

Santa Clara University

TESP (Theology, Ethics, and Spirituality) 04

RTC (Religion, Theology, and Culture) 1

The Christian Tradition

SPRING 2015

PROF. PARRELLA

SYLLABUS

“The world is a beautiful and terrible place. Deeds of horror are committed every minute and in the end those we love die. If the screams of all the earth’s living creatures were one scream of pain, surely it would shake the stars. But we have love. It may seem a frail defence against the horrors of the world, but we must hold fast and believe in it, for it is all we have.”

—P.D. James

The First Course in the Religion, Theology, and Culture Curriculum

The first course in Religious Studies aims to enhance critical reflection on religious belief and practice. It introduces students to the basic approaches by which scholars seek to understand what religion reveals about human beings—their societies, traditions, convictions, and aspirations. It provides an opportunity for students to enrich their understanding of their own religious lives and to better comprehend the diverse local and global communities of which they are a part. By attending to the cognitive and affective dimensions of human experience, this component of the core supports religious reflection and critical and synthetic thought.

• Learning Goals of the RTC 1:

(1) Knowledge Global Cultures—the intertwined development of global, including western, cultures, ideas, institutions, and religions.

(2) Habits of Mind & Heart:

- Complexity—an approach to understanding the world that appreciates ambiguity and nuance as well as clarity and precision
- Critical Thinking—the ability to identify, reflect upon, evaluate, integrate, and apply different types of information and knowledge to form independent judgments
- Religious Reflection—questioning and clarifying beliefs through critical inquiry into faith and the religious dimensions of human existence.

• Course Objectives:

(1) Students will be able to 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 of method; ambiguity).

(2) Students will be able to use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs and the religious dimensions of human existence (critical thinking; complexity of method; reflection)

REQUIRED READINGS

Salinger, Jerome David (J. D.). *Franny and Zooey*. New York: Bantam Books, 1964.

Weaver, Mary Jo and David Brakke. *Introduction to Christianity*, 4th ed. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth

Cengage Learning, 2009.

Parrella, Frederick J. *The Idea of Church: Historical and Theological Perspectives*. Unpublished manuscript, Santa Clara University, 2000-2013 (in packet).

The Gospel of Saint Luke and Saint John. (Use any good, readable translation of the New Testament, such as the New American Bible, the New Revised Standard Version, or the New International Version. Many translations can be found online.)

Lane, Dermot. "The Cross of Christ as the Revelation of God." In *Christ at the Center. Selected Issues in Christology*, 53-79. New York: Paulist, 1991; Dublin: Veritas, 1990 (in packet).

Tillich, Paul. "Symbols of Faith." In *Main Works/ Hauptwerke*, vol. 5, *Writings on Religion*, edited by Robert Scharlemann, 250-256. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988. Original work: *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), 41-54 (in packet).

Selections from the Mystical Writings of Hildegard of Bingen, Meister Eckhart, and John Ruusbroec. In *An Anthology of Christian Mysticism*, edited and introduced by Harvey Egan, rev. ed. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996 [1991] (in packet).

Luther, Martin. *Eight Sermons at Wittenberg (1522)*. In Timothy F. Lull, ed., *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, 414-444. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989 (in packet).

"Models of the Church," edited by Frederick J. Parrella. A summary of Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, rev. ed., New York: Doubleday Image, 1987 (in packet).

How to do footnotes—two examples:

¹ J. D. Salinger, *Franny and Zooey* (New York: Bantam Books, 1964), [page #].

² Dermot Lane, "The Cross of Christ as the Revelation of God," in *Christ at the Center. Selected Issues in Christology* (New York: Paulist, 1991), [page #].

NOTE WELL: Only one full reference per page, NOT per page, is necessary See Writing Guides for more information. Xanadu is NOT the publisher, only the copying service.

OUTLINE OF TOPICS IN THE COURSE

This course will examine the Christian tradition both theologically and historically. Central themes include: (1) the meaning of religious experience and the person's encounter with God; (2) the background, life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus; (3) the nature and the development of the Christian Church and the meaning of its symbols and teachings; (4) ancient and medieval Christianity and the separation of Eastern and Western branches of Christianity; (5) the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century; (6) the ecumenical movement and the strengths and weaknesses of Christianity in the inter-religious and globalized world of the 21st century.

PAPERS AND EXAMS

EXAMS

There is *one* exam in this class, the final exam, to be given at the time assigned by the University: **Tuesday, June 9th /9:10 — 12:10.**

The final exam consists of two parts:

(1) Objective Questions—100 multiple-choice questions to be answered on a scantron form.

(2) Final Report: The Christianity in Practice

Visit a local Christian Church in Santa Clara County (or elsewhere) for a Sunday worship service. In *three (3) pages* (minimum), report on the service: what did you learn about the belief system of the church members? Did the service move you or not? Was the service reflective of some of the ideas learned this quarter in this course? Speaking to some people at the Church might be helpful. You may want to refer to some of the readings or ideas discussed in the course.

One important rule: do **not** attend a service from your own tradition. For example, if you are Catholic, go to a Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal service, etc. Highly recommended would be a Greek or Russian Orthodox service. If you have no tradition, or are from a non-Christian tradition, you may choose *any* Christian Church service. You might want to attend with a friend in the class and work on the assignment together (you must submit separate papers.) In your report, be sure you tell the reader the name and address of the Church you have attended, the pastor, the time of worship, and the date you attended. Submit the Sunday bulletin, if there is one, with your report.

Objectives fulfilled: 1 and 2. Students will experience diversity within the Christian tradition and reflect critically on these differences.

Papers

“Good writing is clear thinking made visible” (Bill Wheeler).

- Four papers and a brief final report are required for the course in the form used in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The most recent edition of this work in popular form is this: *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers* by Kate L. Turabian, Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. This contains all the information on the mechanics of a term paper: capitalization, footnotes or endnotes, spelling, punctuation, bibliographies, typing, etc. Also recommended for style and good writing is William Strunk and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*, 3rd ed., New York: Macmillan, 1979 (1935). This classic work contains chapters on elementary rules of usage, principles of composition, formation of style, matters of form, and words and expressions commonly misused in writing. **Please follow the instructions on the Writing Guides, located at the beginning of the course packet, very carefully.**

• Paper One: The Experience of God

An essay (minimum **four** pages) on the two stories *Franny and Zooey* that attempts, in the broadest sense, to answer this question: How does one learn to be authentically religious? Is religion only a personal experience or does it involve community and commitment? What does Christianity and the other great world religions have in common? How do they differ widely? From the texts: **(1)** What does it mean to be with God before God said “Let there be light”; or **(2)** What does it mean to “shine one’s shoes for the Fat Lady”? **(3)** What does Seymour mean when he says that even if you are in a ditch with your throat cut, you must see the woman carrying a basket across the road?

The student does *not* have to answer any of these questions *literally*; they are given as possible avenues of reflection on the stories.

Your essay should be a critical and personal reflection on the content of the two stories. Therefore, *use the text of the stories and make specific references to it*. Be certain this essay and all your essays have: **(1)** a clearly stated and defined thesis; **(2)** a clear, well-developed, and coherent argument based on the text of the stories as interpreted through your experience.

Sources: *Primary:* Salinger, *Franny and Zooey*
 Secondary: Weaver, chapter 10, 11, 12 (if helpful)

Paper due: Tuesday, 4th week.

Objectives fulfilled: 1 and 2. Students will learn the central question in the major religions of East and West and use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs.

• Paper Two: Jesus

A theological essay (minimum **four** pages) on Jesus in the Gospels and the cross of Christ. What do the Gospels say about the God who is really God? What does the cross of Jesus mean? How is the Cross central to Christian faith and practice? Most important, how is the cross the revelation of the God who is really God, i.e., who is the God whom Jesus reveals in his life and death on the cross?

Sources: *Primary:* Lane, *Christ at the Centre*, chapter 3 (in e-packet).
 Primary: The Gospels of Luke and John
 Secondary: Parrella, chapters 2 and 3 (in e-packet).
 Secondary: Weaver, chapters 1 and 2.

Paper due: Thursday, 6th week.

Objectives fulfilled: 1 and 2. Students will use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs in the idea of God and what kind of God is present in Jesus.

• Paper Three: Great Writings of the Christian Tradition

Choice of One

(1) An essay (minimum **four** pages) based on the writings of the medieval mystics that consider the question(s): What was the world-view that inspired the mystics' vision of life? Does this view make any sense to modern individuals today? How do your author(s) approach the meaning of God, faith, and the relation of their faith to daily life? If it is helpful, follow a theme that interested you in the first and/or second paper.

(2) An essay (minimum **four** pages) on the Eight Sermons at Wittenberg by Martin Luther. Select a theme that is of interest to you. Perhaps compare and contrast Luther's idea of God with that of the medieval mystics. How are Luther's ideas still relevant to the Christian churches today? In your opinion, would he be more "Protestant" or "Catholic" today? Compare Luther to Tillich's ideas of "Protestant principle" and "Catholic substance," found in his understanding of symbols.

Sources: *Primary:* Selections from the mystical writings of Hildegard, Eckhart, and Ruusbroec.
Primary: Martin Luther. *Eight Sermons at Wittenberg (1522)* (in e-packet).
Secondary: Weaver, chapter 4, 5.
Secondary: Parrella, chapter 4 and 5 (in e-packet).

Paper due: Tuesday, 9th week.

Objectives fulfilled: 1 and 2. Students will reflect on two different eras, two approaches to God, and two historical traditions within Christianity; they will be able to critically reflect on their own religious traditions

• **Paper Four: A Historical or Theological Essay** (minimum 4 pages)

From Mary Jo Weaver's book, *Introduction to Christianity*, 4th ed., and from Frederick J. Parrella's *The Idea of Church: Historical and Theological Perspectives*, and other readings, select one of the following topic areas in the history of Christianity and write an essay on one of these question(s):

- (1) What is the importance of the Bible in Christianity? How does it differ as a principle of authority in Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and the in the different Protestant churches?
- (2) What are the primary differences among Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and the different Protestant churches with regard to (choose one or more): their idea of the spiritual life, their concept of church, and their relationship to the world?
- (3) What are the primary causes of the Reformation in the 16th century West, and how have four centuries changed our understanding of the meaning of "church" in both traditions?
- (4) How do Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, and the radical reformers differ on the idea of justification, the nature of the human person, the grace of God, and the question of good works?
- (5) What are some of the issues and factors facing the Christian churches' attitude toward involvement with culture and the world today? What is the range of possible reactions and where do you personally stand?
- (6) How can Christians today make their faith in God and in Jesus relevant in a post-modern world?
- (7) Choose a particular problem facing contemporary Christians:
 - (a) the role of women in the church
 - (b) Christian teaching on homosexuality
 - (c) social justice and the Christian
 - (d) a viable and healthy Christian sexual ethic for Millennials
 - (e) "spiritual but not religious" and the meaning of prayer and sacraments in such a world-view.
- (8) Make up a question of your own from the readings of the course and answer it. Have it approved by me in person, email, or telephone.

Note: This final paper may involve some additional research—an article or chapter in a book that explicitly deals with the topic you have chosen.

Paper due: Thursday, 10th week.

Objectives fulfilled: 1 and 2. Students will be able understand and evaluate the ambiguity and complexity of different theological and historical questions; they will also be able to use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs and the religious dimensions of human existence.

NOTE WELL ABOUT PAPERS

On form:

- (1) Be sure to number the pages of your paper and have a title page.
- (2) No bibliography or “works cited” page is required. All the information is contained in the footnotes.
- (3) Only **one** full reference to any work cited in the footnotes is necessary.
- (4) All papers must be double-spaced with no additional space between paragraphs. (Go into “Paragraph” under the “Format” menu and be sure that “Spacing” on the lower left has 0 pt. under “Before” and “After.”)

On deadlines:

- (1) The first **four (4)** papers must be received by the last day of this course for the Winter quarter, **Thursday of the 10th week, by 5 PM.** No exceptions can be made. ***Please remember: there are deadlines and there are consequences if a student does not submit his/her paper on time. Late papers may be returned with a grade but without comment. Late work is usually inadequate work.***
- (2) The final report on the visit to a Christian church is due no later than the beginning of the final exam.

ATTENDANCE

A student is expected to attend **all** classes and attendance is the student’s responsibility. There are often reasons why a student *cannot* or *does* not attend class. Failure to attend class means that the student will be unfamiliar with the assigned reading material as well as ideas presented and discussed in class for the required papers. This cannot but help have a negative impact upon the student’s final grade. Classes are given only once: if you miss class, it is **your** responsibility, not the professor’s, to keep up to date with the course.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Please observe the following rules of professional conduct in a class:

- Students should make every effort to arrive at the classroom on time.
- Students should be suitably dressed for an academic forum.
- No one is permitted to leave the class without permission of the professor until the class has been dismissed except for a *serious* medical emergency. Restroom facilities are available before and after the class, *not* during the class.
- Electronics: cell/smart phones, iPhones, iPods, iPads, electronic tablets, et al. may *never* be used during class time. Please be sure your cell phone is turned off. You would NEVER want your phone to ring in my class. Do not leave cell phones on your desk or on your lap. ***If the professor sees you texting, you will be asked to withdraw from the course immediately.***
- You may use your computer or iPad to take notes. Again, if the professor sees you using your laptop for any other purpose than the work of this class, ***you will be asked to withdraw from the course immediately.***

Thank you for observing these simple and necessary rules.

GRADING POLICY

- (1) Grades will be based on the papers required for the course along with the final exam. The papers will be evaluated on the basis of the student’s ability: (1) to reveal to the reader his/her command of

the assigned readings in both depth and breadth; (2) to develop a clear and coherent argument of the student's choosing based upon the required readings. References to the texts—either citations or direct quotations—are essential.

The papers will count 4/5 and the exam 1/5 of the final grade. Class attendance and participation will also be a *qualitative* factor in consideration of the final grade.

(2) The grade of Incomplete will be given only under special and unusual circumstances. For students who receive a grade of Incomplete: all work required for the course must be submitted no later than the beginning of the fourth week of the following term. Failure to do so means that the grade will automatically be turned over to an “F” by the Office of Student Records at the beginning of the fifth week. This is the grade you will receive for the course and it cannot be changed..

(3) Note well: Students who do not attend class on a consistent basis so that they are known by the professor and other students to be a member of the course in good standing and who fail to contact the professor with the reason for missing class will receive a serious reduction in their final grade based on the level of attendance and quality of participation, whether or not the student submits any work at the end of the term.

Grades and Numerical Equivalents

The numerical equivalents are based on the University's 4.0 grading system:

A = 4.00; A- = 3.7; B+/A = 3.5; B+ = 3.3; B/B+ = 3.15; B = 3; B- = 2.7; C+/B = 2.5; C+ = 2.3; C/C+ = 2.15; C = 2.00; C- = 1.7, et al.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Cheating can take many forms. Please be aware that if you are caught in a situation of academic dishonesty, you will receive an F in the assignment or the exam. The most common form of cheating is plagiarism. Note carefully: *whenever you use the precise words or even the ideas of another, you must give a complete reference (author, title, city, publisher, date, page number) to your source text either in a footnote or end-note.* Copying a paper or borrowing language from a friend, roommate, former teacher, parent, or God is strictly forbidden.

At the same time, it is perfectly legitimate, even desirable, for students to talk over their topics, exchange ideas, and edit each other's papers. This is an important part of the process of learning: sharing your creative ideas with your peers. This presumes that all students collaborating with others both give and receive from such fruitful collaboration.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION POLICY

If you have a documented disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, 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 initiate a conversation with me about your accommodations during my office hours within the first two weeks of class. Students who are pregnant and parenting may also be eligible for accommodations. Accommodations will only be provided after I have verification of your accommodations as approved by Disabilities Resources, and with sufficient lead-time for me to arrange testing or other accommodations. For more information, you may contact Disabilities Resources at [408-554-4109](tel:408-554-4109).

SCHEDULE

A quarter is ten weeks long. The following is a tentative reading schedule so you will know how to plan your reading intelligently. Try to follow it as best as you can. It is your responsibility, *not* that of the professor, to see to it that you are reading in a timely manner.

For the week of:

Week 1	Salinger, <i>Franny and Zooey</i> ; Weaver, chapters 10, 11, 12.
Week 2	Salinger; Parrella, chapter 1; Weaver, chapters 10, 11, 12.
Week 3	The Gospels of Luke and John; Weaver, chapters 1, 2;
Week 4	Lane; Parrella, chapter 2; Weaver, chapters 3, 4.
Week 5	Lane, "The Cross..."; Parrella, chapter 3; Weaver, chapters 4, 5.
Week 6	Weaver, chapters 4, 5, 6; Parrella, chapters 4, 5.
Week 7	Selections from the Mystics, Luther's sermons.
Week 8	Selections from the Mystics, Luther's sermons, Tillich, "Symbols..."
Week 9	Weaver, chapters 7, 8, 9; Parrella, 6, 7, 8, 9.
Week 10	Final week of the spring quarter; finish any uncompleted readings and complete final paper and church visit.
Week 11	Final Exam

CONSULTATION

My office is in **Kenna Hall, Suite 300, Room H**. If you wish to consult with me at any time about your papers or any other issue related to the course or your education at Santa Clara University, please make an appointment after class or by email or telephone for a mutually convenient time. You may call me at home on any day of the week at a reasonable hour with questions you may have. Be sure to leave your telephone number if you reach my voice mail in my office or answering machine at my home. It is always preferable to make an appointment after class or by telephone or email. A quarter goes very quickly and it is up to you to keep up with the assignments. (*So, guys, turn off those video games once in a while.*)

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"When I shall be dead, tell the kingdom of the earth that I have loved it much more than I have ever dared to say."