

The Bible and Empire

SCTR 157-Fall 2016

TR 10:20 AM-12:00 PM

INSTRUCTOR: Roberto Mata

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OFFICE HOURS: TBD

OFFICE: (300j)

This course explores the complex intersection between empire and the bible. In view of the role that biblical narratives play in religious education, Christian theologies and spiritualities, reconstructions of early Christianity, and contemporary issues (e.g. immigration, poverty, racism, sexism, and etc.), this course investigates the influence of imperial discourses upon biblical texts. Key questions to explore include: What is imperialism/colonialism and its relationship to the formation and interpretation of the bible? Why did Christian missionary enterprises often go hand in hand with European colonial ventures in Asia, Africa, and Latin-America? How did colonial understandings of God, His “Kingdom”, and salvation or damnation shape the spiritualities of colonizers and the colonized? Who benefits today from Eurocentric, patriarchal and imperial formulations of God and the bible? And, how do the oppressed in the U.S., the Caribbean, or Palestine negotiate race, gender, and power in situations of colonial domination? In order to address these questions, we will read biblical texts through the theoretical lenses of Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, and Homi Bhabha among others. We conclude the course by reflecting on how the Bible is also implicated in recent imperial/neo-colonial ventures, both as a tool of colonization and as a tool of resistance.

Also listed as WGST 153. Prerequisite: Intermediate level course (SCTR 20-99, TESP 20-99, RSOC 20-99) or another course approved as fulfilling the intermediate level Core requirement in Religious Studies and completion of 88 quarter units.

RTC 3 and Course Learning Objectives

BY the end of this course, you will be able to:

- a. Identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions (for example, the relationship of scripture to past and present constructions of power, or the role of orientalism and Eurocentrism in biblical scholarship and colonial dynamics) (RTC Core 3.a).
- b. evaluate and apply insights from the study of biblical texts and their interpretation to contemporary questions (for example, justice, religion, and politics, diaspora experience) (RTC Core 3b);
- c. analyze the intersections of multiple factors (e.g. race, class, ethnicity, gender, religious affiliation, national origin) in the imperial origins and deployments of the Bible (WGST);
- d. improve your skills in research, writing, and oral presentation (Course).

Core-relations: Core Requirements, Pathways, & WGST

This course satisfies the University's RTC 3 requirement. It has also been approved for the following three Pathways in the Core: Human Rights in a Global World, Politics & Religion, and Gender, Globalization and Empire. Pathway courses are meant to help you integrate what you are learning across your courses, and interdisciplinary courses like this one to practice just those kinds of integrations. Another goal of your Pathway course is to foster intentional learning, which occurs in this class through your team discussion leadership and your individual choice of a research topic. Furthermore, Pathway courses offer you an opportunity, through critical self-reflection, to hone your educational and vocational choices in light of ethical concerns in our world. The writing and discussion components of this course give you opportunities to practice critical self-reflection, individually and in dialogue with others. If you declare a pathway in one of these areas, you may use a representative piece of work from this course in the Pathway Portfolio you will complete during your senior year. It is recommended that you keep electronic copies of your work for this purpose. This course counts toward the major or minor in Women's & Gender Studies as well, given the attention to the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, and colonial status.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Stephen D. Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse: Post colonialism and the New Testament*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006.

Warren Carter. *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide*. 2006

Sugirtharajah, R S. *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader*. Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 2006.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESMENT METHODS:

- **Class attendance and Critical Engagement (20%).** Students will achieve 20% of their course grade through (1) on-time attendance and (2) thoughtful class participation as well as in course activities (e.g. small and large group discussions, and online discussions. Students who leave class after attendance has been taken will be marked absent. **[Fulfills core curriculum objective 1.1. Students will describe and compare apocalyptic texts/ideas within several religious traditions or within one].**

- **Reading Responses (20%).** In order to prepare for course sessions, students are required to post weekly readings responses (**1 page each**) on Camino throughout the quarter. Each response must summarize the main thesis of the reading assignment and articulate its importance for our understanding of the impact of apocalyptic thought, and reflect on how it might shape their own religious tradition/spirituality. **[Fulfills core curriculum objective 1.2. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on their own beliefs, religious experiences, or faith journeys through reading responses, as well as through class and online discussions.]**

- **Mid-term Examination (30%):** Oral Exam or essay that explores a theme, issue, or practice related to course topics (**5 pages**). The essay must engage the interpretive approach of at least one major postcolonial thinker. **[Fulfills core curriculum objective 1.1. and 1.2. The midterm exam challenges students to identify, describe and interpret apocalyptic themes/ideas/symbols within sacred texts, practices, and beliefs within several or within one religious tradition.]**

- **Final Examination (30 %):** Students will write a **15-page paper** that engages a major issue in American culture, society, or politics, related to the apocalypse. The paper must employ analytical frameworks from the study of religion. Students must also reflect upon the ways in which their socio-religious location shaped their approach to the paper. **[Fulfills core curriculum objective 1.1. and 1.2. Students also employ critical tools to reflect on their own faith journeys and to articulate constructive solutions to the issues they identify.]**

GRADING SCALE:

94%-100%	A	80%-82%	B-	67%-69%	D+
90%-93%	A-	77%-79%	C+	63%-66%	D
87%-89%	B+	73%-76%	C	60%-62%	D-
83%-86%	B	70%-72%	C-	59% & below	F

The instructor will provide written feedback on reading responses, readings responses, and presentations. Group project feedback will be communicated via email or during office hours.

OTHER INFORMATION:

Disability Accommodation Policy

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, <http://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 also 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](tel:408-554-4109).

Sexual Harassment and Discrimination (Title IX)

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, I encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please go to www.scu.edu/studentlife/about/osl.cfm 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 www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethics point: www.ethicspoint.com or <http://stage-www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethics-point>

Academic Integrity Policy

The University is committed to academic excellence and integrity. Students are expected to do their own work and to cite any sources they use. A student who is guilty of a dishonest act in an examination, paper, or other work required for a course, or who assists others in such an act, may, at the discretion of the instructor, receive a grade of F for the course. Santa Clara University is implementing an Academic Integrity pledge designed to deepen the understanding of and commitment to honesty and academic integrity. The Academic Integrity Pledge 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." I ask that you affirm this pledge and apply these principles to your work in this class. For more information on the university's policy on academic integrity see the following: <http://www.scu.edu/provost/policies/upload/Academic%20Integrity%20Protocol.pdf>

PEDAGOGY:

In order to create a collaborative, democratic, and empowering learning environment, this course will implement a form of Border Pedagogy. Such a pedagogical approach acknowledges

the shifting borders of power and knowledge, and links the educational enterprise with the struggle for a more just and democratic society. The instructor’s version of this approach entails five interrelated stages: Critical Awakening, Journeying, Crossing, Negotiating, and Transforming. Such an approach will translate into the following practical dimensions of our learning practices/experiences: (1) students and the instructor will reflect on their own socio-religious location and the ways it shapes their understanding of the three monotheistic religions; (2) students will collaborate with one another and engage in critical and constructive dialogue for class projects and discussions; (3) students will identify and address key issues/themes/ ritual practices in the three religious traditions; (4) students will learn traditional and non-traditional paradigms for understanding religion, as well as methods of interpretation; (5) students will be prepared to articulate the implications of course content and methodologies for the struggle towards a more egalitarian society.

Week & Date	LECTURE TOPICS and READING ASSIGNMENTS
Wk. 1: Sep 20, 22	<p style="text-align: center;">PART I. Theorizing Empire: Empire, Imperialism and Colonialism</p>
<p>Required Readings</p> <p>Tuesday: Empire and Imperialism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Course Overview <p>Thursday: Definitions: Empire, Imperialism, and Colonialism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mattingly, “From Imperium to Imperialism: Writing the Roman Empire,” 3-42. ▪ Peter M. Edwell, “Definitions of Roman Imperialism,” 39-52, in Hoyos, B D. <i>A Companion to Roman Imperialism</i>. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013 	
Wk. 2: Sep 27, 29	<p style="text-align: center;">Postcolonial Theory & The Bible</p>
<p>Select ONE of the Required Readings:</p> <p>Tuesday: Orientalism, Mimicry, and Violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Edward Said, Excerpts from <i>Orientalism, A Reader</i>, ▪ Homi K. Bhaba, “Of Mimicry and Man,” from <i>The Location of Culture</i>. Routledge, 2012. ▪ Frantz Fanon, “On Violence,” 1-52. <p>Thursday: Postcolonial Biblical Criticism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sugirtharajah, <i>Charting the Aftermath: A review of Postcolonial Criticism</i> (TPBR), 6-32. ▪ Segovia, “Biblical Criticism and Postcolonial Studies: Toward a Postcolonial Optic” (TPBR), 	

33-45.

- Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse*, 3-23.
- Benita Parry, "Problems in Current Theories of Colonialism" (TPSR), 36-44.

**Wk. 3: Oct
4, 6**

**Part II: The Bible and Colonialism:
Conquest Narratives in the Hebrew Bible**

Required Readings:

Tuesday:

- Exodus 1-20; Joshua 1-6.
- Daniel
- Musa W. Dube, "Method in Ancient Imperializing Texts," in *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation*, 57-83.

Thursday:

- Daniel 1-12
- Philip Chia, "On Naming the Subject; A Postcolonial Reading of Daniel 1" in PBR 171-85.

**Wk. 4: Oct
11,13**

Imperial Representations in The Gospels

Required Readings:

Tuesday: Empire in The Gospels

- Matthew 1:1-25; Mark 5; Luke 1:2; John 18:1-19:42
- Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse* 45-74.

Thursday: Empire and Evangelization

- 1 Corinthians 1; Romans 1-6
- Neil Elliott, "The Anti-Imperial Message of the Cross,"

ORAL MIDTERM

**Wk. 5:
18, 20**

Apocalyptic Empires

Required Reading:

Tuesday: The Empire of God

- The Kingdom of God in Mark 1:1-15.
- Richard Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 126-129.

Thursday: Apocalyptic Utopias

- Revelation 12:1-22:21
- Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse*, 97-120.

**Wk. 6: Oct
26, 27**

**PART III: Colonial Encounters:
The Bible and Colonized World**

Required Readings:

Tuesday: Evangelization of the New World

- **Matthew 24:14**
- Orders Given to “The Twelve” (1523); and Francisco de Vittoria “On The Evangelization of Unbelievers,” Salamanca, Spain (1534-35) In Mills, K.R, W B Taylor, and S L Graham. *Colonial Latin America: A Documentary History*. Scholarly Resources Inc, 2002, 59-78.
- F.J. Baumgartner, “Millennialism in The New World.” In *Longing for the End: A History of Millennialism in Western Civilization*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2001, 213-233.

Film: The Mission

Thursday: Colonialism The California Missions

- **The Founding of Santa Clara Mission**
- Phelan, John Leddy. *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1970.

**Wk. 7: Nov
1, 3**

**Part V: Imperial Races
Anti-Semitism, Race, Eugenics**

Required Readings:

Tuesday: Empire and Ethnicity

- Mark 8:29
- Shawn Kelley, Racializing Jesus, 64-88.
- R.S. Sugirtharajah, “The Jesus from Bengal and Their Jesus,” in *Postcolonial Reconfigurations*

Film: Schildler’s List

Thursday: Empire and the End-Times Race?

- **Revelation 5:9, 7:9**
- Edwin Black, “The United States of Sterilization,” in *War Against the Weak. Eugenics and Americas Campaign to Create a Master Race*, 87-125.

Wk. 8: Nov

America and Empire

8, 10	Jesus and the American Religious Imagination
<p>Required Readings:</p> <p>Tuesday: Jesus Comes to America</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shawn Kelly, "Portrait of the Artist as a White Messiah," 165-171. <p>Thursday: An American Empire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Richard Horsley, "Jesus and Empire" 137-151. 	
Wk. 9: Nov 15, 17	<p>Part V: Rethinking Empire & The Bible Fundamentalism, Globalization and Migration</p>
<p>Required Readings:</p> <p>Tuesday: Empire and Fundamentalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revelation 19 ▪ New, <i>Holy War: The Rise of Militant Christian, Jewish, and Islamic Fundamentalism</i>, 16-23. <p>Video clip: Displaced in Calais</p> <p>Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revelation 18 ▪ Mata, "Self-Deporting from Babylon: A Latino/a Borderlands Reading of Revelation 18:4" <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <p>.</p>	
Wk. 10 : Nov 22, 24	<p>CLASS CANCELLED</p>
<p>Annual Meeting of Society for Biblical Literature & Thanksgiving Holiday</p>	
Wk. 11: Nov 29, Dec 1	<p>The Bible and Liberation: Decoloniality, Feminism, and Liberation Hermeneutics</p>

Required Readings:

Tuesday: Feminist Biblical Interpretation

- Matthew 8:1-17; 14:1-15:39
- Kwok Pui Lan, "Making Connections: Postcolonial Studies and Feminist Biblical Interpretation" in TPBR, 45-64.

Thursday: Decoloniality and Liberation

- **Revelation 18: 1.**
- Mignolo, Walter. *"Modernity and Decoloniality"*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Wk. 12:
Dec 7-11

FINAL EXAMS WEEK

Oral Exam