

# **TESP 187: Christ and Catholic Theology**

**Spring 2015**

MWF: 2:15-3:20 p.m.

Kenna 109

## **Instructor:**

Sean Gross

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Office hours: MW 1-2 p.m. in Kenna 301

## **Course Description:**

This Religion 3 course focuses on a central element of Catholic theology: the nature of Christ. Christian theology includes treatment of two major types of Christology – Christology from above, which looks at the divinity of Christ, and Christology from below, which considers the humanity of Christ. The bulk of our time will be spent looking at the humanity of Christ, but early in the course we will explore the dual nature of the second person of the Trinity.

This course does not presume affiliation with or deep knowledge of the Catholic – or even Christian – tradition, as the texts we consider should be adequately engaging and clear regardless of previous exposure to the concepts and topics at hand. After looking at Jesus and Bible, Jesus and history, and Jesus and ethics, we will turn to a number of different contemporary Christologies. As we examine these different articulations of the person of Jesus Christ, we will keep in mind the contemporary context and the ramifications of particular understandings of Christ for Christians and non-Christians alike.

## **Objectives**

Students will:

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

**Texts:**

The following texts are required, and are available at the SCU Bookstore.

Borg, Marcus J. *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time: The Historical Jesus & the Heart of Contemporary Faith*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994.

Jenkins, Philip. *Jesus Wars: How Four Patriarchs, Three Queens, and Two Emperors Decided What Christians Would Believe for the Next 1,500 Years*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010.

Johnson, Elizabeth A. *Consider Jesus: Waves of Renewal in Christology*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1990.

Additional course readings, recommended and required, will be available on Camino. Individuals making single copies for their private use are not required to pay copyright fees.

**Structure:**

The course is divided into three units. The first unit focuses on Jesus and the Bible (with an emphasis on the notion of the historical Jesus), Jesus and history (with a focus on the idea of the Christ of faith), and Jesus and ethics. The first unit provides the introductory material needed to complete the two objectives for RTC 3 courses, which are met in units two and three, as well as through discussion throughout the quarter. The second unit turns to voices that could be said to be at the margins of theological consideration, including feminist Christology, liberation Christology, and queer Christology. The third and final unit of the course invites students to participate as members of the “Council of Santa Clara,” which gives each student the charge to present an image of Jesus they have been studying throughout the course. In addition, each student will explain both how that image connects with a contemporary issue, and also articulate the ethical implications of that image for Christians and non-Christians. This final element of the presentations is one of several opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of objectives 3.1 and 3.2.

**Requirements and Grading:**

Participation	30%
Précis of final paper, due April 20	5%
Midterm Exam, held May 4	20%
Book/article review, due May 8	10%
Class presentation, Weeks 8-10	10%
Final paper, due June 11	25%

**Regular participation** in this course is vital for appropriation of the course material. We will discuss how studying the person of Jesus Christ can contribute insights to questions in contemporary society. The diversity of perspectives among both students and the

authors under study will give us great resources for ethical reflection. Satisfies Objectives 3.1 and 3.2 for RTC 3 courses.

**The précis of your final paper** is a short paper proposal. It should be at least one page, and it is designed to encourage you to think about your final paper early in the quarter, since the book/article review and class presentation are linked with the final assignment, too. Please include the image of Jesus you intend to explore, the contemporary issue you plan to link with that image of Jesus, and at least three sources (fully cited) that will help you with your paper.

**The midterm** is your chance to demonstrate mastery of the material associated with the first unit of the course, which centers on the historical Jesus, Jesus and ethics, and early church debates about the nature of Christ. This first unit provides important foundational content for the remainder of the course. Having mastered this material, students will transition to the second and third units, which will assess their ability to meet Objectives 3.1 and 3.2.

**The five-page book/article review** is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your ability to summarize the main points of a book or article, and then to offer a critique of the work. If you opt for a book review, simply write a summary and critique of a book related to the image of Jesus you chose for your final paper. If you choose to write an article review, you must also provide an annotated bibliography with three additional sources (for a total of four sources). More details to follow.

**The 15-minute presentation** showcases your independent research on one of the many images of Jesus that have been advanced in the Catholic (and broader Christian) tradition. Good preparation for this presentation will provide a smooth transition into writing the final paper, as the presentation also requires that you link your image of Jesus with a contemporary issue and offer insights into the ethical ramifications of that Christology for Christians and non-Christians. Satisfies Objectives 3.1 and 3.2 for RTC 3 courses.

**The 10-12-page final paper** is designed to demonstrate mastery of Objectives 3.1 and 3.2 (listed on p. 1 of this syllabus). It is due via email on Thursday, June 11. The paper consists of three sections:

1. Using secondary sources, identify and describe the Christology you have chosen. If you would like to cite Scripture passages aligned with this image of Jesus, that is certainly acceptable.
2. Select and describe a contemporary issue that can be put into dialogue with your image of Jesus. After naming and describing the issue, explain the connection between the issue and the image of Jesus you have chosen. If you focus on the image of Jesus as liberator, a pertinent issue could be sex trafficking or political/military oppression, to name a couple of examples.
3. In the final section of your paper, assess the ethical implications of the image of Jesus you have chosen for Christians and non-Christians.

## **Calendar**

*Unit One (Weeks 1-5) – Who Do You Say That I Am? Classical Theological Positions and Sources*

### Part One: Mapping Biblical Portraits of Jesus

**For April 1:** Read the Gospel of Mark in its entirety

**April 3:** Good Friday (no class)

**For April 6:** Read the Gospel of John in its entirety

### Part Two: The Historical Jesus According to the Jesus Seminar

**For April 8:** Read pp. vii – 39 of *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*  
Extra credit assignment due in class today

**For April 10:** Read pp. 46-88 of *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*

**For April 13:** Read pp. 96-137 of *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*

### Part Three: The Christ of Faith as Examined in Early Church Controversies

**For April 15:** Read pp. vii-37 of *Jesus Wars*

**For April 17:** Read pp. 41-101 of *Jesus Wars*

**For April 20:** Read pp. 103-163 of *Jesus Wars*  
The 1-2-page précis of your final paper is due today. Please send it to me via email by 1 p.m.

**For April 22:** Read pp. 169-226 of *Jesus Wars*

**For April 24:** Read pp. 229-278 of *Jesus Wars*

### Part Four: Jesus and Ethics

**For April 27:** Read the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) and selections from *Just Peacemaking* and *Jesus and Virtue Ethics* (Camino)

**For April 29:** Read selections from *Go and Do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics* (Camino)

**For May 1:** Read selected writings by John Stuart Mill and W.D. Ross (Camino)  
Midterm on May 4

*Unit Two (Weeks 6-8) – What God Has [Not] Assumed, God Has [Not] Saved – Looking to Unexamined Voices*

**For May 6:** Read pp. 42-98 in *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (Camino)

**May 8: 2:00-3:15 p.m. in the St. Clare Room** “Citizens and Leaders: The Public Role of the Humanities,” a talk by Martha Nussbaum that we will attend in lieu of class  
Article/Book review due via email by noon on May 8

**For May 11:** Read pp. 1-15 and 35-63 in *Consider Jesus*

**For May 13:** Read pp. 97-126 in *Consider Jesus*, and also selections from *A Theology of Liberation* (Camino)

**For May 15:** Read chapters 4, 5, and 7 in *Christology from the Margins* (Camino)

**For May 18:** Read chapter 3 from *Enfleshing Freedom* and chapters 8 and 10 in *Christology from the Margins*

*Unit Three – The Council of Santa Clara*

In Weeks 8-10, students will take turns presenting on the Christology they chose to focus on, sharing the image of Christ from the perspective of the author(s) whose texts were consulted for the research, stating which contemporary issue they explored through the lens of that Christology, and assessing the ethical implications of that image of Jesus for Christians and non-Christians today.

Students are expected to be in attendance for all presentations, and to be a good audience for their fellow classmates. Each student will field questions after presenting, so listen intently and be prepared to ask the presenter for more information or to offer comments. Participation in the Council of Santa Clara constitutes a significant portion of the participation grade.

**May 20:** Student Presentations

**May 22:** Student Presentations

**May 25:** Memorial Day (no class)

**May 27:** Student Presentations

**May 29:** Student Presentations

**June 1:** Student Presentations

**June 3:** Student Presentations

**June 5:** Wrap-up and Review

Final Papers are due via email by noon on Thursday, June 11.

## **Policies**

### Attendance:

Participation constitutes a significant portion of the grade, and it is therefore critical that you miss as little classroom time as possible. That being said, things come up. If you are sick, please stay home and get better, but notify me via email no later than 12 p.m. on the day you will be missing class. If it is some sort of medical emergency, or there is a funeral, please be prepared to offer evidence to excuse the absence. Students missing 4 or more classes will automatically face a letter-grade reduction (at a minimum), and only two unexcused absences are allowed. Two tardies constitute one unexcused absence, so please be sure to get to class on time. That way, we will be able to focus on the work we will do together instead of facing distractions.

### Food:

Yes. You may eat, but please be considerate of others. Please be mindful of both the sound and fragrance associated with the food and drink you bring to class, and do pick up after yourself if you make a mess.

### Breaks:

We will not be taking any breaks, because class is 65 minutes. Please plan accordingly. If you need to use the restroom, please quietly excuse yourself and return in a timely fashion.

### A word on academic integrity:

The university has published materials related to academic integrity, including the following resource: <http://scu.edu/studentlife/resources/upload/Academic-Integrity-brochure-2014.pdf>

As a student at Santa Clara University, you are likely familiar with the three Cs: conscience, competence, and compassion. These values are a helpful way to think about academic integrity. By going against one's conscience, one fails to demonstrate how much has been learned in a class (competence) by taking the easy way out. With the opportunity to attain a world-class education that is centered on educating the whole person, maintaining integrity in all spheres of life will help to foster compassion for a world that so desperately needs it. Cutting corners now serves no one, and violations of the university's academic integrity policy may result in a failing grade in this course. To the three Cs, let's add a fourth: citation. Any work that is used to bolster your argument but which did not originate from your own brilliant mind must be cited. If you have questions about this, please do not hesitate to ask.