

**TESP 184: Jesus Across Cultures**  
Spring 2015 MWF 11:45am-12:50 pm

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Office Hours: Thursday 10am-12pm

The course is an exploration and study of selected significant interpretations and images of Jesus of Nazareth in different historical and cultural contexts. Samples of various key historical moments from biblical to contemporary times as well as the variety of interpretations of Jesus in various global contexts will be discussed. The course will explore the interpretations of Jesus from different perspectives: biblical interpretations, American Interpretations, Asian interpretations, African interpretations, Latin American interpretations, Native American interpretations, and feminist interpretations of Jesus.

**CORE CURRICULUM LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

This course fulfills Santa Clara's Core Requirement Religion, Theology, and Culture 3 Core Learning Goals: Knowledge of Global Cultures and Habits of Mind and Heart, Complexity, Critical Thinking, and Religious Reflection.

**Core Goals**

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

**Course Learning Objectives**

1) Gain a basic understanding of the historical Jesus as well as how the church across cultures offered symbolic theological interpretations of Jesus. 2) Be able to articulate the developments of Christologies as well as present the various Christologies in different historical and cultural contexts. 3) Demonstrate the impact of history and cultures that shaped religious ideas, particularly Christian theology.

**Class Texts**

- 1) Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon*, (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004)
- 2) Martin E. Brinkman, *The Non-Western Jesus: Jesus as Bodhisattva, Avatara, Guru, Prophet, Ancestor or Healer?* (Equinox, 2007)
- 3) Kelly Brown Douglas, *The Black Christ*, (HarperOne, 1993)

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Attendance and participation (15%)**

Active participation in class discussions is a requirement of this class. Students will be required to prepare in advance reflections on course readings, discuss them in small groups, and present the keys points of their discussions to the class. Each class day, students are required to write three paragraphs on the assigned readings and post on Camino by 11:30am (late paper is not accepted). The papers will summarize the readings and present the key points discussed by the author.

**Critical reflection papers (20%)**

Papers aim to evaluate student understanding of diverse interpretations of Jesus from various cultural perspectives. These understandings provide new theological and ethical insights to respond to various cultural groups of people in the church as well as open for dialogue with other religious traditions (assessing course goal #1 and #2).

**Midterm exams (60%)**

There will be two midterm examinations, worth 30% each. These exams will evaluate student understanding of the historical Jesus as well as new interpretations of Jesus in America, Africa, Asia, Latin America, etc. These recollections serve as theological and ethical foundations to respond to various religio-cultural and social-political contexts (*assessing course goal #1*).

**Presentations (5%)**

The presentations aim to apply insights from the study of religion, especially from different cultural perspectives of Jesus, to open-ended questions facing contemporary society such as inter-religious dialogue, the liberation of the poor, and ethical concerns in a global context (*assessing course goal #1 and #2*).

**POLICIES**

Regular attendance is required. If you must miss a class, you should inform the instructor in advance. You are responsible for making up missed work.

**Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form (as described in the Student Conduct Code) will result in a failed grade for the project, and possibly for the course. All allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported to the department chair and Office of Student Life. For a full presentation of University policies concerning plagiarism, see: <http://www.scu.edu/studentlife/resources/academicintegrity/>

**Disability Accommodations:**

To receive academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Recourses located in Benson 216. Students must register with Disabilities Resources and provide documentation of a disability to Disabilities Resources prior to receiving academic accommodations

**ASSIGNMENTS**

Critical reflection papers should be either posted on Camino or emailed to me by the end of the day on the day that they are due. Later work will be penalized unless the instructor has granted an extension in advance.

**Grading Scale**Grading Scale:

94-100 A	87-89.9 B+	77-79.9C+	67-69.9D+
90-93.9 A-	83-86.9 B	73-76.9C	63-66.9D
	80-82.9B-	70-72.9C-	60-62.9D-

**Syllabus**

**Week 1** Mar 30 Introduction to the course and its requirements

April 1 Jesus in Art (1<sup>st</sup> assignment). Students will watch *The Face: Jesus in Art* and write a paper (1-2 pages) presenting the various portrayals of Jesus in history. Please indicate the biblical theme(s) and the cultural contexts in which the images of Jesus were portrayed. **Papers should be posted on Camino by 11:30am April 1.**

April 3 **Holiday**

**Week 2**

- April 6 Historical Jesus and Christ of Faith (handouts) (2<sup>nd</sup> assignment)
- April 8 Brinkman, *The Non-Western Jesus*, ch 3&4 The Asian Religious Context (3<sup>rd</sup> assignment)
- April 10 Brinkman, ch 5, The Image of Jesus among The First Christians in China (4<sup>th</sup> assignment)

**Week 3**

- April 13 Brinkman, ch 6, Jesus in A Buddhist Context (5<sup>th</sup> assignment)
- April 15 Brinkman, ch 7&8, The Japanese and Korean Jesus
- April 17 Brinkman, ch 9-11, The Indian Jesus (6<sup>th</sup> assignment)

**Week 4**

- April 20 Brinkman, ch 12-14 The Indonesian Jesus (**reflection paper due**)
- April 22 Asian women's Jesus (Handouts)
- April 24 Brinkman, ch 15&16, The African Religious Context and The African Image of Jesus (7<sup>th</sup> assignment)

**Week 5**

- April 27 **Midterm Exam**
- April 29 Movie: *Son of Man*
- May 1 African Women's Jesus (handouts) (8<sup>th</sup> assignment)

**Week 6 Coloring Jesus**

- May 4 Douglas, *The Black Christ*, ch. 1 (9<sup>th</sup> assignment)
- May 6 Douglas, ch.3
- May 8 Douglas, ch.4 &5 A Womanist Approach to The Black Christ (10<sup>th</sup> assignment)  
Video: *Jesus was Black*

**Week 7 Latin American Jesus**

- May 11 John Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation* (handouts) (11<sup>th</sup> assignment)
- May 13 Bonino, *Jesus Christ Liberator* (handouts)
- May 15 Video: *Romero*

**Week 8 American Jesus (second reflection paper due)**

- May 18 Prothero, *American Jesus*, Introduction and Chapter 1, Enlightened Sage (12<sup>th</sup> assignment)
- May 20 Prothero, *American Jesus*, chapter 2, Sweet Savior
- May 22 Prothero, *American Jesus*, chapter 3 (13<sup>th</sup> assignment)

**Week 9**

- May 25 Holiday
- May 27 Jesus Super Star and Jesus in Hollywood
- May 28 Prothero, 5; Movie: *Jesus Christ Superstar*

**Week 10**

- Jun 1 Peelman, *Christ is A Native American* (handouts) 14<sup>th</sup> assignment)
- Jun 3 Presentation 1
- Jun 5 Presentation 2

**Week 11 Final Exam (TBA)**