

SYLLABUS

TESP 4:27656 Theology, Ethics & Spirituality (Area 2)

Mon-Wed-Fri 9:15 a.m. to 10:20 a.m.

FALL 2015

Prerequisites: None

This course fulfills Santa Clara's Core Requirement for RTC 1

Instructor: Janet Giddings

Office: Kenna Hall 305

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 10:45 to 12 noon and by appointment

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Classroom: Kenna Hall 109

Course Description (SCU)

A theological examination of the Christian tradition covering such topics as religious experience and the meaning of God; Jesus experience and the meaning of God; Jesus in the Gospels; the development and history of the Christian churches; the relevance of Christianity in the 21st century global world.

Welcome from Professor Giddings,

I welcome students interested in exploring Christian tradition from its roots and beginnings to its various expressions today. This course introduces students to the tradition and practice of Christian theology, ethics, and spirituality. We will explore how Christian tradition was/is developed and expressed through both intellectual and practical ways in different parts of the world. Theology and spirituality of the Jesus Movement (early Christians) is scrutinized through a close reading and study of the *Gospel of Mark*; Jesus and his Jewish tradition is explored in *The Misunderstood Jew*; ethical questions posed in *Conflict, Community, and Honor: 1 Peter* are considered and debated; and *God at the Margins*, allows us to look at how Christianity has developed by people on the margins of societies.

Purpose of the Core Course in Religious Studies

At Santa Clara University, the study of religious belief and practice in various cultural contexts (including your own) is one of the central features of the Core Curriculum. This is an essential part of Jesuit education. The study of religion at Santa Clara is not about making the student believe certain teachings or limiting their inquiry to one tradition. We want you to think critically about religious experiences, practices, and beliefs, including your own religious identity (or other ways you identify your beliefs) and those of others.

Courses in Area 2 deal with three dimensions of "faith seeking understanding," a phrase that has classically described theology as a discipline. Theology seeks to articulate the truth of faith; ethics, the implications of faith in human life and activity; and spirituality, the practice and understanding of the experience of faith. All three dimensions are pursued in dialogue with culture in its various forms of discourse, and all three aim specifically to situate the Jewish or Christian faith tradition within contemporary approaches to the study of religion.

Course Goals

1. Students will be able to express a critical understanding of the theological foundations of Christian tradition.
2. Students will be able to compare and contrast at least two different cultural and/or theological expressions of Christian tradition.
3. Students will be able to describe and evaluate the positioning of Christianity, Catholicism in particular, within the pluralism of the United States.

Religious Studies Department Goals

1. Students question and probe religion for what it reveals about human beings, their diverse societies, traditions, convictions and aspirations.
2. Students use diverse materials and demonstrate formal postures of inquiry into religion and in order to go beyond a simple description of religion to a reflective engagement with it.
3. Students propose and investigate the "big questions" --that is, the meta-reflective questions that ask how and why we ask the questions that we do about religion.

Core Curriculum Learning Goals and Objectives (LGOs)

1a. Students will be able to describe and compare the central religious ideas and practices from several traditions or within one, and from at least two globally distinct regions. (Knowledge of Global Cultures; Complexity; Ambiguity)

1b. Students will be able to use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs and the religious dimensions of human existence. (Critical thinking; Complexity; Reflection)

Study Units

1. Theology in the *Gospel of Mark*; and selected theologians
2. Jesus and his Jewish tradition
3. Spiritual exemplars
4. The environment, global-warming; the Pope and Silicon Valley
5. Christian plurality: past and present
6. Current Christian communities in conflict

Required Texts (Note: You must bring books to class if indicated on the Schedule)

Elliott, John H. *Conflict, Community, and Honor: 1Peter in Social-Scientific Perspective*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2007.

Levine, Amy-Jill. *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*. New York: HarperCollins, 2006.

Light, Aimee Upjohn. *God at the Margins: Making Theological Sense of Religious Plurality*. Minnesota: Anselm Academic, 2014.

The New Oxford Annotated Bible. NRSV. Or, the online Bible Gateway website. If you do not have this Bible, you may use your own; however, the NRSV is preferred. If you use the online source, you must print out the Gospel of Mark and bring it to class for discussions.

Online: There will be study guides and other information, short films, etc

Assessment: 100 points possible

20: Informed participation: means in-class participation based on your reading. Students are required to participate regularly in class discussions. Full credit will be given for active, *informed* participation directly concerning the text, film, or website under consideration. While the instructor will occasionally solicit and/or accept personal points of view to begin or encourage discussion, it is essential to the course of study to discuss assignments and/or questions raised on the assignment topics. Only students who consistently demonstrate a close reading of the homework will receive an ‘A’ in this area. (LGO 1a, 1b)

Homework: There will be 5 short homework papers on reading assignments, which include, 1) a 2-page paper critical reflection on being misunderstood and, 2) a 2-page critical response to our study of Christianity and the environment based upon the Pope’s *Laudato Si*, 3) responses to chapters in, *God at the Margins*. Homework is not graded but must meet the assignment to be accepted. Not turning in homework will deduct points from your participation grade. Each assignment is worth: 5 points @ 25 % of participation grade. Homework papers are turned in at class time. (LGO 1a, 1b; RS Dept goals 1,2,3)

20: Test: on theology; Gospel; Misunderstood Jew; and may consist of short answers, identification, and short essay. A large test booklet is required for this in-class test. (LGO 1a, 1b; and RS Dept goals 1,2,3)

20: Spirituality: Research and critical analysis of 1 spiritual exemplar in Christian tradition. This assignment is either a paper or power point. Either must include a Works Cited list. This assignment is uploaded into Camino. (LGO 1b, and RS Dept goal 1)

20: Christian Encounters Paper: This paper will require a larger amount of research, analytical skill and keen writing, which demonstrates proper format and serious scholarship. A Christian group from two distinct global regions will be researched: history, religious practice and ideas will be critically compared and contrasted. This paper requires scholarly sources, both journal articles and books. The paper is to be uploaded into Camino. (LGO 1a, and RS Dept goals 1, 2, 3)

20: Group argument: requires a complete comprehension and understanding of the moral issues in *1 Peter*. The argument will follow proper form: Position, 2 premises, applied reasoning, consider the opposing view and refute, and conclude. This assignment requires scholarly sources in addition to the assigned reading. (LGO 1a, 1b; RS Dept goal 2)

*In fulfillment of **Core learning goal 1a**, paper, presentations, and tests will ask you to demonstrate a grasp of central religious ideas and practices of Christianity commensurate with the material covered in the course. The student will demonstrate an understanding of at least two different expressions of Christian tradition from distinct regions of the globe. (These also fulfill all course learning objectives).*

1. Theology: Students will research and coordinate critical information on one theologian who impacted the development of Christianity either through accepted or rejected ideas and concepts. This may be a group assignment. Scholarly sources required. Presentation given to class.
2. Spirituality: students will research and write on one spiritual exemplar. This assignment may be either a paper or power point. This assignment is uploaded to Camino.
3. Test: Theology; Mark; Misunderstood Jew: written test may consist of short answer, identification, and essay.
4. Christian Encounters paper: This paper will require a larger amount of research, analytical skill, keen writing, which demonstrates proper format and serious scholarship. The paper requires 6-7 pages of writing; and, a Works Cited/Works Consulted page. This paper is to be uploaded to Camino.

*In fulfillment of **Core learning goal 1b**, the paper and quiz questions will ask you to reflect critically on your own beliefs or thoughts about the religious dimensions of human existence that are raised by a study of the Christian tradition. (These also fulfill all Religious Studies department learning goals).*

- 5) Argument: This allows the student to critically determine a solution to a moral issue within Christian tradition.
- 6) Critical Reflection: is personal. You will reflect on ways you may have been misunderstood in regards to your religious tradition or journey. You will make an analogy to ways Jesus was misunderstood.

Various types of paper assignments:

1. Response: In writing the critical response papers you will demonstrate a grasp of the central ideas and/or problems in the assigned text. This is a paper to show sound analytic skill, critical consideration of the text, the people, ideas, practices, and or challenges involved in the topic at hand. You will be graded on proper introduction, a concise summary, thesis statement, use of at least one quotation to provide context and that supports your thesis.

2. Critical reflection paper: is personal. You will reflect on ways you have been misunderstood in regards to your own religious tradition and journey. You will make analogies to ways Jesus was misunderstood.

4. Research paper: Research sources are scholarly, E.g. Journal essays or books. If you are not certain as to whether or not your source is appropriate for university level research, please see your professor. The paper should integrate research into the study/thesis of the paper.

- Note: If the professor agrees to accept a late paper, the paper will lose one letter grade for each day it is late. Meeting deadlines is essential to success in this course.

5. Argument: You will make a clear and logical argument on a point made in the assigned text: 1 Peter. The student will argue as to how Christians on the margins can gain acceptance, have better access, or any other argument pertinent to those who suffer from being shoved to the margins. The argument must follow: Claim; Premises (2); Warrant; Opposing view/Counterclaim; Rebuttal; Conclusion.

Assessment criteria:

- “A” work is excellent. An “A” paper is focused with an explicit thesis statement. It exhibits a clear, effective and organized line of thought as well as thorough understanding of the material. It has no English usage problems, anticipates possible objections to its point of view and/or supporting arguments, and frequently provides pertinent citations to make its case. The writer’s voice is firm, confident, and clear.
- All papers will follow MLA Writing Style Guidelines and Formatting; 7TH Edition. You may find MLA format at the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#).
- If the professor allows a rewrite of any required paper, corrections on the original paper may not indicate ALL the transgressions demonstrated in the paper. If a student is given the *opportunity* to rewrite a paper, it is her/his responsibility to correct any and all problems with the paper. A rewrite may or may not result in a higher grade.
- Papers are deducted points when there is a digression in any of the areas mentioned above and including errors in syntax, grammar and spelling, punctuation, awkward or nebulous writing; poor organization; carelessness, or food on the paper.
- A finished paper is a final draft. This means you have edited the paper and **stapled** it. Unstapled papers may be either rejected or a **10% reduction** in grade will be applied. If a paper is assigned for upload to Camino, the paper must be uploaded prior to class meeting.

Grading: 6-point scale

A 95-100	B 77-82	
A- 89-94	B- 71-76	
B+ 83-88	C+ 67-70	and so on

Attendance Policy

Students should come to each class prepared to 1) be present for the full 65 minutes we are together in our classroom, and 2) contribute to and support the learning community for which we are all responsible. These two statements guide the instructor's attendance policy.

Consistent attendance is essential to the course dynamic and to a learning environment. Consistent absence will require a meeting with the professor to discuss whether you need to be referred to a supportive campus department to help you achieve success in the course. Remember, your best way to be successful in this course is to communicate with your instructor.

Generally, legitimate excuses for an absence are illness, or a family emergency. Both will need to be supported by appropriate documentation. A note from the Cowell Student Health Center does not automatically excuse your absence. As a courtesy, please inform the professor when you know you will not be in class. Thank you.

If you registered into the course on the second or a subsequent day of class, you must meet with the professor in her office to go over what you missed. . It is student responsibility to ensure meeting the professor once you are enrolled in the course.

Emergency and/or necessary absences will result in the student making up missed in-class work to be determined by the professor. Therefore, even though there are classes missed for good reason, the student must demonstrate an understanding of, and produce paperwork that fulfills the missed in-class or out of class assignment(s).

All students must be in class for student presentations. Students may not use their one 'free' absence to miss class during presentations. Absences during presentations will result in a half-grade reduction in participation grade unless absence is justified/documented and excused with the professor.

Disruptive Behavior

Tardiness is disruptive. Tardiness is disruptive to the professor and students. It can distract some students from concentration and can challenge them to regain a focus. It is

a major distraction for the professor. Consistent tardiness will result in a reduction of your grade. Two tardy's = warning.

3 tardy = loss of 20% participation points 4 = loss of 50% of participation grade

5 tardy= drop one entire grade level on the FINAL GRADE.

Consistent restroom breaks during class may result in the same consequences. Please use the restroom prior to class. If you have a medical challenge that makes it necessary to leave the classroom regularly, please make certain the professor is made aware and the professor will work with the student in the appropriate manner.

Disability Policy

To receive academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources located in Benson 216. The phone number is 408-554-4109 or inquiries can be emailed to Robin Cole, Administrative Associate, rcole@scu.edu. Students must register with Disabilities Resources and provide documentation of a disability to Disabilities Resources prior to receiving academic accommodations. Your professor will accommodate your registered requirements. Please communicate with her in the beginning of the quarter.

Academic Integrity

The instructor expects your moral standard to fit the Jesuit mission and the work you produce will be your own. When you consult or borrow the ideas of others you must give them credit by citing their work. Plagiarizing will result in an "F" for the entire assignment and may lead to more serious consequences if consistent. Please download the policy in pdf at: www.scu.edu/studentlife/resources/upload/Academic-Integrity-Policy-and-Protocol.pdf

Hub Writing Center

You may be asked to take a paper to the Writing Center and work with one of the excellent tutors there. Also, you may want to consult with the Center on your own to update your writing skill. There is drop-in assistance as well. Located in Benson, Lower Level, Room 022. Phone: 1-408-551-3286.

NOTE: If an extra credit opportunity is offered, the credit will be used at the professor's discretion and will not erase consequences of absences, consistent tardiness, or failure to meet assignments.

Technology use and other classroom protocol:

- Laptops: NO
- Quizzes: No bathroom breaks; phones put away/off.
- No taping of any kind may occur without explicit written permission from the professor or Disability Resources.
- Phone or other device texting in class: NO. If this is a problem that occurs more than once, your participation grade will be deducted 50% and you will be asked to leave class.

LEARNING SHOULD BE FUN

Generally, most students perform as scholars at SCU. I assume you will as well. My classes are friendly and I appreciate students who work within a friendly environment. Please be respectful and follow the syllabus. I look forward to working with you and hope you will enjoy this course. Please come see me with any questions or confusions!

Prof Giddings