



**The Theology of Marriage TESP 124  
(Paradigm Shift Pathway)**

Tuesday/Thursday

8:3-10:10 in Kenna 105

Dr. Sally Vance-Trembath [svancetrembath@scu.edu](mailto:svancetrembath@scu.edu)

Office Hours: TTHR 12:15- 1:15 and by appointment Kenna 313

***This is a no-digital device class; no iPads, laptops, or other electronic devices that access the world-wide web.  
Paper notes only.***

**Course Description**

This course addresses this central question: "Who or what is the Marital Community?" In Catholic teaching the family is called "the domestic Church." We shall trace the way Christianity imagined married life for both personal and corporate responses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Having inspected this history and development, we shall explore marriage as a signal way to nourish and express the Christian life. In this course we shall explore the Church's teachings about marriage to see if they display a coherent intellectual understanding of marriage. A hallmark of Catholic Theology is its intellectual coherence; we shall be looking for such coherence with the contemporary intellectual landscape.

*Note: Only those who have taken RTC 1 and RTC 2 and who have completed 88 units, will earn credit for RTC 3 courses. If you have not met those requirements, you will not earn Core-RTC 3 credit for the course. There are no exceptions and no waivers to this requirement.*

**The Place of RTC3 in the Core (Why do I have to take 3 Religion classes?)**

The University values critical reflection about Religion, Theology and Culture. It recognizes the distinctive relationship that Theology in particular has with Ethics, that is the study of how human persons make decisions about what enhances human life and what diminishes or is destructive to human flourishing. Christian Theology has long described Family Life as a "good." The presumption that Family life and marriage are "goods" is not a simple "given" in our contemporary situation. The claim that marriage and family life lead to human flourishing requires critical inspection. This course engages that task. However, we do so using University-level discourse that begins with central intelligible and coherent questions. University-level discourse does not begin by stipulating that marriage is a "good." Such discourse requires that we build a case for such an ethical claim. In TESP 124, we build our case theologically, that is, we position ourselves in the critical discipline of Christian Theology and apply the tools of that discipline to the contemporary questions about marriage and family life.

The Core Requirement directs us to approach our task from these two directions:

1. *Students will identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions.*
2. *Students will evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society.*

In TESP 124, we approach these questions theologically. That means that we create a dialogue with Catholic Christianity's truth claims about marriage and family.

### **Texts**

Readings are posted on *Camino*.

Two films viewed in segments in class: *Lantana* and *Lars and the Real Girl*

### **Requirements**

**Critical Reflection Essay: (60%)** 7-10 page essay that engages the narrative of one of the selected films in order to illuminate a feature of the class material on the Theology of Marriage. (Detailed Instructions on *Camino*)

This task is an exercise in conversation with one of the films. The purpose of this assignment is to reflect upon your own ideas and/or experiences of religious teaching and/or practice in conversation with two other partners; these partners are our shared texts, *Lantana* OR *Lars and The Real Girl*. I ask that you anchor your reflection in at least one idea, concept or insight from the course lectures and/or readings.

DO NOT SUBMIT A PAPER COPY. All essays are due by December 13, by 10pm via email to [svancetrembath@scu.edu](mailto:svancetrembath@scu.edu) NOT *Camino*.

**Group Discussions: (20%)** Each day after we take our break, you will break into groups to discuss the reading of the day. One person from the group will write a 1-2 paragraph summary of your conversation. I shall circulate in the classroom to move in and out of these discussions.

### **Attendance: (20%)**

Class is important. As students at Santa Clara University, you are members of the Academy. Engaged presence in the class is not a category that I am willing to quantify ahead of time; it requires an exercise of judgment that I shall make as a more seasoned member of the Academy. Your membership in the Academy is a form of professional activity and so class attendance is expected. I do not expect you to miss class anymore than an employer expects you to be absent. So there are no "free absences" in this class. That said, there are situations that come up that will mean that you need to miss class. When that happens, please let me know. I also ask that you arrange with at least one other student in the class to exchange emails so that you may ask that person for the notes from class. If absence is excessive and I

make the judgment that you were not properly engaged as a member of the Academy, I will reduce some percentage of the 10% that is earned by attendance.

### **Housekeeping**

- Please use your SCU email account. This will be the major way that I communicate with students.
- No electronics during class. No iPads, laptops, tablets or phones please.

### **Academic Integrity**

Please review the University's policy regarding academic integrity <http://www.scu.edu/academics/bulletins/undergraduate/Academic-Integrity.cfm>. Violations of academic integrity through cheating or plagiarism may result in failure of the course.

### **Syllabus Statements on Disabilities Resources, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination (Title IX Resources), and Reporting Requirements**

#### **Disabilities Syllabus Statement**

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, [www.scu.edu/disabilities](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 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.

#### **Title IX Syllabus Statement**

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, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please go to [www.scu.edu/studentlife](http://www.scu.edu/studentlife) and click on the link for the University's Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy or con-

tact 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](mailto:bguthrie@scu.edu). Reports may be submitted online through [www.scu.edu/osl/report](http://www.scu.edu/osl/report) or anonymously through Ethicspoint: [www.ethicspoint.com](http://www.ethicspoint.com) <http://stage-www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethics-point/>

### **Statement for Syllabi on Reporting Practices**

While I want you to feel comfortable coming to me with issues you may be struggling with or concerns you may be having, please be aware that there are some reporting requirements that are part of my job at Santa Clara University.

For example, if you inform me of an issue of harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, I will keep the information as private as I can, but I am required to bring it to the attention of the institution's EEO and Title IX Coordinator. If you inform me that you are struggling with an issue that may be resulting in, or caused by, traumatic or unusual stress, I will likely inform the campus Student Care Team (SCU CARE).

If you would like to reach out directly to the Student Care Team for assistance, you can contact them at [www.scu.edu/osl/report](http://www.scu.edu/osl/report). If you would like to talk to the Office of EEO and Title IX directly, they can be reached at 408-554-3043 or by email at [bguthrie@scu.edu](mailto:bguthrie@scu.edu). Reports may be submitted online through [www.scu.edu/osl/report](http://www.scu.edu/osl/report) or anonymously through Ethicspoint: [www.ethicspoint.com](http://www.ethicspoint.com). Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to the Office of Student Life (OSL), Campus Safety Services, and local law enforcement. For confidential support, contact the Counseling and Psychological Services office (CAPS), the YWCA, or a member of the clergy (for example, a priest or minister).

Finally, please be aware that if, for some reason, our interaction involves a disruptive behavior, a concern about your safety or the safety of others, or potential violation of University policy, I will inform the Office of Student Life. The purpose of this is to keep OSL apprised of incidents of concern, and to ensure that students can receive or stay connected to the academic support and student wellness services they need.

### **Academic Integrity**

Students need to be aware of and follow the university's academic integrity policy. See <http://www.scu.edu/academics/bulletins/undergraduate/Academic-Integrity.cfm>. Plagiarism will lower your grade and may result in an F for the course.

**Calendar TBD** The Calendar will be posted on Canvas.