

TESP 82, **Witches, Saints, and Heretics:**  
**Religious Outsiders**  
Spring Quarter, 2015  
William J. Dohar, PhD



*COURSE SYLLABUS*

**Course Description:** This course *is* about its title but the underlying subject is religious difference along with its praises and penalties in the social and religious categories of heretic (doctrine), witch (power over nature) and saint (unusual virtue). The course is both historical in its search for origins and patterns of religious exclusion, but understood in light of contemporary experience. The course spends a lot of time on the borderlands of any formal religion, but our emphasis (for the sake of focus) is Christianity, so some basic knowledge of that religious tradition is helpful.

**A Blended Course:** Although the majority of our class meetings will be in a classroom at SCU, about 20% of this course takes place in online environments. This online content includes individual and group projects, short research ventures and discussions. Class days when we'll meet online rather than in Kenna Hall are marked below with an asterisk \*.

**Core Learning Objectives:** Since our main focus is on religious outsiders and how the boundaries are established within various historical and cultural settings, our first Core Learning Objective (CLO 1) is to **analyze diverse (and divergent) religious phenomena** including the ways in which they are judged. The medieval Inquisition, for example,

cannot be understood apart from the heresies it hoped to suppress. Secondly, we approach these phenomena from a **variety of historical and theological source perspectives** including, scripture, law (civil and canon), fiction, folk-tale, theological and scientific treatises, biography, letters and personal journals (CLO 2). Since ventures into the realms of magic, religious dissent and holiness touch upon the core beliefs of others, we are invited **to consider our own world-views and ways of believing** (CLO 3). Special consideration of each objective is noted in the course schedule below.

**Texts: All readings for this course are uploaded to Camino (Canvas)**, so you'll need to have regular access to Camino for course materials, weekly announcements (reading questions) and discussion forums. Students should have access to a Bible, a hard copy or e-version. **All sources should be brought to class the day due** so that we can work them to best effect.

**Assessment, Evaluation and Feedback:** course learning objectives are assessed in three main ways—examination, reflective and critical writing and participation in various discussion forums, in and outside the classroom. Two brief **quizzes** chart student retention of basic material drawn from the texts, audios and lectures; a **final exam** (essay form) invites a more synthetic view of the course's major themes and learning objectives; **writing** occurs in two forms, five brief in-class reflections (two or three sentences each) on questions meant to stimulate discussion and **two essays** (4-5 pages) drawn from a list of paper topics and due dates (see the final page of the Syllabus). Lastly, **participation** is central to a course of this nature; every student brings a vital perspective to the content of the course and this is made apparent through regular class participation and **four online discussions**.

**Instructor feedback** reaches students through written comments on papers and online discussions (through Camino) and, in more general ways, during office hours. I'm happy to consult with students on papers **before, during or after** they're written in mentoring the practices of critical thinking and written communication. In addition, students will be encouraged to assess critically their own experience of the course in a mid-quarter survey and in the standard end-of-term narrative evaluation.

**Course Credit** is apportioned in the following ways:

Writing	35% (Including in-class reflections: 5%)
Quizzes	15%
Online Exercises	20%
In-class Participation	15%
Final Exam	15%

**Disabilities:** 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).

**Plagiarism:** All assignments—reading and writing—are due the day assigned. Plagiarism *in any form* will result in certain failure of the project in question and may result in a failing grade for the entire course according to University policies and procedures. Please read carefully: <http://www.scu.edu/studentlife/resources/academicintegrity/>.

## SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

3/31 “Witches, Saints, and Heretics”: An Introduction to the Course

### MODULE 1: HERETICS

- 4/2 HERETICS: Who’s In, Who’s Out? – Marking Boundaries (CLO 1, 2, 3)
- *Galatians 1: 6-12; 1 Peter 2: 1-10*
  - ‘A Class Divided’ (YouTube video)
  - *Eve’s Various Children* (from the Brothers Grimm)
- 4/7 Religion and Exclusion in an Age of Anxiety: Heretics and the Apocalypse (CLO 1, 2, 3)
- C. Berlet, “Dances With Devils: the Logic of Oppression”
  - ‘Southern Baptists Condemn Transgender People’
  - ‘The Science of Transgender’
- \*4/9 How to Become a Heretic: a Case Study (CLO 2)
- NPR, ‘This American Life’: “Heretics” (podcast)

**Online discussion #1:** *based on what you’ve learned about heresy, its definitions and conclusions, what happens in the case of Carlton Pearson? When does he first ‘appear’ to be a heretic? Who decides? What’s heresy ‘from the inside’ look like?* (CLO 2)

- 4/14 Hunting Heretics (CLO 1, 2, 3) **Paper Option 1**
- Bernard Gui's 'Manual for the Inquisitor'

## MODULE 2: WITCHES

- 4/16 WITCHES: From Heresy to Witchcraft **Paper Option 2**
- "Witches" from Jeffrey Richards, *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation*
  - Sorcerers in Java,' *New York Times*, June, 1992

\*4/21 'Witches on the Web'

**Online discussion #2:** For this discussion, first read 'Sorcerers in Java.' Then search the web for another contemporary account of witchcraft somewhere on the globe. Guide questions for the discussion will appear on Camino. (CLO 1, 2)

- 4/23 'Daughters of Eve': the Iconography of Witchcraft **Quiz 1**
- K. Briggs, *A Sampler of British Folk-Tales* (specific tales TBA)

- 4/28 Sexuality, the Feminine and the Making of Witches
- The *Malleus maleficarum*, ('Hammer of Witches'), Part I

- 4/30 Witches and the Law I: Women and the Devil **Paper Option 3**
- The *Malleus maleficarum* (Part II)

- 5/5 Witches and the Law II: Judicial Procedure
- 'The Trial of Suzanne Gaudry' (France, 1652)
  - Frederick Spee, SJ, 'Cautio Criminalis' (Germany, 1637)

- \*5/7 Witches at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba?
- NPR, 'This American Life': 'Habeas Schmabeas' (podcast)

**Online discussion #3:** Listen to "Habeas Schmabeas." How do detainees at the American military base compare with suspects arraigned on charges of witchcraft in the pre-modern era? (CLO 1, 2)

## MODULE 3: SAINTS

- 5/12 SAINTS: God's Presence or Divine Madness? **Paper Option 4**
- 'Investigating Saints: the Current Procedure'

- 5/14 Before They Were Saints: Holiness on the Edges (CLO 1, 2)
- Thomas of Celano on Francis of Assisi (1235)
  - Christina of Stommeln, "Letters" (1272)

- 5/19 Folk Saints and the Ambiguous Hero (CLO 1, 3) **Quiz 2**
- 'St. Pancho Villa?' (J. Griffith, *Folk Saints on the Borderlands*)
  - 'A List of Patron Saints'

- 5/21 Praying to Saints (CLO 1, 2, 3)
- Sandra Cisneros, 'Little Miracles, Kept Promises'

- \*5/26 Saints and the Body (CLO 3)
- K. Harrison, 'What Remains: The Lure of Relics in a Faithless Age'

**Online discussion #4:** based on Kathleen Harrison's article, *what is it about personal remnants, mementos and relics that keeps our hold on them? Is this something we humans need to outgrow or is it another important aspect of spirituality and connection?* (CLO 3)

- 5/28 Sainly Iconography (CLO 2) **Paper Option 5**
- No readings

- 6/2 Sainly Phenomena: Magic or Miracle? (CLO 3)
- Mark Garvey, 'A Date with a Virgin' (from *Searching for Mary*)

- 6/4 Witches, Saints and Heretics: A Retrospect

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**Office Hours:** TR 9a – 10a (and by appointment)

**Contact Info:** [wdohar@scu.edu](mailto:wdohar@scu.edu)  
350 Kenna Hall

**Grading Scale:**

A	100-95	exceptional
A-	94-90	excellent
B+	89-87	very good
B	86-83	good
B-	82-80	solid performance
C+	79-76	average
C	75-72	
C-	71-69	
D	68-64	
D-	63-60	
F	< 59	

## Paper Topics for TESP 82

Before you write a paper, even as you're considering which topic to choose, **make sure you read in the Administration module on our course page the document titled 'How to Write a Paper for TESP 82.'**

Below are five options to consider for your writing assignments in TESP 82. Look at them carefully and **choose two** that you want to work on. Make sure you take into consideration their due-dates. Late papers will *always* incur a penalty.

1. The "logic of oppression": a case study. Apply C. Berlet's logic of oppression to some person or group in *contemporary* society. Try to describe as many of the stages in the logic of oppression as your chosen subject can illustrate. **Due April 14**

2. Discuss social and/or sexual 'heretics' in one of the following films (or any other that you think may fit the category—just clear it with me in advance). If you've seen any of these films already, don't rely on a dated viewing; your thinking about the film and its topic will change in light of this course. What *makes* them heretics? Who does the judging? **Due April 16**

Saved!

Jesus Camp

The Laramie Project

The Pianist

Boys Don't Cry

Monster

3. Images of the witch: choose one of the folktales from Katherine Briggs' collection on witches and analyze the story based on *qualities of the witch* that you've learned about in this course. **Due April 30**

4. Take one of the documents on witch-trials ("The Trial of Suzanne Gaudry" or the Jesuit-authored "*Cautio criminalis*") and comment on judicial procedure. What do you make of it, its organization and procedure? Who's involved in the process and what are the results? **Due May 12**

5. Using Sandra Cisneros's work of fiction, *Little Miracles, Kept Promises* as a 'window' into religious devotion and saintly intercession, choose one or several of these votives—prayer messages—and discuss them. What's going on in them? Are they merely superstitious or is something more significant going on here? **Due May 28**