

TESP 4 — The Christian Tradition
Fall 2016 – Section # 43266
MWF 1:00 -2:05 pm, Sobrato Hall 19

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 3:00 – 5:00 pm, and
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Traditions might be understood as means by which human beings—as individuals and communities—*hand on* and *receive* significant events and meaningful life-experiences. As such, traditions are realized through diverse cultural expressions and particular historical periods. Ultimately, traditions strive to convey and to inform a personal and communal sense of identity.

For two millennia Christian experience has been globally realized through Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant and Pentecostal/Charismatic traditions. Through spiritual teachings and doctrines, by way of community structures and understandings of leadership, in rituals, art and architecture, in short, through the life of believers, Christians express their belief in God revealed in and through Jesus Christ.

This course in Christian tradition fulfills the **Religion, Theology and Culture 1 (RTC 1)** requirement for Santa Clara University's Core Curriculum, and provides students with the intellectual tools to examine and to speak meaningfully about Christian tradition. In doing this, throughout the term the curriculum for TESP 4 utilizes three interwoven components: first, students examine Christianity's expression through Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant and Pentecostal/Charismatic traditions; second, students explore Christianity's global presence—in the Middle East and North Africa, in Western and Eastern Europe, in Central and South Asia, and East Asia, in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as in North America and Oceania; and third, students engage the theological insights of important personages and historical events which have determined the contours of Christian tradition.

Required Text

Douglas Jacobsen, *The World's Christians: Who they are, Where they are, and How they got there* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell Press, 2011). Paperback edition: ISBN 978-1-4051-8887-6; this text is also available on *Kindle*.

Note: This text will be supplemented by essential documents from Christian tradition that have been selected and prepared by the instructor and posted on *Camino*. Students will also regularly need to refer to biblical passages. While there are various translations of the scriptures, the *NRSV*, that is, the *New Revised Standard Version*, is preferred in this course.

Engaging Theological Inquiry

As distinct from a philosophy of religions approach, this course presumes that a student is open to questions of faith and willing to utilize theological methods to explore Christian beliefs and traditions. This course develops students' theological understanding by stretching them beyond a popular understanding of religion. As such, it attends to and examines theological questions—*ultimate* questions—by way philosophical and theological methods. In this course students will master significant theological material in order to broaden and deepen their intellectual skills for examining religious experience, religious questions and assertions, and to appreciate the interdisciplinary character of religious thought and imagination. Christian tradition privileges its past that has been realized through diverse peoples, cultures and historical periods.

At the outset, it is important for students to understand that two and a half hours of focused study are expected for each class meeting and that a passive reading of texts will not suffice. Consequently, even when class reading is not accompanied with a written assignment, students are strongly encouraged to take notes on what they have read, to attend to important terms and new concepts, and to bring their notes and questions to each class meeting.

Course Aims and Religious Studies Department Objectives

This course strives: **(A)** to bring students to an academic understanding of and familiarity with the terminology, major concepts, cultural influences and subdivisions within Christian tradition; **(B)** to integrate students' intellectual study of theology with their reflection on the practical implications of the doctrinal statements and spiritual practices that historically and culturally emerge from Christian experience; and **(C)** to develop students' capacity for analytic reading, complex thought and academic writing.

In order to realize this aim, this course engages the student learning goals and objectives that have been established by the Religious Studies Department at Santa Clara University.

1. In this course students explore human experience in such a way as to encounter foundational theological concepts (faith, belief and unbelief, virtue and vice, sin, and revelation). As they explore theological themes and terms, students gradually gain an understanding and appreciation of the rich dimensions of religious experience and expression. Throughout this introductory course, students will be challenged to **examine Christian tradition from within various cultural and historical contexts and to relate this globally expressed tradition to contemporary issues concerning faith, religious practice and real-life questions.**
2. Through the ten-weeks of term, students build-up a body of knowledge that will enable them to understand various aspects and methods of theological inquiry. Through careful study and class engagement, students will see **how theological themes systematically illuminate the social, moral, and spiritual dimensions of human experience and culture.** Ultimately, it is the aim of this course for students to **develop an appreciation of the interdisciplinary nature of studying Christian tradition's global expression through its doctrinal and spiritual writings, its art, architecture and music, and its religious rituals and popular festivals.**

Core Curriculum Learning Objectives in this Course

As mentioned above, **this course fulfills Santa Clara's University's Core Curriculum requirement for Religion, Theology and Culture 1 (RTC 1).** As such, students are challenged to engage in analysis of complex religious phenomena, to develop critical thinking skills, and to engage in a theological reflection on human experience—its joys as well as its struggles—as well as on human societies with its own convictions and aspirations.

Core Learning Objective for RTC 1

1.1 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 of Content as well as Method; Ambiguity)

1.2 Use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs and the religious dimensions of human existence. (Critical Thinking; Complexity of Method; Reflection)

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

1. In this course students are subject to **announced and unannounced quizzes**. These short “surprise” quizzes test a student’s understanding of and ability to articulate important theological terms and definitions, as well as to identify significant historical personages and events within Christian tradition. The content for these quizzes is drawn from assigned readings and in-class lectures.

Students are pressed to **define and analyze specific themes from within Christian tradition**. By way of written expression, students need to **demonstrate their understanding of complex and diverse religious phenomena** (such as, an understanding of tradition, historic and contemporary Christian understandings of faith, and the complex global development of Christianity) **and to explore the religious dimensions of Christian experience as expressed through diverse cultures and historical periods (cf. Core Objective 1.1)**.

Through **essays, an in-class presentation, and exams** students are challenged to demonstrate their intellectual inquiry into Christian tradition as it has developed through diverse cultures and various historical periods and crises. As such, students are continually invited to explore human experience in order to gain practical insight into the strengths and weaknesses of Christianity’s theological assertions and religious expressions.

2. As a way of developing their analytic skills and academic reflection, students are required to **write précises** on specific reading assignments and in-class themes. Through informal and formal **writing assignments**, students will learn to identify in a concise manner **central insights and argumentation**. At the conclusion of each précis, a student will be invited to include three questions that emerge from his or her reflection on the text. In addition to providing a basis for in-class discussion and group work, the instructor will also review and comment on these writing assignments.

Based on class readings and discussions, writing assignments and examinations, students will be evaluated on their ability to **identify, reflect upon, evaluate and compare complex theological concepts, assertions and movements in Christian tradition within a global and historical context**. It is challenging to learn the essential steps in effective critical thinking. Consequently, students will practice these skills through various course topics so that they can understand how to think critically in academic and personal contexts. Through examinations and take-home essays, students will **compare and utilize various disciplinary approaches to religious phenomena**, such as, Christian tradition’s diverse understandings of and theological approaches to Trinity, theological anthropology, ritual encounters with the *Sacred*, and ecclesial and community structures. In doing this, students will come to appreciate the ambiguity and nuance, as well as clarity and precision that are involved in theological inquiry (cf. **Learning Goals for RTC 1 and Core Objectives 1.1 and 1.2**).

3. In the final weeks of this course, students will examine and compare the historical, cultural and global dimensions of Christian tradition and its encounter *Ultimate Mystery*. In the third and final part of the course, students will have sufficient background in Christian tradition **to reflect on their own beliefs in a critical fashion**, and to engage in an academic consideration of Christianity’s understanding into **the religious dimensions of human existence (cf. Core Objective 1.2)**.

The students’ final essay and their final examination will invite them to **demonstrate their theological understanding and to offer a modest synthesis of how Christian tradition—as realized from at least two globally distinct regions—illuminates humanity’s understanding and experience of God revealed in Jesus Christ (cf. Core Objectives 1.1 and 1.2)**.

IMPORTANT DATES AND FINAL GRADE IN THIS COURSE

Your final grade in this course is based upon **class participation (10%)**, scores from an

unspecified number of announced and unannounced **quizzes** and short **précises** that are based on course readings and lectures (20%), two **major exams** (30%), two **take-home essays** (30%), and the **final examination** (20%).

Grading Scale

10—9.4	A
9.3—9.0	A-
8.9—8.7	B+
8.6—8.3	B
8.2—8.0	B-
7.9—7.7	C+
7.7—7.3	C
7.2—7.0	C-
6.9—6.7	D+
6.6—6.3	D
6.2—5.9	D-

Important Dates for this Course:

First Major Exam: Monday, October 10, 2016.

Note: Friday, October 14, is the last day to drop this class without a W.

Second Major Exam: Monday, October 31, 2016.

Note: Friday, November 4, is the last day to drop this class with a W.

Final Examination: Wednesday, December 7, 2016, from 1:30 to 4:30 pm

Note: The final examination for this course will be held at the time that has been established by the Registrar's Office and published in the *SCU Schedule of Classes*. There should be **no exceptions**.

CLASS POLICIES

The class begins punctually at 8:00 am. Our compartment sets the academic tone and environment for our study. Therefore, the following points must be observed:

- a) **Appropriate academic decorum, respect and civility are expected.** No hats. No food. No drink, except for water.
- b) **Tardiness is unacceptable.** However, should you arrive late for class, come in and take your seat; at the end of class, it is appropriate to excuse yourself.
- c) **Class attendance and participation are required.** If you are miss class for any reason, know that it is your responsibility to get the notes for that class. Once you have obtained and reviewed these notes, you are welcome to meet with the instructor and present any questions that you may have.

Note:

—At **3 absences**, the final grade is subject to a drop of 15% (one grade point less than final course grade, e.g. an A, 4.0, becomes a B, 3.0).

—At **4 absences**, the final grade is subject to a drop of 25% (two grade points less than final course grade, e.g. an A, 4.0, becomes a C, 2.0).

—At **5 absences**, I would recommend that you withdraw from the course, since a final grade of F will be assigned.

Essays: Your work will be evaluated on content, clarity and logical presentation. Consequently, grammar and spelling affect your grade. It might be good for you to review the specific recommendations on writing for and participation in this course that are posted on *Camino*.

Note:

- If an essay is **24 hours late**, your grade is subject to a 10% drop (one grade less than the grade that would have been given, e.g. an A, 4.0, becomes a B, 3.0).
- If an essay is **36 hours late**, your grade is subject to a 20% drop (two grades less than the grade that would have been given, e.g. an A, 4.0, becomes a C, 2.0).
- If an essay is **48 hours late**, your grade is subject to a 30% drop (three grades less than that would have been given, e.g. an A, 4.0, becomes a D, 1.0).

Academic Integrity Pledge

The Academic Integrity Pledge is an expression of our University's commitment to fostering an understanding of—and commitment to—a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. The Academic Integrity Pledge applies to all students, and it 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.

Students are expected to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this course.

Disabilities Resources

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this course, 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 or by appointment. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy 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 need to 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.

Accommodations for Pregnancy and Parenting

In alignment with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and with the California Education Code, Section 66281.7, Santa Clara University provides reasonable accommodations to students who are pregnant, have recently experienced childbirth, and/or have medically related needs. Pregnant and parenting students can often arrange accommodations by working directly with their instructors, supervisors, or departments. Alternatively, a pregnant or parenting student experiencing related medical conditions may request accommodations through Disability Resources.

Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct (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

Read: Jacobsen, *The World's Christians*, Part III: How They Got There, Introduction (pp. 267-268), as well as Jacobsen's Chapter 14. The Ancient Tradition: Beginnings to 500 (pp. 269-292)

Wednesday, October 12

Friday, October 14

Read: Jacobsen, *The World's Christians*, Part III: Chapter 15. The Great Division and the Age of the East: 500 to 1000 (pp. 293-318)

Note: Today is the last day to drop Fall classes without a W.

WEEK 5 + + + + + + + + +

Monday, October 17

Wednesday, October 19

Read: Jacobsen, *The World's Christians*, Part III: Chapter 16. The Rise of the West and the Decline of the East: 1000 to 1500 (pp. 319-345)

Friday, October 21

WEEK 6 + + + + + + + + +

Monday, October 24

Read: Jacobsen, *The World's Christians*, Part III: Chapter 17. Christianity in a Global Era: 1500 to the Present (pp. 346-374)

Wednesday, October 26

Friday, October 28

Review for First Major Class Exam which will be held on Monday, October 31.

WEEK 7 + + + + + + + + +

Monday, October 31

In Class Exam

Wednesday, November 2

Student Panels: Presentations and Essays

Friday, November 4

Student Panels: Presentations and Essays

Note: Today is the last day to drop Fall classes with a W.

WEEK 8 + + + + + + + + +

Monday, November 7

Student Panels: Presentations and Essays

**Part III of this Course: An Overview of Christianity's Presence in Our World
Where They Are—Short Introduction and Nine Chapters**

Read: Jacobsen, *The World's Christians*, Part II: Where They Are, Introduction (pp. 63-66), as well as Jacobsen's Chapter 5. The Middle East and North Africa: Barely Surviving (pp. 67-87)

Wednesday, November 9

Read: Jacobsen, *The World's Christians*, Part II: Chapter 8. Western Europe: Thin, but Alive (pp. 132-

154)

Friday, November 11

Read: Jacobsen, *The World's Christians*, Part II: Chapter 11. Latin America: After Monopoly (pp. 203-224)

Note: First Formal Essays due today.

WEEK 9

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Monday, November 14

Read: Jacobsen, *The World's Christians*, Part II: Chapter 10. East Asia: Piety and Politics (pp. 180-202)

Wednesday, November 16

Read: Jacobsen, *The World's Christians*, Part II: Chapter 12. North America: Faith in a Free Market (pp. 225-247)

Friday, November 18

Note: Special Project Reading and Second Formal Essay due on Wednesday, November 30.

WEEK 10

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Monday, November 28

Wednesday, November 30

Friday, December 2

Review for Final Examination.

FINAL EXAMINATION: Wednesday, December 7, from 1:30 – 4:30 pm

Note: The final examination for this course will be held at the time that has been established by the Registrar's Office and published in the *SCU Schedule of Classes*. There should be **no exceptions**.