

TESP 184: Jesus Across Cultures

Spring 2016 TTh 2:00pm-3:40pm

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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 people 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.

This course is associated with the Race, Place & Social Inequalities Pathway: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PATHWAYS. You can find information about Pathways on the Core Curriculum website <https://www.scu.edu/provost/core/> including specific Pathways, all courses associated with them, and the Reflection Essay prompt and rubric used to evaluate the final essay you will submit.

<https://www.scu.edu/provost/core/pathways/pathway-reflection-essay-instructions/essay-submissions/>
SAVE YOUR WORK FROM THIS CLASS

If you declare this Pathway, you may use a representative piece of work from this course as one of the Pathway materials you will upload via eCampus during your junior or senior year. Therefore, we recommend that you keep electronic copies of your work using Dropbox 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.

Class Texts

- 1) *Gospel of Luke*
- 2) Martin E. Brinkman, *The Non-Western Jesus: Jesus as Bodhisattva, Avatara, Guru, Prophet, Healer?* Equinox, 2007.
- 3) Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.
- 4) Kelly Brown Douglas, *The Black Christ*, HarperOne, 1993.
- 5) Supplementary reading materials will be posted on Camino.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Daily Assignments and Participation (20%)

Active participation in class discussions is a requirement of this class. Students will be required to prepare in advance reflections on course readings and discuss them in small groups. Each class day, students are required to write a one-page paper (single space) on the assigned readings. Each class, five to seven students will be chosen at random to present their papers. Papers will be graded on a pass/fail basis. A failed paper will result in a reduction of 5% of your participation grade. (*assessing course learning objectives #1*).

Examinations (60%)

There will be three examinations, worth 20% each. These exams will evaluate student understanding of the historical Jesus as well as new interpretations of Jesus in different cultural contexts. These recollections serve as theological and ethical foundations to respond to various religio-cultural and social-political contexts (*assessing course goal #1*). These understandings also provide new theological and ethical insights to respond to various cultural groups of people in the church as well as to be open for dialogue with other religious traditions (*assessing course goal #1 and #2*). (No makeup exams).

Synthesis Paper (20%)

You will submit a 10- page synthesis paper at the end of the quarter. The paper aims 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*). The paper also articulates the developments of Christologies as well as present the various Christologies in different historical and cultural contexts (*assessing course learning objectives #2*).

Attendance Policies

Students are required to attend every class. You are allowed one unexcused absence without penalty. Two additional unexcused absences will lower your final grade one level. (For example, if you earn an A with two unexcused absences, your final grade will be B; if you earn a B with two unexcused absences, your final grade will be C, etc; Four (4) additional unexcused absences will lower your final grade from A to C; B to D, etc. Five (5) or more unexcused absences will result in automatic failure for the course. If you experience life-altering circumstances and cannot attend class, please inform the instructor.

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.

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/>

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

Mar 29	<p>Introduction to the course.</p> <p>Assignments: you write a one- page paper (single spaced) that will present your understanding/ knowledge about Jesus. (For example, where have you learned or heard about Jesus? What have you learned about Him? (eg., his background, biographies, characteristics, etc.) Who is Jesus to you? (eg., a philosopher, teacher, friend, Son of God, mystical person, religious leader, revolutionary, republican, socialist, etc.). What image(s) of Jesus do you have in mind? What are the titles, symbols, and theological presentations of Jesus you have learned or heard? What characteristics of Jesus that have inspired you?) If you come from other religious traditions, please present your understanding of Jesus from your own religious tradition(s) (paper due March 31).</p>
March 31	<p>Jesus in The Gospels</p> <p>In this class, we will explore how Jesus is presented in the four gospels: Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John. We will also discuss a) the differences between historical Jesus and Christ of faith; b) the similarities and differences between the gospels in presenting Jesus and how the early church understood Jesus? <i>Video Clip: The Gospel According to St. Matthew</i> (paper due).</p>
April 5	<p>Jesus According To The Gospel of Luke</p> <p>This week, we will begin our exploration of how Jesus is presented and portrayed in the Gospel of Luke. We also study the biblical and cultural characteristics of the Mediterranean world in the first century.</p> <p>Themes to consider: a) the dominant images of Jesus presented in the Gospel of Luke; groups of people Jesus related to; Jesus' teaching; women in Jesus' ministry. Also, the cultural world of Jesus and your own culture? (paper due). <i>Gospel of Luke: chapter 1-8</i> (John J. Pilch, <i>The Cultural World of Jesus</i>(handouts)</p>
April 7	<p>We continue our exploration of the cultural world of Jesus and examine how the Mediterranean culture shaped the gospel stories. We also study how Jesus has been presented in the Christian arts in the last many centuries. John J. Pilch, <i>The Cultural World of Jesus</i> (handouts) Video: <i>The Face: Jesus in Arts.</i> (paper due).</p>
April 12	<p>Jesus in the Chinese and Buddhist Contexts</p> <p>This week, we will explore the new interpretations of Jesus in the Chinese and Buddhist contexts. We will look at the history of Christianity in China and how the early church in China has incorporated Taoist and Confucian elements into Christian teachings. Martin E. Brinkman, <i>The Non-Western Jesus</i>, chapter 5&6 (paper due).</p>
April 14	<p>Martin E. Brinkman, 8 (No paper) Video: <i>Three Pillars: Confucius, Jesus and Mohammed</i></p>
April 19	<p>Jesus in the Hindu Contexts</p> <p>Themes to consider: Hindu theological concepts and Christian understanding of God? Jesus and Krishna? Hindu and Christian understandings of the Trinity and salvation? (paper due). Martin E. Brinkman, 9 &11.</p>

April 21	Jesus in the Philippines (handouts)
April 26	<p>The African Jesus</p> <p>This week, we will explore the different interpretations of Jesus from African perspectives. We will focus on a) the characteristics of African theology; b) African interpretations of the cross; c) images of Jesus presented by African theologians as well as the theological implications of new images of Jesus? Martin E. Brinkman, 15 & 16 (paper due).</p>
April 28	In this class, we will watch one of the fascinating films on Jesus, <i>Son of Man</i> , that presents Jesus in the African context. Movie: <i>Son of Man</i> (No paper).
May 3	In -class Midterm #1
May 5	<p>American Jesus</p> <p>In this class, we will explore the various interpretations of Jesus in the US in the last couple of centuries. Themes to consider: a) Thomas Jefferson's understanding of Jesus and his contribution to reconstructing new interpretations of Jesus; b) the Jesus Seminar and Jefferson's approach? Prothero, <i>American Jesus</i>, Introduction & chapter 1 (paper due).</p>
May 10	<p>American cultural images of Jesus in the 19th and 20th centuries Prothero, 2&3 (paper due).</p>
May 12	<p>American Jesus</p> <p>Themes to consider: a) the Jesus Movement and its impact on American culture and religion; b) people who got involved in the Jesus Movement; c) American images of Jesus in the 60s and 70s and ; d) the distinction between cultural and religious icons. Prothero, 4.</p>
May 17	<p>The Black Christ</p> <p>As we begin to study the interpretations of Jesus from African American perspectives, please pay attention to: a) the roots of the Black Christ; b) the justification of slavery; c) the Christianization of slaves; d) African American understanding of Jesus; g) different interpretations of Christ within the Black community; and h) the Black Christ within the Black struggle movements. Douglas, <i>The Black Christ</i>, chapter 1&2 (The Roots of The Black Christ) (paper due)</p>
May 19	<p>The Black Christ</p> <p>Douglas, ch. 3 &4 (The Theological Development of The Black Christ) (paper due).</p>
May 24	Native American Jesus (handouts)
May 26	<p>Latin American Jesus</p> <p>Latin American interpretations of Jesus based on Social Gospel and Liberation Theology Video: <i>Archbishop Romero</i></p>

<p>May 31</p>	<p>Latin American Jesus (<i>Class Discussion and Reflection Paper</i>) Your reflection paper will respond to these following themes: 1) the "Mystical body of Christ" manifested in the film "Romero?" 2) traditional images of Jesus in Latin America? 3) conscience according to Christian teachings is not merely making decisions between right and wrong; in what way did Archbishop Romero exercise his conscience? 4) the dominant images of Jesus presented in the film; 5) how does the gospel message contribute to shaping Romero's ethical choices? 6) the different or contradicting images/understandings of church in Latin America.</p>
<p>June 2</p>	<p>John Sobrino, <i>Spirituality of Liberation</i>, (handouts) (<i>synthesis paper due</i>).</p>
<p>June 6-10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">In-class Midterm #2 (TBA)</p>