

TESP 187: Christ and Catholic Theology

Fall 2015

TR 10:20 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Kenna 212

Instructor:

Sean Gross

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Office hours TR 12 – 1 p.m. in Kenna 311

Course Description:

This Religion 3 course focuses on a central element of Catholic theology: the nature of Christ. Christian theology includes treatment of two major types of Christology – Christology from above, which looks at the divinity of Christ, and Christology from below, which considers the humanity of Christ. The bulk of our time will be spent looking at the humanity of Christ, but early in the course we will explore the dual nature of the second person of the Trinity.

This course does not presume affiliation with or deep knowledge of the Catholic – or even Christian – tradition, as the texts we consider should be adequately engaging and clear regardless of previous exposure to the concepts and topics at hand. After looking at Jesus and Bible, Jesus and history, and Jesus and ethics, we will turn to a number of different contemporary Christologies. As we examine these different articulations of the person of Jesus Christ, we will keep in mind the contemporary context and the ramifications of particular understandings of Christ for Christians and non-Christians alike.

Objectives

Students will:

- 1 Identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions
- 2 Evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society

Texts

The following texts are required, and are available at the SCU Bookstore.

Borg, Marcus J. *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time: The Historical Jesus & the Heart of Contemporary Faith*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994.

Johnson, Elizabeth A. *Consider Jesus: Waves of Renewal in Christology*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1990.

Additional course readings, recommended and required, will be available on Camino. Individuals making single copies for their private use are not required to pay copyright fees.

Structure:

The course is divided into three units. The first unit focuses on Jesus and the Bible (with an emphasis on the notion of the historical Jesus), Jesus and history (with a focus on the idea of the Christ of faith), and Jesus and ethics. The first unit provides the introductory material needed to complete the two objectives for RTC 3 courses, which are met in units two and three, as well as through discussion throughout the quarter. The second unit turns to voices that could be said to be at the margins of theological consideration, including feminist Christology, liberation Christology, and queer Christology. The third and final unit of the course invites students to participate as members of the “Council of Santa Clara,” which gives each student the charge to present an image of Jesus they have been studying throughout the course. In addition, each student will explain both how that image connects with a contemporary issue, and also articulate the ethical implications of that image for Christians and non-Christians. This final element of the presentations is one of several opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of objectives 3.1 and 3.2.

Requirements and Grading:

Participation	30%
Précis of final paper, due October 15	5%
Midterm Exam, held October 22	20%
Book/article review, due November 3	10%
Class presentation, Weeks 9-10	10%
Final paper, due at noon on December 11	25%

Regular participation in this course is vital for appropriation of the course material. We will discuss how studying the person of Jesus Christ can contribute insights to questions in contemporary society. The diversity of perspectives among both students and the authors under study will give us great resources for ethical reflection. Satisfies Objectives 3.1 and 3.2 for RTC 3 courses.

The précis of your final paper is a short paper proposal. It should be at least one page, and it is designed to encourage you to think about your final paper early in the quarter, since the book/article review and class presentation are linked with the final assignment, too. Please include the image of Jesus you intend to explore, the contemporary issue you plan to link with that image of Jesus, and at least four sources (fully cited) that will help you with your paper.

The midterm is your chance to demonstrate mastery of the material associated with the first unit of the course, which centers on the historical Jesus, Jesus and ethics, and early church debates about the nature of Christ. This first unit provides important foundational content for the remainder of the course. Having mastered this material, students will transition to the second and third units, which will assess their ability to meet Objectives 3.1 and 3.2.

The five-page book/article review is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your

ability to summarize the main points of a book or article, and then to offer a critique of the work. If you opt for a book review, simply write a summary and critique of a book related to the image of Jesus you chose for your final paper. If you choose to write an article review, you must also provide an annotated bibliography with three additional sources (for a total of four sources). More details to follow.

The 15-minute presentation showcases your independent research on one of the many images of Jesus that have been advanced in the Catholic (and broader Christian) tradition. Good preparation for this presentation will provide a smooth transition into writing the final paper, as the presentation also requires that you link your image of Jesus with a contemporary issue and offer insights into the ethical ramifications of that Christology for Christians and non-Christians. Satisfies Objectives 3.1 and 3.2 for RTC 3 courses.

The 10-12-page final paper is designed to demonstrate mastery of Objectives 3.1 and 3.2 (listed on p. 1 of this syllabus). It is due via email on Friday, December 11. The paper consists of three sections:

- 1 Using secondary sources, identify and describe the Christology you have chosen. If you would like to cite Scripture passages aligned with this image of Jesus, that is certainly acceptable.
- 2 Select and describe a contemporary issue that can be put into dialogue with your image of Jesus. After naming and describing the issue, explain the connection between the issue and the image of Jesus you have chosen. If you focus on the image of Jesus as liberator, a pertinent issue could be sex trafficking or political/military oppression, to name a couple of examples.
- 3 In the final section of your paper, assess the ethical implications of the image of Jesus you have chosen for Christians and non-Christians.

Calendar

Unit One (Weeks 1-5) – Who Do You Say That I Am? Classical Theological Positions and Sources

Part One: Mapping Biblical Portraits of Jesus

For September 24: Read the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of John

Part Two: The Historical Jesus According to the Jesus Seminar

For September 29: Read pp. vii – 88 of *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*

For October 1: Read pp. 96-137 of *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*

Part Three: The Christ of Faith as Examined in Early Church Controversies

For October 6: Read Gerhard Lohfink, “The So-Called Historical Jesus,” in *Jesus of Nazareth* and selections from “Against Heresies” by Irenaeus of Lyons (on Camino)

For October 8: Read “Eastern Christianity” in Justo González’s *The Story of Christianity* (on Camino)

Part Four: Jesus and Ethics

For October 13: Read selected writings by John Stuart Mill (Camino)

For October 15: Read selected writings by W.D. Ross (Camino)

The 1-2-page précis of your final paper is due today. Please send it to me via email by 10 a.m.

For October 20: Read the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) and selections from *Just Peacemaking, Jesus and Virtue Ethics*, and *Go and Do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics* (Camino)

Midterm on October 22

For October 29: Review and Wrap-Up of Unit 1

Unit Two (Weeks 6-8) – That Which He Has Not Taken Up, He Has Not Saved – Looking to Unexamined Voices

For October 29: Read pp. 1-15 and 35-63 in *Consider Jesus*

For November 3: Read Ch. 6 of Pope Francis’ “Laudato Si”

Article/Book review due via email by 11:59 p.m. on November 3

For November 5: Read pp. 97-126 in *Consider Jesus*, and also chapter 7 in *Christology from the Margins* (Camino)

For November 10: Read chapters 4 and 5 in *Christology from the Margins* (Camino)

For November 12: Read chapters 8 and 10 in *Christology from the Margins*
Unit Three – The Council of Santa Clara

In Weeks 9-10, students will take turns presenting on the Christology they chose to focus on, sharing the image of Christ from the perspective of the author(s) whose texts were consulted for the research, stating which contemporary issue they explored through the lens of that Christology, and assessing the ethical implications of that image of Jesus for Christians and non-Christians today. Students are expected to be in attendance for all presentations, and to be a good audience for their fellow classmates. Each student will field questions after presenting, so listen intently and be prepared to ask the presenter for more information or to offer comments. Participation in the Council of Santa Clara constitutes a significant portion of the participation grade.

November 17: Student Presentations

November 19: Student Presentations

Thanksgiving Week

December 1: Student Presentations

December 3: Student Presentations, Wrap-up and Review

Final Papers are due via email by noon on Friday, December 11.

Policies

Attendance:

Participation constitutes a significant portion of the grade, and it is therefore critical that you miss as little classroom time as possible. That being said, things come up. If you are sick, please stay home and get better, but notify me via email no later than 9:30 a.m. on the day you will be missing class. If it is some sort of medical emergency, or there is a funeral, please be prepared to offer evidence to excuse the absence. Students missing 4 or more classes will automatically face a letter-grade reduction (at a minimum), and only two unexcused absences are allowed. Two tardies constitute one unexcused absence, so please be sure to get to class on time. That way, we will be able to focus on the work we will do together instead of facing distractions.

Food:

Yes. You may eat, but please be considerate of others. Please be mindful of both the sound and fragrance associated with the food and drink you bring to class, and do pick up after yourself if you make a mess.

Breaks:

We will take a ten-minute break during class, but if the break is abused (i.e., if students regularly return late), it will be shortened or taken away. If you need to use the restroom outside of break time, please quietly excuse yourself and return in a timely fashion.

A word on academic integrity:

The university has published materials related to academic integrity, including the following resource: <http://scu.edu/studentlife/resources/upload/Academic-Integrity-brochure-2014.pdf>

As a student at Santa Clara University, you are likely familiar with the three Cs: conscience, competence, and compassion. These values are a helpful way to think about academic integrity. By going against one's conscience, one fails to demonstrate how much has been learned in a class (competence) by taking the easy way out. With the opportunity to attain a world-class education that is centered on educating the whole person, maintaining integrity in all spheres of life will help to foster compassion for a world that so desperately needs it. Cutting corners now serves no one, and violations of the university's academic integrity policy may result in a failing grade in this course. To the three Cs, let's add a fourth: citation. Any work that is used to bolster your argument but which did not originate from your own brilliant mind must be cited. If you have questions about this, please do not hesitate to ask.

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 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)

While I want you to feel comfortable coming to me with issues you may be struggling with or concerns you may be having, please be aware that there are some reporting requirements that are part of my job at Santa Clara University.

For example, if you inform me of an issue of harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, I will keep the information as private as I can, but I am required to

bring it to the attention of the institution's EEO and Title IX Coordinator. If you inform me that you are struggling with an issue that may be resulting in, or caused by, traumatic or unusual stress, I will likely inform the campus Student Care Team (SCU CARE).

If you would like to reach out directly to the Student Care Team for assistance, you can contact them at www.scu.edu/osl/report. If you would like to talk to the Office of EEO and Title IX directly, they can be reached at 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. Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to the Office of Student Life (OSL), Campus Safety Services, and local law enforcement. For confidential support, contact the Counseling and Psychological Services office (CAPS), the YWCA, or a member of the clergy (for example, a priest or minister).

Finally, please be aware that if, for some reason, our interaction involves a disruptive behavior, a concern about your safety or the safety of others, or potential violation of University policy, I will inform the Office of Student Life. The purpose of this is to keep OSL apprised of incidents of concern, and to ensure that students can receive or stay connected to the academic support and student wellness services they need.