

RSOC 9: Ways of Understanding Religion
Prof. Philip Boo Riley
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Spring Quarter, 2016
1:00-2:05, Kenna Hall, 308
Office Hours: W, 2:15-3:00 & by appt.

Course Description

This RTC 1 course focuses on ways to think about religion, with a special interest in how religion plays out in public life. We read authors who write about that interest from within different traditions (Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Atheism) and develop categories through which to analyze those readings and think about the issues they raise. The course includes an independent project on religion in Silicon Valley that takes students off campus several times during the quarter.

Meeting with Students

I like to meet with students outside of class. In previous quarters students have gone over items on their category worksheets with me, their weekly reflections, quiz questions, an idea I introduced in class as important but that they had missed, something in a reading that warrants further discussion. The trick is, students need to take the initiative. My office hours are only a placeholder; we can usually find a time to meet that is convenient for both of us after only a couple of e-mails, and I am open to setting up regular meetings with individual (or small groups of) students.

Texts

- Gregory Boyle, S.J., *Tattoos on the Heart* (Free Press, 2010)
- Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, tr. J. Strachey (W.W. Norton, 1989)
- Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace Begins Here: Palestinians and Israelis Listening to Each Other* (Parallax Press, 2004)
- Martin Luther King, selections from sermons and speeches, posted on Camino
- Eboo Patel, *Acts of Faith* (Beacon Press, 2010)
- Elie Wiesel, *Night* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006)
- Other readings posted on Camino

While they do contain information, our readings are not textbooks, and so require a particular kind of engagement. Indeed, much of our time this quarter will be devoted to discussing ways to engage texts like these and to use them as springboards for independent reflections. These texts reward multiple readings; if students have read one before (e.g. *Night*, or MLK's Birmingham Jail Letter), this course provides the opportunity to reflect on the text in a new context.

Outcomes

A simple approach to outcomes is to pose a question, What will students get out of this course? Answers will vary.

The University has set outcomes for all RTC 1 courses, calling them learning objectives:

- Describe and compare the central religious ideas and practices from several traditions or within one, and from at least two globally distinct regions.
- Use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs and the religious dimensions of human existence. (2015-16 Core Curriculum Guide, p. 11)

Although not a perfect match (For reasons we will discuss in the first week, we try not to study religions by isolating its central ideas and practices), this course was designed to help students engage those objectives. For instance, we will compare how Martin Luther King and Thich Nhat Hanh, Christian and Buddhist respectively, drew on their faith traditions to address politically-charged conflicts in their different countries. And the variety of categories and readings (including one that advocates removing

religion from public life altogether) help students develop critical tools with which to think about religious and spiritual life, their own and others.

The instructor has set outcomes for this particular course as well:

- Students will want to replace generalizations about religions with specific questions about particular religious persons.
- Students will become aware of how religion is constructed and represented.
- Students will engage a facet of the rich and complex religious landscape of Silicon Valley.
- Students will use this course to improve their reading and writing practices.

Students are encouraged to develop their own outcomes for this course during the first week of classes, and return to them, and those above, throughout the quarter.

Engaging Those Outcomes

Students realize the course outcomes in this class to the extent they engage in activities they have been doing since kindergarten: read, write, and talk. The following course requirements are about those activities; they help direct students' energy and ground the weighted grading system for this course.

- *Class Engagement:* Informed participation in class is expected and highly valued. In addition to showing up and contributing to class discussions, this includes drafting responses to preparation notes and category worksheets, meeting outside of class, and completion of online quizzes. 10% of final grade
- *Midterm Exams:* (two, weeks 5 and 10). Students demonstrate comprehension of the assigned readings and their mastery of the categories introduced in the preparation notes and in class. Midterms are drawn from preparation notes, quizzes, category worksheets, and class discussions. 45% of final grade
- *Monday Reflections* (nine + one). Students demonstrate they can analyze readings, identify salient issues, think critically and independently about them, and write clearly, succinctly and carefully in short reflections (approximately 350 words) due prior to each Monday class (the *one* reflection due in the 11th week). 20% of final grade
- *Course Project:* A community-based independent project related to religion in Silicon Valley begun early in the quarter and completed in stages, including in-class presentations the 11th week (during our assigned final exam slot). 25% of final grade

Students who wish to do so during the quarter can use this rough guide (based on the section on grades in the 2015-16 Undergraduate Bulletin, pp. 446-447) to transpose percentages to a letter grade: A range grades =90-100% (excellent); B range grades =80-89% (good); C range grades =70-79% (adequate), D range grades =60-69% (barely passing). Students are welcome to talk with the instructor anytime about the grade we think they have for the course based on their work to date. A letter grade for the course will be assigned at the end of the quarter based on weighted scores on the requirements students complete.

The university and wider community offer an abundance of programs and experiences that could relate to this course e.g. the talk on Pope Francis' encyclical during week two. A list of a few illustrations will be posted on Camino, and students are invited to find their own. As an incentive to engage the class beyond what we have here, students can earn up to 5 (five) bonus points that will be added to either their Reflections or Class Engagement scores for participation in and reflection on such events.

Outside the Classroom Resources for this Class

The Camino site for this course includes resources that students should use to prepare readings for class, study for midterms, and gauge their understanding of assigned readings: preparation notes, category worksheets, and quizzes. They are available in the module for each section of the course on Camino. Students are expected to use these resources regularly and actively on their own, and take the initiative to let the instructor know if they are having problems with them. Students are encouraged to meet with the

instructor outside of class to go over any of these materials (individually or in groups). Given this, a typical week's schedule might look like the following:

Saturday/Sunday:	Annotate readings for Monday using preparation notes; draft weekly reflection
Monday:	Revise/submit reflection; attend class, participate by drawing on reflection, annotations, prep notes
Tuesday:	Annotate readings for Wednesday using preparation notes; Draft Category worksheets
Wednesday:	Attend class, participate by drawing on annotations, prep notes, category worksheets
Thursday:	Annotate readings for Friday; review annotations, class notes, take quiz, revise category worksheets
Friday:	Attend class, participate by drawing on prep notes, category worksheets, quiz; revise worksheets, class notes, annotations as necessary

Students have the opportunity to work on their writing through the weekly reflections and the course project. In addition to consultation with the instructor about their writing, students are strongly encouraged to utilize the Hub, SCU's writing center (www.scu.edu/provost/writingcenter/).

Respect the Class: Classroom policies

Most students will complete more than 40 classes before they leave SCU and, presumably conclude their formal education. This is one of them. While this class was conceived and developed by the instructor, it really does not work without the active engagement of students. Here is a twofold exhortation offered in lieu of policies for classroom behavior: 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. There are plenty of things we all want and need to do on a daily basis: study for exams, sleep, use the bathroom, e-mail professors, text loved ones, prepare for other classes, exercise, run errands, catch up with news, but the twofold exhortation tells us they should not happen during our time together. An easy way for students to determine whether something is appropriate is to ask, Am I respecting the class when I do it? Of late some students' use of personal electronic devices during class has led me to ask students to refrain from their use in class. Students who find this policy burdensome (e.g. they take notes on laptops or i-pads, or have purchased electronic copies of texts) should consult with me the first week of classes to arrange for their use of the necessary devices during class.

Feedback to Students

Students receive feedback on the work they submit (quizzes, midterms, weekly reflections, course project) and in observations and suggestions from fellow students and the instructor during class discussions. Students are invited to discuss this feedback and solicit more from the instructor at any time during the course.

Course Evaluation by Students

Students will be asked to evaluate the course formally at the end of the quarter by completing surveys. In addition, students are encouraged to give the instructor feedback on what is and is not working for them throughout the quarter. Communication is an important responsibility we share; this is our course. I may not be able to make adjustments to meet every students' interests or needs, but a heads up about a problem in the 3rd or 4th week at least creates an opportunity to attempt to address it in the remainder of the quarter.

Disability Accommodation Policy

Students with DR approved academic accommodations should meet with the instructor during the first week of classes to discuss options or concerns in order to make appropriate arrangements. To request

academic accommodations for a disability, students must register with and provide documentation of a disability to Disabilities Resources, located in Benson 216 (408 554 4109). For further information, consult <https://www.scu.edu/disabilities/>.

Academic Integrity Expectations

We should all conduct ourselves in accordance with the academic integrity standards and policies Santa Clara articulates in numerous places, including the 2015-16 Undergraduate Bulletin (pp. 456-457) and the protocol available on the University website: <https://www.scu.edu/media/offices/provost/policy-procedure/Academic-Integrity-Policy-and-Protocol.pdf>

Camino Course Management System

This course uses features of the University's course management system, Camino (*aka* Canvas). Each section in the course will include the resources referenced above. Patience and communication are needed as we learn how to best use this system throughout the quarter so please, send the instructor an e-mail whenever things appear not to be working on Camino. The people who are trying to support faculty in using this system are in Media Services, ITRS (<https://www.scu.edu/is/academic-technology/camino-canvas-lms/>), and can assist students as well.

Schedule

The schedule below is arranged by the weeks in the quarter and the sections of the course. For each class session students should have access to the preparation notes, category worksheets and the assigned readings for the week, along with any notes, questions or reflections they have prepared. Readings are listed on the day they will be discussed and thus should have been read. Assignments (submission via Camino), quizzes (on Camino), and exams (in class) are in **Bold Red** font. Monday reflections are due on Camino by Monday before class (Adjustments due to holidays are noted in the schedule.). Quizzes, which cover the reading for the entire week, M-F, are completed on Camino between Thursday, starting at approximately 5:30 p.m., and Friday, before class.

Students should be able to access most of the online readings through the links in the schedule; however, Word or pdf versions of those readings, most with annotations, are also posted on Camino.

The schedule is subject to change by the instructor; should that happen, students will be notified in class and/or on Camino.

WEEK 1 3/28-4/1	Introductions/Religion in Public Life: Perspectives, including Jesuits
M 3-28	HOLIDAY
W 3-30	Course Overview: Syllabus and Course Design, Roster, Survey, Course Project
TR 3-31	Informal Reflection for Introduction: Location/ Background and How I think about Religion (I Me and Religion) (submit on Camino, Assignments, Informal Reflection)
F 4-1	Religion and Public Life: 3 Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immanuel Kant, bWhat Is Enlightenment? (annotated version on Camino) http://www.mnstate.edu/gracyk/courses/web%20publishing/KantOnEnlightenment.htm McCutcheon, Russell, uCase Study: 'Religion' and the Politics of Classification (excerpts; annotated version on Camino) from <i>Studying Religion: An Introduction</i>, Religious Studies Dept., University of Alabama http://www.as.ua.edu/rel/studyingreligion.html Dorothy Day, . Suicide or Sacrifice?! (Camino) http://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/articles/834.html
	Quiz. (after class)

Week 2 4, 4-8	Introductions/Religion in Public Life: Perspectives, including Jesuits (cont.), Course Project
M, 4-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday Reflection Jesuit Education with a focus on SCU's Relationship with El Salvador <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ignacio Ellacuria, 1982 Commencement Address, SCU (Camino) http://www.scu.edu/Jesuits/ellacuria.html Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, uTrue Solidarity,i America, February 5, 2001 (Camino) http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=1906 Michael Eng, S.J., The El Salvador Martyrs: Crosses To Liberate the Poor,c Mission (Spring 2010), p. 24 https://jesuitswest.org/Assets/Publications/File/mission_2010_spring.pdf <p>Religion and Public Life: Presidential Perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thomas Jefferson's Bible (http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/how-thomas-jefferson-created-his-own-bible-5659505/?no-ist) and his January 1, 1802 Letter to Danbury Baptists (introduced by an atheist organization (https://www.ai.org/files/images/page_photos/jeffersons-letter-to-the.pdf))
W, 4-6	<p>Religion and Public Life: Presidential Perspectives cont.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> John F. Kennedy, pSpeech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association,c September 12, 1960. (Video and Transcript: http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/ALL6YEBJMEK.YGM.CntrSCvg.aspx) Barak Obama, Keynote at the Call to Renewal's Building a Covenant for a New America Conference in Washington, D.C. (aka, oSpeech on Faith and Politicsn) (2006) (annotated version on Camino) http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/28/us/politics/2006obamaspeech.html (also available on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tdoQr3BQ1g) Barak Obama, Remarks at National Prayer Breakfast, 2/5/15 (Camino), https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/05/remarks-president-national-prayer-breakfast
TR, 4-7	Quiz
F, 4-8	<p>Course Project : Setting the Stage and Forming Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religion in Silicon Valley, BBC gHeart and Soul (June, 2015) (http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02ybw32) Overvieww(3-19) the release of the PEW Research Center's 1America's Changing Religious Landscapet report (May 2015) (Camino) http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/) Americans may be getting less religious, but feelings of spirituality are on the rise, PEW Research i FastFactr (January 2016) http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/01/21/americans-spirituality/
WEEK 3 4, 11-15	Religion in Public Life: Race, Religion, Civil rights
M 4-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday Reflection James Baldwin, oLetter from a Region in My Mind,l The New Yorker (November 17, 1962) (excerpts posted on Camino); www.newyorker.com/magazine/1962/11/17/letter-from-a-region-in-my-mind James Baldwin, oA Letter to My Nephew,l The Progressive (December 1962; reprinted December 4, 2014) (Camino) http://www.progressive.org/news/2014/12/5047/letter-my-nephew
W 4-13	<p>Classic MLK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Martin Luther King, vLetter from a Birmingham Jailr (April 16, 1963) (Camino) http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/resources/article/annotated_letter_from_birmingham/ Martin Luther King, nI Have a Dream Speech,c Washington, D.C. (August 28, 1963) (Camino) http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc_august_28_1963_i_have_a_dream/
TR 4-14	Quiz
F 4-15	<p>Assessing MLK's Legacy: Ta-Nehishi Coates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Martin Luther King, fI've Been to the Mountaintop,a Memphis, Tennessee (April 3, 1968) (Camino) http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/ive_been_to_the_mountaintop/ Ta-Nehisi Coates, presenting on The Atlantic website a clip from a MLK talk, http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/06/martin-luther-king-makes-the-case-for-

	<p>reparations/372696/ (not required, but you may want to follow the link to an excerpt from Michael E. Dyson's <i>I May Not Get There With You: The True Martin Luther King</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ta-Nehisi Coates, a Letter to My Son, adapted from <i>Between the World and Me</i>, (Selections on Camino) for <i>The Atlantic</i>, July 15, 2015. http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/07/tanehisi-coates-between-the-world-and-me/397619/
	Course Project Check In: Sites

WEEK 4 4, 18-22	Religion in Public Life: Further Explorations/ Thich Nhat Hanh's Peace
M 4-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday Reflection • Thich Nhat Hanh, <i>Peace Begins Here</i>, Foreword, Introduction, Chs. 1-2 • Martin Luther King, Nobel Prize Nomination letter for Thich Nhat Hanh (January 25, 1967) (Camino) http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/025.html
W 4-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thich Nhat Hanh, <i>Peace Begins Here</i>, Chs. 3-4 • Thich Nhat Hanh, 4A History of Engaged Buddhism, r (Camino) http://www.mindfulnessbell.org/wp/2015/02/dharma-talk-history-of-engaged-buddhism-2/
TR 4-21	Quiz
F 4-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thich Nhat Hanh, The Sutras on Dependent Co-Arising and Great Emptiness, r March 19, 1998 Dharma Talk, Plum Village (Camino) (http://www.buddhist-canon.com/PLAIN/TNHSUTTA/1998%20Mar%2019%20%20Dependant%20Co-arising%20&%20Great%20Emptiness.htm)
	Course Project Check In: Preparation for Visit

WEEK 5 4-25-29	Thich Nhat Hanh's Peace/ Greg Boyle's Tattoos
M 4-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Monday Reflection • Thich Nhat Hanh, <i>Peace Begins Here</i>, Chs. 5-6 • Thich Nhat Hanh, In Search of the Enemy of Man (addressed to (the Rev.) Martin Luther King). In Nhat Hanh, Ho HUU Tuong, Tam Ich, Bui Giang, Pham Cong Thien. Dialogue. Saigon: La Boi, 1965. P. 11-20. (Camino) http://www.aavw.org/special_features/letters_thich_abstract02.html
	* Quiz (after class)
T 4-26	Study Session, 5:00 p.m., RS Department, Kenna 323
W 4-27	MIDTERM ONE
F 4-29	Boyle, <i>Tattoos</i> , Preface, Introduction, Ch. 1-2 (xi-60)

WEEK 6 5, 2-6	Greg Boyle's Tattoos
M 5-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday Reflection • Boyle, <i>Tattoos</i>, Chs. 3-5 (61-128)
W 5-4	• Boyle, <i>Tattoos</i> , Chs. 6-7 (129-165)
TR 5-5	• Quiz
F 5-6	• Boyle, <i>Tattoos</i> , Chs. 8-9 (167-212)
	Course Project Check In: Observations on Visit

WEEK 7 5, 9-13	Freud on Religion
M 5-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Monday Reflection • Freud, <i>Future of an Illusion</i>, Chs. 1-2 • Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter Laudato Si, On Care for our Common Home, selections related to Nature (Camino) http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html (Pdf on Camino)
W 5-11	• Freud, <i>Future of an Illusion</i> , Ch. 3 (4 optional)
TR 5-12	Quiz

F 5-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freud, <i>Future of an Illusion</i>, Chs. 5-6, 8 (7 optional)
	Course Project Check In: Preparations for Interview

WEEK 8 5, 16-20	Freud on Religion Eboo Patel's Identity
M 5-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday Reflection Freud, <i>Future of an Illusion</i>, Chs. 9-10 * Albert Camus, <i>The Myth of Sisyphus</i> (1942) (http://dbanach.com/sisyphus.htm)
W 5-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patel, <i>Acts of Faith</i>, Introduction and Chs 1-3
TR 5-19	Quiz
F 5-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patel, <i>Acts of Faith</i>, Chs. 4-6

WEEK 9 5, 23-27	Eboo Patel's Identity and Elie Wiesel's Memory
M 5-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday Reflection Patel, <i>Acts of Faith</i>, chs 7-8 Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilization," <i>Foreign Affairs</i> (Summer 1993), excerpts (Camino) http://edvardas.home.miruni.eu/wp-content/uploads/2008/10/huntington.pdf
W 5-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Samantha Power, <i>A Problem from Hell</i> (2002) (excerpts) (Camino) Albert Camus, Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech (annotated version on Camino) http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1957/camus-speech.html Elie Wiesel, Remarks at the Dedication of Yad Vashem's Holocaust History Museum (March 15 2005, Jerusalem, Israel) http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/eliewiesel-yad-vashem-dedication.htm
TR 5-26	Quiz
F 5-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elie Wiesel, <i>Night</i>, Preface Elie Wiesel, Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, included in <i>Night</i>, pp. 117-120 Elie Wiesel, Congressional Gold Medal Award and Acceptance Speech (April 19, 1985) http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/US-Israel/RR4_19_85.html Francois Mauriac, <i>Night</i>, Foreword
	Project Check In: good to go?

WEEK 10 5, 30 - 6, 3	Elie Wiesel's Memory
M 5-30	HOLIDAY
W 6-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday (on Wednesday) Reflection Elie Wiesel, <i>Night</i> * Quiz (after class)
TR 6-2	Study Session, 5:00 p.m., RS Department, Kenna 323
F 6-3	MIDTERM TWO

WEEK 11 6, 6-9	Finals Week
M 6-6, 1:30	Course Project: PK in class presentations https://www.scu.edu/registrar/undergraduate-final-exams-schedule/
W 6-8	Reflection on Reflections due
TR 6-9	Course Project: Submit final PK presentation and interview via Google Drive; and research reflection via Camino