successful if you send me an email, because whether I receive an email does not depend on whether I'm in my office, while a phone call's reception depends upon where I am at the time you call.

Academic Integrity

The Academic Integrity pledge is an expression of the University's commitment to fostering an understanding of— and commitment to—a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. The Academic Integrity pledge, which applies to all students, states:

I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code.

Academic integrity is part of your intellectual, ethical, and professional development. I expect you to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this class. I prohibit the use of AI for any and all assignments. If you have questions about what is appropriate on any assignment, please let me know before you hand in work. For more resources about ensuring academic integrity in your work, see this [LibGuide on Academic Integrity](#).

Policies, Resources & Accommodations

Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct (Title IX)

Santa Clara University is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment free of all forms of discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence.

Please know that as a faculty member, California law SB 493 requires me to report any information brought to my attention about incidents of sexual harassment or misconduct to the SCU [Equal Opportunity and Title IX Office](#) (408) 551-3043. This includes, but is not limited to, disclosures in writing assignments, class discussions, and one-on-one conversations.

Should you need support, SCU has dedicated staff trained to assist you in navigating campus resources, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and filing a formal complaint with the University or with law enforcement. Please see the [Student Resources](#) page for more information about reporting options and resources.

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence and wishes to speak to a confidential resource who is not required to report, please contact one of the following SCU resources for support:

- [SCU Wellness Center](#)
- [CAPS](#)
- Any individual (clergy, counselors) acting in a professional capacity for which confidentiality is mandated by law

I am happy to help connect you with any of these resources.

Accommodations for Pregnant and Parenting Students

Santa Clara University is committed to creating and maintaining a non-discriminatory learning environment for all students, including students who are pregnant or parenting. Absences due to medical conditions relating to pregnancy and childbirth will be excused for as long as deemed medically necessary by a student's doctor, and students will be given the opportunity to make up missed work. Students needing accommodations can often arrange accommodations by working directly with their instructors, supervisors, or departments. Students needing accommodations can also seek assistance with accommodations from the [Office of Accessible Education](#) (OAE) or from the [Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX](#). This [resource page](#) from the Title IX Office provides information regarding support for students and employees who are pregnant or parenting.

Office of Accessible Education

If you have a documented disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact the Office of Accessible Education oe@scu.edu, <https://www.scu.edu/oe> as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through OAE, please be sure to request your accommodations through your my OAE portal and discuss them with me during my office hours within the first two

weeks of class. To ensure fairness and consistency, individual faculty members are required to receive verification from the Office of Accessible Education before providing accommodations. OAE will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assistive technology.

Students with approved accommodations of time and a half should talk with me as soon as possible. The Office of Accessible Education must be contacted in advance (at least two weeks' notice recommended) to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. Students should continue to reach out to OAE (oe@scu.edu) regarding access barriers related to this course or content.

Academic Freedom

The University is dedicated to an uncompromising standard of academic excellence and a commitment to [academic freedom](#), freedom of inquiry, and freedom of expression in the search for truth. We are here to engage a set of ideas and research findings that often have long and complicated histories. Scholars may disagree on the topics we will be discussing. Assignment of and references to sources (readings, films, websites, etc.) are not an endorsement of the opinions or content contained in those materials. Students are expected and required to become familiar with the literature relevant to the topic of this course regardless of whether the professor, the University, or the students find this content agreeable. You are invited to introduce additional challenges in a serious and open-minded manner.

Safety Measures

In order to meet our learning objectives, we will adhere to the highest standards for safety and mutual respect. University policy allows faculty to require the use of face coverings in their classrooms. I may request that students wear face coverings occasionally or throughout the academic term. Failure to comply with my request is a violation of the [Student Conduct Code](#), which I will need to report.

Use of Classroom Recordings

Depending on the learning objectives and pedagogical approaches used in a lesson, some classes may be recorded and made available on Camino. However, in line with item 12 of the [Student Conduct Code](#), dissemination or sharing of any classroom recording without the permission of the instructor would be considered "misuse" and, therefore, prohibited. Violations of these policies may result in disciplinary action by the University. At the instructor's discretion, violations may also have an adverse effect on the student's grade.

Copyright Statement

Materials in this course are protected by the United States copyright laws. I am the copyright holder of the materials I create, including notes, handouts, slides, and videos. You may make copies of course materials for your own use and you may share the materials with other students enrolled in this course. You may not publicly distribute the course materials without my written permission.

Technology Support

Course materials and online activities will be available on SCU's Canvas learning management system (also known as Camino). Course reminders, readings, and assignments will be available through Camino.

SCU can provide you with technical assistance, and you can also reach out to our providers directly for questions. For Camino support, contact caminosupport@scu.edu or call 408-551-3572. You can also find support resources via the help button within the Camino platform (on the left-hand navigation) to access after-hours support via email, chat, or phone.

For Zoom assistance, contact Media Services at mediaservices@scu.edu or 408-554-4520. You can also get support from the [SCU website](#) or the [Zoom Help Center](#) website.

For SCU network and computing support, contact the SCU Technology Help Desk at techdesk@scu.edu or 408-554-5700. They can provide support for MySCU Portal, Eduroam, Duo, hardware and software issues, and more.

Respect for All

It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students of all backgrounds bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of all identities and perspectives. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you.

Wellness

I know you will do the best you can in this class (and all of your classes); however, it should never be at the expense of your own mental and physical health and your overall well-being. Jesuit education is grounded in *cura personalis*, concern for the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. What does this mean for you? Be kind to others, and more importantly, be kind to yourself. Attend to your sleep (quantity and quality); drink lots of water; move; get outside; and pay attention to beauty that isn't coming to you on a screen. Eat good food, laugh, enjoy friends and family, look for opportunities to connect with others in new ways, pray, meditate, or otherwise attend to your spirit. And ask for help, even if you don't think you need it. Lots of folks, including me, are here to support you. It's never too late to reach out, and I am committed to helping you.

SCU has many resources and programs to support you. These resources may be especially helpful:

Wellness Center

The Wellness center provides resources to aid and promote student well-being across the eight dimensions of wellness, including student peer groups for healthful living, violence prevention, and recovery.

CAPS

Santa Clara students are provided confidential counseling sessions at no cost through Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Students have access to clinically appropriate, short-term therapy; group therapy; and other resources for care. A new 24/7 support line is also available: 408-554-5220.

SCU Culture of Care

If you are concerned for the mental or physical welfare of one of your peers, the Office of Student Life Culture of Care website provides resources for recognizing and helping someone in distress.

Academic Concerns

If you are concerned with your progress in this class, please contact me so that we can find solutions together.

- [The HUB Writing Center](#) (Writing and Public Speaking)

Grief Resources and Support

An important part of healing from loss is the support of others. The SCU community is committed to supporting you during this difficult time. If you need to miss class or foresee being late on upcoming deliverables due to bereavement, please let me know immediately so we can make appropriate arrangements. If you need additional support, you can contact the Dean of Student's Office at (408) 554-4583 or email dso@scu.edu. Staff in DSO can notify other faculty and/or campus supervisors on your behalf and connect you with helpful campus resources.

Gender Inclusive Language

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you go by a name different from what is on the class roster, please let me know. Using correct gender pronouns is important to me, so I encourage you to share your pronouns with me and correct me if I make a mistake. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. For more on personal pronouns see www.mypronouns.org

Land Acknowledgement

Santa Clara University occupies the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ohlone and Muwekma Ohlone people.
