

JESUS TAKES A SELFIE



CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

Examination of the religious, theological and ethical issues and perspectives raised by various media: print, visual, audio, multimedia, and virtual. Special attention will be given to the nature of their relationship and the religious and spiritual issues currently present in their interface. The course fulfills RTC3 requirements for the core curriculum. (5 units)

RTC 3 CORE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

3.1 Students will be able to identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions, specifically those at the intersection of media, religion and culture.

3.2 Students will be able to evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society.

DIGITAL AGE PATHWAY

This course is associated with Pathway(s) in the Digital Age Pathway. A main Pathway goal will be to deepen knowledge and understanding of the complex interplay between social, moral, political and cultural values and our digital society through integrative, cross-disciplinary learning. If you declare a Pathway in this area you may use a representative piece of work from this course in the Pathway Portfolio you will complete during your senior year. Therefore, it is recommended that you keep electronic copies of your work using Dropbox, iCloud, or Google Docs in addition to saving copies on your own computer or flash drives. This may ensure you will have a range of choices for retrieving your saved files when you analyze and assemble your Pathway materials in preparation to write the Pathway reflection essay.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Increasingly, religion is experienced not only in sacred spaces, and through ritual and scripture, but is also communicated through radio, TV, and the internet, as well as in consumer culture and political campaigns. Likewise, religious communities are consciously adapting new communication technologies to further their missions, outreach, self-identity, and community formation. This course examines the historical and theoretical significance of the intersection between communication technologies and religious communities. In particular, the course will focus on new media technologies and the unique issues of user generated content, non- (or less) hierarchical information flow, and formation of religious community in social networks. The course will ask students to explore the significance of religion as a cultural phenomenon as well as to take seriously the theological significance of media practices as articulated by religious subjects. Original student research projects on religion and new media use are a core component of the class. The course will primarily focus on U.S.-based media technologies and Christian religious communities, though comparisons will be made with other geographies and other religious traditions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will describe the convergence of media, religion, and culture from religious, theological, social scientific and other theoretical perspectives;
- Students will explain how religion, civil religion, myth, and ritual interact with and through media;
- Students will apply communication theories to contemporary manifestations of religion and media;
- Students will learn key concepts and methods to identify theological meaning of religious practices, as articulated by religious practitioners and religion scholars;
- Students will compare media and religion functions and practices in the United States, and primarily among Christian religious communities, with other geographies and other religious traditions;
- Students will evaluate the various areas of inquiry within religion and media and identify their own areas of interest;
- Students will undertake research through which they will demonstrate the ability to frame and investigate questions empirically, present their work to their peers, and present the fruits of their research in visual, written, and spoken formats.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SYLLABUS MAY CHANGE THROUGHOUT THE QUARTER TO BETTER ADDRESS THE LEARNING NEEDS OF STUDENTS OR RESPOND TO OTHER CONTINGENCIES.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required Texts:

dana boyd, *It's Complicated: the Social Lives of Networked Teens* (Newhaven: Yale University Press) ISBN-13: 978-0300199000

Elizabeth Drescher, *Tweet If You ♥ Jesus: Practicing Church in the Digital Reformation* (New York: Church Publishing, 2011). ISBN-13: 978-0819224231

Pope Francis, *Laudato si'* (Praise be to you - On Care For Our Common Home). Encyclical, Pope Francis (May 24, 2015) [Camino]

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium : Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World* (November 24, 2013) [Camino]

Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei* (The Light of Faith). Encyclical. (June 29, 2013) [Camino]

We will also be reading articles, book chapters, and online materials each week. These will be posted on Camino.

Attendance (5 Points): Students must regularly attend class. Students who are absent or late are responsible for obtaining missed material from classmates. Students should not expect the professor to provide overviews of content from missed classes, readings, handouts, or other materials. More than two unexcused absences will automatically result in a lower grade and chronic lateness will also be reflected in our evaluation of your participation. Absences due to a verifiable documented emergency (e.g. dire medical condition or family emergency) or a pre-approved activity (e.g. university sanctioned travel) will not affect a student's overall attendance and participation grade. However, the student is still responsible for obtaining missed material from classmates. If a student is involved in any university sanctioned activity (e.g. athletics) that conflicts with class, they must give the instructor written documentation of the activity at the beginning of the quarter.

Intellectual Engagement (10 Points): Although a portion of this course will be devoted to lectures, a larger portion will be devoted to class discussions. Everyone is expected to contribute to discussions. Therefore, it is essential that students complete the assigned readings before coming to class.

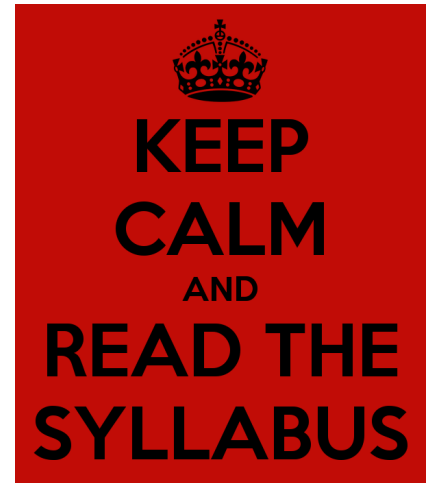
To help with this, students will be asked to write a 250 to 300-word summary (about two paragraphs) of the readings or other course preparation materials for each class. Summaries will be collected at the end of each class (primarily to track attendance), but their main purpose is to help students prepare for the class discussion by (1) identifying the main points of the materials we're studying together; (2) noting the evidence that supports the main point(s); and (3)



posing 1 or 2 questions, curiosities, or critiques raised by the material. The summaries also give the professor the opportunity to understand something of how students who are less verbal in class discussions understand the reading. These papers must be submitted at the end of class on the day of the discussion. Students will receive no credit for the summary if they are not in class. A reading guide is provided on the course Camino site. (RTC 3.1)

Midterm Exam (20 Points): There will be an online, take-home midterm exam during week five of the course. The exam format will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions exploring conceptual issues related to the impact of new media on religious practice and of religion on new media practice. Readings, lectures, videos, handouts, and in-class exercises are all source material for exam questions. (RTC 3.1, RTC 3.2)

Digitally-Integrated Religion Project (40 Points): Throughout the quarter, students will use digital formats (blogs, podcasts, videos, Facebook groups, Instagram feeds, Pinterest boards, TweetChats, online photo montages, online magazines, etc.) to explore the relationship between new media and religion as it is understood through the teachings of Pope Francis on economic justice, environmental justice, and evangelism. [Note well: We are focusing on the teachings of Pope Francis because they offer insights in to a very recent body of thought from a world religious leader with a powerful media presence. Our attention to Francis is not meant as a specific endorsement of his ideas, but as an occasion to seize a cultural moment in religion and media that can be applied to other religious or nonreligious groups, leaders, or ordinary practitioners.] (RTC 3.1, RTC 3.2) Elements of the project, which will play out throughout the course, include:



Small Group: Five groups will be formed during the **first class** to develop a common platform (blog site, podcast series, digital photo collaborative, Facebook group, etc.) on which individual students in the class will post throughout the quarter on topics identified by the groups. The content of the platforms will focus on the teachings of Pope Francis, but the structure and process of participating in the platforms will be determined by student groups.

Platform Proposal: During the **second week of class**, each group will submit a one-page, written proposal for the platform (**5 points**). Proposals should include a description of the platform, the issues or themes in religion it aims to address.

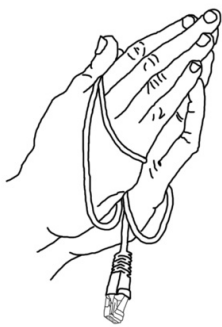
Platform Presentation: During the **third week of class**, each group will present an overview of their platform to the whole class, provide examples of other sites that they have used as models for the platform, and outline guidelines for submitting content to the group managing the platform. Students will sign up to post on each of the platforms after the presentations. (**10 points**)

Student Developed Content: Links to these platforms will be posted on the Classroom Commons on the course Camino site, and students will post to *each of the platforms* through **weeks four to nine** of the course. Content will focus on the teachings of Pope Francis (roughly, weeks 4-5, *Laudato Si*; weeks 6-7, *Evangelii Gaudium*; weeks 8-9, *Lumen Fidei*). Content will be evaluated, edited, and prepared for posting by the small groups with input from the professor. This means that both the student groups and the students posting to their platforms must have read and reflected on the teachings of Pope Francis in light of their own experiences and events in the world around them. Students will also comment regularly on what they learn through engaging other students' research, perspectives, and insights. (**15 points**)

Through a collaboration with the Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education, students will have the opportunity to submit their content for publication on the Ignatian Center website as well as on Religion News Service, and the *Bearings* blog.

Final Presentation: During the **final week of class**, each student group will deliver a 20-minute, digitally-integrated presentation on what they have learned from the development, management, and submissions to the platform they have been managing in light of a key theme in new media and religion explored in the class and further illuminated through their independent research (**10 points**).

Final Exam (25 Points): An exam during finals week combining multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions, will allow students to demonstrate their conceptual and practical understanding of issues related to the impact of new media on religious practice and of religion on new media practice. Readings, lectures, videos, handouts, in-class exercises, and student presentations and media content are all source material for exam questions. (RTC 3.1, RTC 3.2)



GRADING

Students will be evaluated based on their completion of the course requirements listed above and the quality of their work. There are no extra credit assignments for this class. The final course grade will be determined according to the following formulas:

- Attendance: 5%
- Intellectual Engagement : 10%
- Digitally-Integrated Religion Project: 40%
- Midterm Exam: 20%
- Final Exam: 25%

A = 94-100	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69
A- = 90-93	B = 84-86	C = 74-76	D = 64-66
	B- = 80-83	C- = 70-73	



SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

(Please note that this schedule is subject to change based on the needs of the class.)

CLASS SESSION	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
Week 1	Introducing New Media and Religion	
Wednesday	Introduction to the Course	Read: Course syllabus Task: Digitally-Integrated Religion Groups formed
Friday	New Media Habitus	Read: Drescher, <i>Tweet</i> , Introduction and ch. 1, pp. 1-33.
	Make sure to begin reading the teachings of Pope Francis early in the quarter. Links to his teachings and brief overviews are provided on Camino.	
Week 2	New Media and Religion as Cultural Practice	
Monday	Religion as Culture	Read: Drescher, <i>Tweet</i> , Introduction and ch. 2, pp. 34-53.
Wednesday	Media as Culture	Read: Geertz, Clifford. (1973). "Religion as a Cultural System," In <i>The Interpretation of Cultures</i> (New York: Basic Books), pp. 87-125 [Camino] Task: Submit Platform Proposal in class
Friday	Practicing Mediated Religious Culture	Read: Morgan, David. (2008). "Introduction. Media, Religion, Culture: The Shape of the Field" in D. Morgan (Ed.) <i>Keywords in Media, Religion, and Culture</i> . New York: Routledge, pp. 1-19. [Camino]
Week 3	Mediating Religion	
Monday	Platform Overviews	Task: Each group will have 10 minutes to provide an

CLASS SESSION	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
		overview of their platform
Wednesday	Religion as Media/Mediation	Read: Zito, Angela. (2010). "Religion as Media(tion)" in B. Verter and J. Wolfart (Eds.) <i>Rethinking Religion 101: Critical Issues in Religious Studies</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Camino]
Friday	Media Logics	Read: Hjarvard, Stig. (2008). "The Mediatization of Religion: A Theory of the Media as Agents of Religious Change." <i>Northern Lights</i> , 6(2008), pp. 9-26 [Camino]
Week 4	Mediated Selves	
<i>Have you read "Laudato Si"?</i>		
Monday	Mediated Identity	Read: boyd, <i>It's Complicated</i> , Introduction, chs. 1-2, pp. 1-76
Wednesday	Mediated Religious Selves	Read: Tom Beaudoin, Part I: "Why Religion Still Matters: GenX, Pop Culture, and the Search for God," in <i>Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X</i> (Jossey-Bass, 2000), pp.3-49. [Camino]
Friday	Guest speaker: Theresa Ladrigan-Whelpley, PhD, Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education	Class will be held in the recording studio in the Arts & Sciences building Read: TBD Task: Posts to <i>Platform A</i> due
Week 5	Mediating Troubled Souls	
Monday	Media Dangers	Read: boyd, <i>It's Complicated</i> , chs. 3-175, pp. 77-175
Wednesday	Mindful Mediation Guest speaker: Alex Pang, author of <i>The Distraction Addiction</i>	Read: Alex Soojung Kim Pang, excerpts from <i>The Distraction Addiction</i> [Camino] Read: Kevin Healey, "Disrupting Wisdom 2.0: The Quest for "Mindfulness" in Silicon Valley and Beyond," <i>Journal of Religion, Media and Digital Culture</i> , Vol. 4:1 (2015) [Camino]
Friday	Online Midterm Exam	No in-class session Task: Posts to <i>Platform B</i> due
Week 6	Digitally-Integrated Community	
<i>Have you read "Evangelii Gaudium"?</i>		
Monday	Can Digital Space be Spiritual Communities?	Read: Asamoah-Gyadu, J. (2008). "Community" in D. Morgan (Ed.) <i>Keywords in Media, Religion, and Culture</i> . New York: Routledge, pp. 56-68. [Camino] Drescher, <i>Tweet</i> , chs. 4-5, pp. 74-107
Wednesday	Young People Negotiating Community	Read: boyd, <i>It's Complicated</i> , ch. 8. 199-214 Task: Posts to <i>Platform C</i> due
Friday	Shaping Digitally-Integrated Spiritual Community	Campbell, Heidi. "How Religious Communities Negotiate New Media Religiously," in <i>Digital Religion, Social Media and Culture: Perspectives, Practices and Futures</i> , edited by Paula Hope Cheong, et al. (Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 81-96 [Camino]
Week 7	Mediating Justice	
Monday	Digital Activism	Read: boyd, <i>It's Complicated</i> , ch. 6, pp. 153-175
Wednesday	Digital Inequality	Read: boyd, <i>It's Complicated</i> , ch. 7, pp. 176-198
Friday	Exploring Digital Diversity	Online applied theory practice session Task: Posts to <i>Platform D</i> due
Week 8	<i>Have you read "Lumen Fidei"?</i>	
Monday	Practicing Digitally-Integrated Justice	Read: Drescher, <i>Tweet</i> , chs. 6-8, pp. 108-153

CLASS SESSION	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
Wednesday		Read: Wooten, “Who Has the Right to be Violent?” <i>Bearings</i> (November 12, 2015) Baker, “Loving in Public,” <i>Bearings</i> (January 14, 2016)
Friday	Exploring Digitally-Integrated Activism	Online applied theory practice session Task: Posts to <i>Platform D</i> due
Week 9	Wildcard Sessions	
	Content for wildcard sessions will be developed by students after the midterm exam, in consultation with the professor.	
Monday	TBD	TBD
Wednesday	TBD	TBD
Friday	TBD	TBD
Week 10		
Monday	Student Presentations	Groups A and B
Wednesday	Student Presentations	Groups C and D
Friday	Student Presentations Final Exam Review	Group E
Finals Week	**FINAL EXAM DATE TBD**	

COURSE POLICIES

Accountability: You are expected to read and adhere to the guidelines set forth in this syllabus. You are expected to ask questions and get clarification about anything in the syllabus that you do not understand during the first week of class. Do not wait until the end of the semester to express confusion with the course expectations. Before emailing the professor with questions about assignments, please be sure that you have carefully reviewed the syllabus.

Classroom Behavior: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to discipline, up to and including being asked to leave the class. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion, and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions. In order to assure a classroom environment conducive to learning, please turn off your cell phones and refrain from texting, surfing, sleeping, or engaging in other activities unrelated to the class. Unless specifically directed to do so by the professor in the context of class learning objectives, students may not use any digital device in class, including laptops, smartphones, smart watches, tablets, or technologies as yet known by the professor. (Students with a certified disability may use laptops for note-taking. See below for *Disability Accommodation* policies.) Students who violate this policy by texting, posting, or otherwise distracting the professor or other students with digital activity or other disruptive practices will be asked to leave the class and will be marked absent for that class. Students who violate the policy more than one time may receive a failing grade for the course.



Attendance: Attendance will be taken in each class. Prompt attendance for each class session is required. **More than two excused or unexcused absences will negatively impact a student’s final grade.** Arriving late or leaving early more than two times will count as an absence. If students must miss a class, it is their own responsibility to get notes from a classmate and make up missed work. The professor will not meet with students during office hours to make up material from missed classes.

Academic Integrity: Students should read and understand the University's policy with regard to academic integrity: <http://www.scu.edu/studentlife/resources/upload/Academic-Integrity-Policy-and-Protocol.pdf>

Suspected violations of academic integrity (“e.g., plagiarism, falsification of data, misrepresentation of research...and other acts generally understood to be dishonest”) will be investigated immediately, and students shown to have violated the University academic integrity policy will receive a failing grade on the assignment and may also fail the course.

It is worth noting that what constitutes plagiarism is often misunderstood, and students often plagiarize unintentionally. Students are advised to take particular care when quoting, summarizing, or paraphrasing another source in writing assignments or oral presentations so that the student does not appear to be representing the words, thoughts, or ideas of the source as her or his own. The University of North Carolina provides a handout on plagiarism that may be helpful for students to review: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/plagiarism.html>.

Disability Accommodation: If you have a 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 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 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 and click on the link for the University's [Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie at 408-554-3043 or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.com <http://stage-www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethics-point/>

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. 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. Reports may be submitted online through

www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: 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.