

**RSOC157: RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS AND CONTEMPORARY MORAL
ISSUES: (CORE: RELIGION THEOLGY AND CULTURE 3)**

Kenna 304

Fall 2015

Pre requisite: RTC1 & RTC2 (in Sequence) and completion of 88 Units to get RTC3 Credit

Instructor: Prof. Teresia Hinga

Religious Studies Department

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-3 or By appointment

Keeping Connected: Please Schedule Office Hours at least once before end of week 5

RSOC 157 Across The Curriculum:

The Course is and RTC 3 and also counts for the Following Pathways

- 1. Applied Ethics Pathway**

For details about the Core and Pathways : Please see the link below

<http://scu.edu/core>

Course Description:

The course will explore selected moral issues that face humanity today and *critically analyze* the responses given to these issues by the **selected religious** traditions including but not limited to the **Christian tradition(s)**. Issues to be analyzed will include issues pertaining to human life (eg **Euthanasia, Health care ethics**) **Issues pertaining to Human sexuality (eg gender and human rights, Same sex relationships)** and **global issues** (e.g. Poverty, War, Environmental degradation). Given the **cultural** and religious diversity that characterizes the contemporary world, the central approach will be to explore *diverse perspectives* and compare and contrast the responses to selected moral issues from the perspective of *more than one religio-cultural context*. The goal is to highlight **points of difference and points of similarity and even map common grounds in efforts to forge morally viable responses selected issues**. The goal is also to gain insights into the **depth , complexities** and even intersectionality of the ethical issues of our time and the correspondingly complex responses to these issues . Through the course, students will also gain an analytical understanding of the **role /impact of religion as humans, individually or collectively navigate these complexities.**

Specific Objectives/Learning outcomes

Students who successfully complete this class will:

- 1. Demonstrate an analytical awareness and appreciation of various ethical systems/ and theories** (eg Utilitarianism, Theories of Justice , the Human Rights Paradigm) and how these are applied in the navigation of *ethical reasoning and decision* making surrounding the **selected contemporary moral issues and dilemmas**

Course Requirements: (AKA) Means of achieving/assessing goals or learning outcomes:

1. **Attendance** : This will be monitored routinely and will comprise **5%** of final grade (see also Policy on Attendance Below)
2. **Adequate preparation for class by a critical and annotated reading of the required texts prior to class and Active Participation**
 - a) Evidence of preparation should be manifested in the students' ability to respond to questions in class or in preparation for class both **oral and written**. In order to monitor this preparedness, students will be asked to **submit written answers to specific** questions based on the readings. They will also be called upon in class /or otherwise to respond to questions based on their analytical readings of the texts
 - b) **Active participation** in class discussions both in structured group work and voluntary suggestion of ideas or voluntary answering of questions in class discussions. Participation will be **evaluated for quality as well as quantity** of your contribution to discussions and other class activities designed to facilitate understanding of the issues at stake. Your contributions should not only **show that you understand the issues at stake**, they should also manifest your analytical/critical skills as defined very explicitly in Keeley , in "*Asking the Right Questions*". (see excerpts on Camino) The interventions and contributions you make should also be marked by a *sense of collegiality* and mutual respect for all involved in RSOC 157 as a **learning community**. Participating involves both **engaged and analytical listening** to what is being said as well as **engaged and analytical speech** geared towards "**moving the conversation along**" (See also paragraph on class procedures below) **10%**
3. **Midterm/learning outcome exercise** Format TBA (**25%**)
4. **Group class presentation**: Topics of relevance to the course will be selected for group discussion in consultation with the instructor. The group will **research the topic** and present its findings in class. The mode of presentation will be optional but could be in the form of a debate and could include audio visual aids , research and presentation of a specific faith community and its response to a specific moral issues etc. Each person will receive the grade **jointly earned by the group**. For each of the group presentation, the presenting group will submit a 3 page analytical **synthesis of their topic**, how they researched it, what they found out in the process, matters arising etc.) .The rest of the class will act as **active discussants** and **respondents** to the presentation, asking appropriate questions and contributing to the debate /discussion in an analytical manner . **NB When groups are presenting , active participation as defined in 3 above will be particularly crucial. It will be mapped and evaluated accordingly . 20%**
5. **2 Analytical response papers** **Minimum 3 Maximum 5** double spaced typewritten pages. These should reveal your critical engagement with an issues or issues (limit to 2) arising out of the readings and class discussions around the selected themes. This should be the opportunity personally to explore an issue raised through the readings that **intrigues you**, by analytically questioning or commenting on it (see course goals/objectives above). See also excerpts from the book : Asking the Right questions on how to **identify issues in other people's work or name and articulate issues in your own writings. 20%** .

is a serious issue and stands to be penalized. Students should therefore be aware of the strong sanctions against plagiarism and academic dishonesty. For a full presentation of University policies concerning plagiarism, see: <http://www.scu.edu/studentlife/resources/academicintegrity>. If proven, charges of plagiarism could also result in **an automatic F for the course**. Consequently, students are encouraged to develop a strong sense of the need for academic honesty at all times, a fact that is self-rewarding both in the short and long run

Policy on Attendance:

Class attendance is **mandatory** except for emergencies, which should be explained to me preferably *in advance* and *in writing*. Only those students with *excusable absences* will be allowed to do make up assignments. Note that frequent (*more than 2*) **unexplained absences** will reduce your overall graded by a **letter grade** (eg from B to C). More than **4 unexplained absences** invite an **"F" for the whole course**. Even when you have an excusable absence, it is your *responsibility to catch up with* what you missed during your absence.

Disability Accommodation Policy:

"To receive academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact *Disability Resources* located in Benson 216. The phone numbers is 408 554 4109. Please contact Disabilities office in good time, at any rate no later **than 6 PM Thursday week 1** in order to ensure that you get the accommodations that you need in a timely and *meaningful manner*. See also *appendix one for current SCU special accommodations Policy as of September 2015*

Special note: Since this class meets late evening, it is advisable that you spare some time for your snack or dinner etc. **before class rather than during class** to avoid undue disruption in class. Water, juice, or soft drinks **OK in class**.

Class Procedures:

The course will be presented through a **combination of lectures and discussion** in order to achieve the stated goals: **Audiovisual material** where possible and applicable will also be used. Other learning activities, **including group discussions** will be used. Students are **encouraged to cultivate an inquiring mind, bold enough** to raise **appropriate** questions for discussion. However, this should be done with a spirit of **sensitivity and respect** for all involved in the learning situation. To this end, students are encouraged to cultivate a **spirit of collegiality and accountability to the whole class at all times to ensure success of the class**. Students' **initiative** in keeping *tuned in by reading around and beyond the assigned readings*, sharing information pertinent to the course and a general sense of responsibility for the success of the class over and above the *minimum requirements of the class is highly encouraged and is self-rewarding*.

Connecting the dots

As indicated in the course goals, a major objective of the course is *to nurture awareness of complexities and depth of ethical issues facing humanity today*. Overall, a major part of the goal is to create a context in and through which students can explore their *own analytical responses to issues of diversity and justice among human beings* and be able critically to analyze those attitudes in light of their examination of the religious dimensions of human existence. Students are expected *analytically to connect the dots between the text book analysis of Religion/ethics and lived realities* of our diverse and complex world. Opportunities for such connection include the *scheduled response/reflection papers*. They also include *group project and written*

September 30th Background of Choice :Ethics, Law and Moral Reasoning : The Case of Human Rights

- i) Religion and Law and Ethics: Religion and the Cross-Cultural Legitimacy of Human Rights :
- ii) Gender , Religion and Human Rights In Contemporary Ethics

Readings: Readings Larry May: Essays by Abdullahi

Larry May: Essay by Bunch: Women's Rights as Human Rights

Week 3: Making Moral Choices : More Theoretical Background
October 5th

- a) Making Moral choices, and responding to moral Dilemmas: *The Principle of Double Effects.*
- b) Group and individual morality: *Occasion of evil & Cooperation with evil.*
(Video Excerpts: TBA)
Readings : TBA

October 7th

- c) Making Moral choices: *The Role of the Conscience,*

Stivers Case Study Readings : Case Study from Stivers: Rigor and Responsibility

Video : More of Gandhi or Soldiers of Conscience

Week 4: Introducing Issues Surrounding Human life:

12th October Ethical issues at the Genesis of life :Cross Cultural Perspectives

Readings: Larry May: *Applied Ethics:* Essays by Noonan Warren and LA fleur P

Stivers Case Studies : A Matter of Life and Death &/or How Many Children

Video: Roe V Wade

October 14th Issues of Human Life: Ethics at the End of life:

Issues pertaining to the end of Life: Euthanasia , Letting Die and the Right to die

Readings :

Larry May Essays : By Rachels, and Battin (On Camino)

Stivers Case Study :Keeping the Doors Open

Video: World Apart

Readings : From Larry May: Essay by Becker : Buddhist Views of Suicide and Euthanasia

Week 8 : The Morality of War ?

November 9th : The Just War tradition and Its Alternatives
Readings : From Larry May : Essay By Douglas Lackey: On Camino PDF
Stivers Case: Vietnams Legacy
Video Resource : Soldiers of Conscience

November 11th : Religion and Non Violent Paths to Peace
Readings : Christopher Subverting Hatred: chapter 1 2, 4

Video resource: Gandhi

Week 9 Global Issues Continued: The Morality of War Concluded :

16th Subverting Hatred : The Challenge and Promise of Religion
Readings :

- i) Subverting Hatred: The Challenge and Promise of Religion
Readings: Larry May: (essay by MLK :Letter from the Birmingham Jail
Smith Christopher: Subverting Hatred: Chapters : Introduction , 2
6,7, ,8
Video: More of Gandhi or Equivalent: *eg As we forgive*)
Group 4: Religion, War and the Quest for Just Peace

18th November Second Response paper due

Towards Global Ethic : The Case of Parliament of World Religions

Readings: Pdf on the Global Ethic

Video : Fremont or Parliament of world Religions
Thanks Giving week: Recess (no Classes)

Week 10: Course synthesis: Class Reflections on Religion and Ethics

November 30th :

- a) Any unfinished Business from week 9
- b) **Class Reflections on Religion and Ethics (based on preliminary abstracts of their chosen book for review) All as resource persons**

December 2nd : Last day of Class Conclusions , course wrap up:

- a) Reviews and Revisions: Preparing The Final paper
- b) Course Wrap Up
- a) Students' Questions

Final Paper: Due Friday exam Week In my Mail Box on or before 4:30PM as well as on Camino :A Drop Box will be posted by Monday exam week :

Appendix 2: SCU Special Needs Accommodation Policies

Syllabus Statements on Disabilities Resources, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination (Title IX Resources), and Reporting Requirements

September 2015

Disabilities Syllabus Statement

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, www.scu.edu/disabilities as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with me during my office hours. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy or parenting may be eligible for accommodations.

While I am happy to assist you, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

Title IX Syllabus Statement

Santa Clara University upholds a zero tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence or stalking, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please go to www.scu.edu/studentlife and click on the link for the University's Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie at [408-554-3043](tel:408-554-3043) or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.com

Statement for Syllabi on Reporting Practices (adapted, with permission, from Scott Lewis's SCU presentation on Title IX)