



RSOC 136 Religion in Latin America
Religious Studies, Santa Clara University
Fall Quarter 2016
TTH 8:30 -10:10 Kenna 306

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Religion in Latin America (43476)

This course develops intellectual tools to explore with depth and clarity the recent religious pluralism in Latin America and the Caribbean. Further, it offers us a place to consider the role that faith and belief play in people's lives and culture. The course situates and examines distinct historical, socio-cultural contexts, political and economic processes in which various religious expressions have emerged. Understanding religion as generative, we will examine the foundations, theological themes, and processes of pre-Hispanic indigenous practices, Spanish colonial Catholicism, liberation theology, the recent growth of Protestantism with a focus on Pentecostalism, the contemporary praxis of Catholicism, the public emergence of native spiritualities, and diasporan religions of the Caribbean and Brazil.

Course offers critical analysis to ways various religious traditions construct knowledge and power, that is, inform/transform communities and identities. The course will critically appraise of the meaning of conversion: "What is conversion? Who converts and under what circumstances? How does conversion impact beliefs and actions? How are the political, economic and social effects of conversion multiple, complex and even counterintuitive? Students seeking RTC 3 credit must have completed RTC 2 and have at least 88 units.

This course is associated with the following Pathways: Human Rights in a Global World; Law & Social Justice; Justice and the Arts; Beauty; Politics and Religion.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PATHWAYS You can find information about Pathways on the Core Curriculum website <http://scu.edu/core> including specific Pathways, all courses associated with them, and the Reflection Essay prompt and rubric used to evaluate the final essay you will submit. <http://www.scu.edu/provost/ugst/core/pathways/resources/>

SAVE YOUR WORK FROM THIS CLASS

If you declare this Pathway, you may use a representative piece of work from this course as one of the Pathway materials you will upload via eCampus during your junior or senior year. Therefore, we recommend that you keep electronic copies of your work using Dropbox or Google Docs, in addition to saving copies on your own computer or flash drives. This may ensure you will have a range of choices for retrieving your saved files when you analyze and assemble your Pathway materials in preparation to write the Pathway reflection essay.

Course Goals

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. *Identify the geography, demographics and expressions of religious pluralism in Latin America/ the Caribbean in various historical periods;*
2. *Investigate and compare* distinct historical, socio-cultural contexts in Latin America and political and economic global processes in which various religions have emerged;
3. *Recognize, contrast and analyze* distinctions between Liberation Theology, Evangelical Protestantism, Pentecostalism, Indigenous and Afro-Diasporan religions;
4. *Evaluate* contributions of diverse religious expressions to Latin American lives;
5. *Evaluate and apply* insights from these studies to open-ended questions, (i.e. religion and identity formation; religion and power politics; conversion: who converts and under what circumstances) facing their personal lives and contemporary society.

Departmental Goals (adapted from RS "Description of the Three Levels."

1. Students questions 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 in order to go beyond simple description of religion to 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 we do about religion.

Departmental goals are imbedded in course goals.

Core Curriculum Learning Goals and Objectives

This course fulfills Santa Clara's Core Requirement for RTC 3

- 3.1 Be able to identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions. (Critical Thinking; Ethical Reasoning; Perspective);
- 3.2 Be able to evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society. (Critical Thinking; Religious Reflection)

Course Requirements

Consistent thoughtful active and written participation (15%, includes attendance and quizzes)

University level discourse, critical reflection, and designated in-class facilitating of course materials are required. Class preparation is a critical part of any course. The readings listed under each day's topics should be read before that class. They will provide the basis for our class discussion. On CAMINO, there is a class prep page that introduces you to the readings, offers questions and vocabulary to help you focus on the most important issues, and provides a Powerpoint slides for the day's lecture. Take a look at these before you do the reading so you know what to pay attention to; this will help you participate in class and prepare effectively for quizzes and exams. Occasionally, students will be asked at the beginning of class to identify author's main arguments, contributions and insights or will interview one another – an inventory of understanding assigned readings. Occasional reading quizzes will be distributed during the quarter. These quizzes will be brief and are intended to help you keep up with the readings; they will total 40% of your participation grade.

Three unexcused absences during the quarter will result in the drop of one letter grade. Three tardy attendances equal one absence.

Please note: Use of laptops or iPads as long as you are using them to do course-related work. The privilege of using these will be revoked if it becomes apparent you are using them for other purposes.

Student Presentations: 15%. Students will sign up for designated topics and present to class. You will have the choice of 1) taking responsibility for one of the readings/topics that are assigned on the syllabus; or 2) make a ten-minute presentation on a specific aspect of Religion in Latin America, which compliments and extends the day's reading; or 3) towards the end of the quarter, being on a panel around a specific topic based on distinct worldviews of diverse religions: What is conversion? How do religions interpret human suffering? Distinguish between faith, images of the human person and faith in various religions and the outcomes of these stances.

Topics and guidelines provided Week One, Day Two; topics and teams assigned Week Two. Student presentations will amplify, develop or illustrate particular class topic of that day, and make connections to religious, historical, political processes under discussion. Student led discussions or presentations will begin the third week.

Working groups of two people will be asked to take responsibility for one of the readings/topics that are assigned on the syllabus or a selected supplemental topic. All students are required to read the material; the group's task is to present a summary of the reading and lead a conversation around 2-3 critical questions raised by the article. The group is responsible to craft the following:

- a. a one-page summary of the author's argument;
- b. a description of the central evidence and/or analysis used by the author
- c. 2-3 questions that engage the course material thus far with the author's argument. (Refer to Bloom's taxonomy: #2, 3,4,6, comprehension, analysis, application, evaluation)

The group will introduce the article on the first day, and lead a follow-up discussion the second day. Please submit via e-mail the following to your professor one day before the class meeting: Names of group members,

title and author of the article. Divide the responsibilities as you decide is best. All may present or just one or two people. The group earns the same grade (15 of the 25 points for participation)

You will be asked to list and rank your choices during the second week of the quarter. If you are doing a presentation, you will produce your own research, which may be folded into your Final Inquiry Project, and will also work with co-researchers on teams to present your work with the class. Further guidelines on CAMINO.

2 nd week	List and rank research projects
3 rd week	Research projects/teams/presentation dates posted
Finals week	Individual research papers due.

Exams (20% and 20%) based on course texts and lecture material will be given on Thursday, Week 5 and a midterm of short essays will be given on Tuesday, Week 8. These exams are given to assess your comprehension of basic ideas. The first exam is designed to test for careful reading with attention to historical processes, key players and the construction of religious identities. The second exam is designed for you to demonstrate applied, analytical and comparative thinking.

Final Inquiry Project (30% Total: annotated bibliography 5%: paper 25%): A comprehensive, comparative and integrated essay evaluating an aspect of religion in Latin America as it relates to a particular contemporary question, 8-10 pages. Topic to be discussed with instructor by Week Seven. Proposal, with thesis and annotated bibliography, to be submitted Thursday, Week Eight.

There is a one 8-10 page research paper and class presentation. You may design your own research, but are encouraged to undertake a collaborative project in which you will select design and focus research of a contemporary issue: popular religion; conversion; OR topic that investigates astronomy, architecture, glyphs, dance, mythic characters from ancient texts, climate change and religious responses. You may include this research as part of your Final Inquiry Project.

Extra Credit

Extra credit opportunities are posted on-line on CAMINO. To receive extra credit, attend the event, write a 2-3 page summary and evaluation, and turn it in on CAMINO within one week of the event. (Papers on events attended during the 10th week of classes have to be submitted by Friday of that week). Points can only be counted if all regular assignments have been completed. Suggested activities include:

Policies:

Incompletes, Plagiarism and Cheating. Late papers, make-up exams, or incompletes are not acceptable except under unusual circumstances and with prior permission. Please speak with me in anticipation of a problem. In accordance with the Student Handbook, plagiarism and cheating of any kind are a serious breach of morality and can lead to expulsion.

Disability Accommodation: To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources located in Benson Center, (408) 554 4111; TTY (408) 554 5445.

Academic Integrity: Please see the universities policy regarding academic integrity
<http://www.scu.edu/academics/bulletins/undergraduate/Academic-Integrity.cfm>.

Required Texts

Penyak, Lee M. and Walter J Penn (Eds.) 2009. *Religion and Society in Latin America: Interpretive Essays from Conquest to Present*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Molesky-Poz, Jean. 2006. *Contemporary Maya Spirituality: The Ancient Ways Are Not Lost*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Steigenga, Timothy and Edward L. Cleary. 2007. *Conversion of a Continent: Contemporary Religious Change in Latin America*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

And required reading posted on CAMINO.