RSOC 9: Ways of Understanding Religion Prof. Philip Boo Riley priley@scu.edu ; 408 554 2199; Kenna 300B Spring Quarter, 2017 MWF 1:00-2:05 p.m., Kenna 111 Office Hours: W, 2:10-3:00 **& by appt**.

Course Description

This RTC 1 course focuses on ways to think about religion, with a special interest in how religion plays out in public life. We read authors who engage our interest from within different traditions (Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Atheism) and we develop categories through which to analyze their engagements and think about issues and questions they may raise. The significance of an important objective--to shift our thinking from religion to religious persons—will become clear as the course progresses.

Meeting with Students

I like to meet with students outside of class. In previous quarters students have gone over items on their category worksheets with me, discussed their weekly reflections, followed up on quiz questions, clarified or challenged an idea I introduced in class, pursued something in a reading that warranted further discussion, etc. In these instances, students took the initiative to reach out. My one designated office hour is only a placeholder; we can usually find a time to meet that is convenient for both of us after only a couple of e-mails. I am also open to setting up regular meetings with individual (or small groups of) students.

Texts

- Gregory Boyle, S.J., Tattoos on the Heart (Free Press, 2010)
- James Cone, The Cross and the Lynching Tree (Orbis, 2011)
- Sigmund Freud, The Future of an Illusion, tr. J. Strachey (W.W. Norton, 1989)
- Thich Nhat Hanh, Peace Begins Here: Palestinians and Israelis Listening to Each Other (Parallax Press, 2004)
- Eboo Patel, Acts of Faith (Beacon Press, 2010)
- Elie Wiesel, Night (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006)
- Other readings (from, e.g., Martin Luther King) posted on Camino

Because our readings are not textbooks they require a particular kind of engagement. Indeed, much of our time this quarter will be devoted to discussing ways to engage texts like these and to use them as springboards for discussion and reflection.

Community as Text

The course includes an independent project on religion in Silicon Valley. It will take students off campus several times during the quarter. As with the text for this class, students will expend time engaging the site chosen for their project, incur expenses (transportation), and ideally will learn something new.

Outcomes

A simple approach to outcomes is to pose a question, What will students get out of this course? Answers will vary.

The University has set two outcomes for all RTC 1 courses, calling them "learning objectives":

- "Describe and compare the central religious ideas and practices from several traditions or within one, and from at least two globally distinct regions."
- "Use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs and the religious dimensions of human existence." (2015-16 Core Curriculum Guide, p. 11)

Although not a perfect match (For reasons we will discuss in the first week, we try not to study religions by isolating their "central ideas...and practices"), this course was designed to help students engage those objectives. For instance, we may compare how Martin Luther King and Thich Nhat Hanh, Christian and Buddhist respectively, drew on their faith traditions to address politically-charged conflicts in their different countries. And the variety of categories and readings (including one that advocates removing religion from public life altogether) help students develop critical tools with which to think about how people—including themselves—live out religious convictions (or not) in various settings.

The instructor has also set outcomes for this particular course, all of which serve my primary intent, to change the way students think about religion.

- Students will replace generalizations about religions with specific questions about particular religious persons.
- Students will practice humility about the extent to which they can understand others' religious lives.
- Students will come to appreciate ambiguity in the study of religious texts and people.
- Students will become aware of how "religion" is constructed and represented in different settings.
- Students will engage a facet of the rich and complex religious landscape of Silicon Valley.
- Students will use this course to improve their reading and writing practices.

Students are encouraged to develop their own outcomes for this course during the first week of class, and return to them, and those above, throughout the quarter.

Engaging Those Outcomes: Requirements and Grade Weighting

Students realize the course outcomes in this class to the extent they engage in activities they have been doing since kindergarten: read, write, and talk. The following "course requirements" are about those activities; they help direct students' energy and ground the weighted grading system for this course.

- *Class Engagement.* Informed participation in class is expected and highly valued. In addition to showing up and contributing to class discussions, this includes drafting responses to preparation notes and category worksheets, utilizing the online resources (e.g. quizzes to monitor their comprehension of readings), meeting outside of class, and advancing the class's exploration of ways of understanding religion. 10% of final grade
- *Midterm Exams:* (two, weeks 5 and 10). Students demonstrate comprehension of the assigned readings and their mastery of the categories introduced in the preparation notes and in class. Midterms are drawn from preparation notes, quizzes, category worksheets, and class discussions. 40% of final grade
- *Monday* Reflections (eight + one; See handout for full explanation). Students demonstrate they can analyze readings, identify salient issues, think critically and independently about them, and write clearly, succinctly and carefully—in short reflections (target: 350 words) due prior to each Monday class (the "+one" reflection due in the 11^h week). In lieu of a Monday reflection for a week, four students will be assigned to work in a group to produce an analysis of the M and W class discussions in light of the readings for the week. 30% of final grade
- *Course Project* (See handout for full explanation): A community-based independent project related to religion in Silicon Valley begun with field work early in the quarter and concluded with a formal multimedia Pecha Kucha presentation that will be posted online for the students in this class. 20% of final grade

Grades

One key to this course—and hence to students' grades— is persistence; the course does not have much in the way of down time or a lull. Students who miss class or slack off in a given week have difficulty catching up; and students who do not attend to the course project throughout the quarter have a hard time producing quality work at the end. Another key to this course—and hence to students' grades—is engagement with the assigned texts. Think of the engagement as a conversation, and my role as mediating that conversation. My mediation supports your work, but it does not replace it. I mediate in class, online through quizzes and notes (mostly preparation), through midterms, and most directly in reflections. Please consult the table below that ties ways I see student engagement with readings to grades on reflections. *Mutatis mutaandis*, these apply to grades for class engagement, the course project, and to a degree to exams.

Grade	%	Bulletin	Reflections
Range		language	
А	90-	Excellent	In addition to qualities of a good reflection, these demonstrate a nuanced
	100		and creative approach to interpreting the text.
В	80-	Good	Analysis of text through categories and/or comparisons; student
	89		demonstrates grasp of entire reading by developing focus on an important
			element; student uses categories or comparisons to focus and develop the
			analysis; clarity and quality of writing suggests careful preparation and
			attentive execution.
С	70-	Adequate	Analysis of text tends more towards either generalizations or impressions
	79	-	based on something of interest in the text; student is familiar with author's
			language but has not read the text as carefully as they know they can;
			student applies categories or comparisons, but results are vague. Quality
			of writing suggests minimal revising or editing.
D	60-	Barely	Analysis of text suggests only passing familiarity with reading. Quality of
	69	Passing	writing suggests very little time was available for writing.

If after reading these descriptions you decide on a given assignment you are only able to, e.g., do an adequate job of engagement, please let me know at the beginning of the assignment so I can calibrate my comments accordingly. On the other hand, if you judge your work to be of higher quality than the grades you receive, or would like feedback beyond what is provided in comments on the reflections, come see me.

Outside the Classroom Resources for this Class

The Camino site for this course includes resources that students should use to prepare readings for reflections and class discussions, study for midterms, and gauge their understanding of assigned readings: preparation notes, category worksheets, and quizzes. They are available in the module for each section of the course on Camino. Explanations and samples for the Monday reflections and course project are also available on Camino. Students are expected to use these resources regularly and actively on their own (and to take the initiative to let the instructor know during class if they are having problems with any of these materials—and/or to meet with the instructor outside of class about them.) Given this, a typical week's schedule might look like the following:

Saturday/Sunday:	Annotate readings for Monday using preparation notes; draft weekly reflection
Monday:	Revise/submit reflection; attend class, participate by drawing on reflection,
	annotations, prep notes, other students' perspectives
Tuesday:	Annotate readings for Wednesday using preparation notes; draft Category worksheets
Wednesday:	Attend class, participate by drawing on and adding to annotations, prep notes, category
	worksheets
Thursday:	Annotate readings for Friday; make new and review earlier annotations, class notes,
	take quiz, revise category worksheets
Friday:	Attend class, participate by drawing on prep notes, category worksheets, quiz; revise
	worksheets, class notes, annotations as necessary

In addition to consultation with the instructor about their writing, students are strongly encouraged to utilize the Hub, SCU's writing center (<u>www.scu.edu/provost/writingcenter/)</u>.

Co-Curriculum

The university and wider community offer an abundance of programs and experiences that could relate to this course—e.g. the talk by Anna Deavere Smith in the first week. Students are encouraged to consider programs offered by campus programs like: Bannan Institute Programs offered through the Ignatian Center, Markkula Ethics Center, and the Office of Multicultural Learning. An example: https://www.scu.edu/events/#view/event/event_id/24694 Students are also invited to find their own. As an incentive to engage the class beyond what we have here, students can earn one bonus point per event (up to a maximum of 5 events) that will be added to their Reflections or Class Engagement scores by writing up a reflection on their participation in such events.

Respect the Class: Classroom policies

Most students will complete more than 40 classes before they leave SCU. This class is one of them. While it was conceived and developed by the instructor, it really does not work without the active engagement of students. Here is a twofold exhortation offered as a class policy for classroom behavior: students should come to each class prepared to

- 1) be present for the full 65 minutes we are together in our classroom, and
- 2) contribute to and support the learning community for which we are all responsible.

There are plenty of things we all want and need to do on a daily basis—study for exams, sleep, use the bathroom, e-mail professors, text family, prepare for other classes, exercise, run errands, catch up with news, pursue romance, watch t.v. —but the twofold exhortation tells us these things should not happen during our time together in the classroom. An easy way for students to determine whether something is appropriate is to ask, Am I respecting the class when I do it?

Of late some students' near compulsive engagement with personal electronic devices during class time has led me to despair that I can expect all students to use them in a way that respects the class. I have therefore decided to ask students to refrain from their use in class. Students who find this policy burdensome—e.g. they take notes on laptops or i-pads, or have purchased electronic copies of texts—should consult with me outside of class during the first week to discuss their needs and interests.

Feedback to Students

Students receive feedback on the work they submit (quizzes, midterms, weekly reflections, course project) and in observations and suggestions from fellow students and the instructor during class discussions. Students are invited to discuss this feedback and solicit more from the instructor at any time during the course.

Course Evaluation by Students

Students will be asked to evaluate the course formally at the end of the quarter by completing surveys. In addition, students are encouraged to give the instructor informal feedback on what is and is not working for them throughout the quarter. Communication is an important responsibility we share; this is our course. I may not be able to make adjustments to meet every students' interests or needs, but a heads up about a problem in the 3rd or 4th week at least creates an opportunity to attempt to address it in the remainder of the quarter.

Disability Accommodation Policy

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, http://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 early in the quarter. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

Academic Integrity Expectations

We should all conduct ourselves in accordance with the academic integrity standards and policies Santa Clara articulates in numerous places, including the 2016-17 Undergraduate Bulletin (pp. 467-469) and the protocol available on the University website: www.scu.edu/media/offices/provost/policy-procedure/Academic-Integrity-Policy-and-Protocol.pdf. The Academic Integrity pledge, which applies to all students, states:

I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code Students are expected to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this class.

Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct (Title IX)

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/dating violence, or stalking, you are encouraged to tell someone promptly. For more information, please consult the University's Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy at http://bit.ly/2ce1hBb or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie, at 408-554-3043, buthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through http://www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethicspoint/.

Camino Course Management System

This course uses features of the University's course management system, Camino (*aka* Canvas). Each section in the course will include the resources referenced above. Patience and communication are needed as we learn how to best use this system throughout the quarter—so please, send the instructor an e-mail whenever things appear not to be working on Camino. The people who are trying to support faculty in using this system are in Media Services, ITRS (<u>https://www.scu.edu/is/academic-technology/camino-canvas-lms/</u>), and can assist students as well: email <u>caminosupport@scu.edu</u> or call 408-551-3572.

Schedule

The schedule below is arranged by the weeks in the quarter *and* the sections of the course. As explained above, for each class session students should have access to the preparation notes, category worksheets and the assigned readings for the week, along with any notes, questions or reflections they have prepared. Readings are listed on the day they will be discussed and thus should have been read. Assignments (submission via Camino), quizzes (on Camino), and exams are in **Bold Red font**. Monday reflections are typically due on Camino by Monday before class. Quizzes, which cover the reading for the entire week, M-F, are completed on Camino between Thursday, starting at approximately 5:30 p.m., and Friday, before class.

Students should be able to access most of the online readings through the links in the schedule; however, Word or pdf versions of those readings, most with annotations, are also posted on Camino.

The schedule is subject to change by the instructor; should that happen, students will be notified in class and on Camino.

Week One	Introductions: Approaching Religion in Public Life	
4, 3-7		
M	Course Overview: Syllabus and Course Design, Roster, Survey, Course Project	
Т	• Informal Reflection for Introduction: Location/Background and How I think about Religion ("Me	
8:00 a.m.	and Religion") (submit on Camino, Assignments, Informal Reflection)	
W	Religion and Public Life: Enlightenment and Jesuit Education Considerations	
	Enlightenment Thinking and Religion	
	 Immanuel Kant, "What Is Enlightenment?" (annotated version on Camino) 	
	http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/kant-whatis.asp	
	Jesuit Education with a focus on SCU's Relationship with El Salvador	
	 Ignacio Ellacuria, 1982 Commencement Address, SCU (Camino) 	
	http://www.scu.edu/Jesuits/ellacuria.html	
	 Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, "True Solidarity," America, February 5, 2001 (Camino) 	
	http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=1906	
	o Michael Eng, S.J., "The El Salvador Martyrs: Crosses To Liberate the Poor," Mission (Spring 2010), p.	
	24 https://jesuitswest.org/Assets/Publications/File/mission_2010_spring.pdf	
	Supplement	
	• Thomas Jefferson's Bible (<u>http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/how-thomas-jefferson-</u>	
	created-his-own-bible-5659505/?no-ist) and his January 1, 1802 Letter to Danbury Baptists (introduced	
	by an atheist organization (https://www.au.org/files/images/page_photos/jeffersons-letter-to-the.pdf	
TR	Quiz	
F	Religion and Public Life: Self-Immolation Case Studies	
	• McCutcheon, Russell, "Case Study: 'Religion' and the Politics of Classification" (excerpts; annotated version	
	on Camino) from Studying Religion: An Introduction, Religious Studies Dept., University of Alabama	
	http://www.as.ua.edu/rel/studyingreligion.html	
	1	
	Dorothy Day, "Suicide or Sacrifice?" (Camino)	
	http://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/articles/834.html	
	Supplement	
	• John F. Kennedy, "Speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association," September 12, 1960. (Video	
	and Transcript: <u>http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/ALL6YEBJMEKYGMCntnSCvg.aspx</u>)	
	Review Course Project Assignment that will be posted on Camino	

Week Two	Eboo Patel's Identity
4, 10-14	
Μ	Monday Reflection
	Patel, Acts of Faith, Introduction and Chs 1-2
W	Patel, Acts of Faith, Chs. 3-4
TR	Quiz
F	HOLIDAY

Week Three	Eboo Patel's Identity and Boyle's Tattoos
4, 17-21	
М	Monday Reflection
	Patel, Acts of Faith, chs. 5-6
W	Patel, Acts of Faith, chs 7-8
TR	Quiz
F	Boyle, Tattoos, Preface, Introduction, Ch. 1

Week Four	Greg Boyle's Tattoos
4, 24-28	
Μ	Monday Reflection
	Boyle, Tattoos, Chs. 2-4
W	Boyle, Tattoos, Chs. 5-7
TR	Quiz
F	Boyle, Tattoos, Chs. 8-9

Week Five	Elie Wiesel's Night	
5, 1-5		
Μ	Monday Reflection	
	Elie Wiesel, Night (just the full text; Preface, Foreword, Afterword for Wednesday)	
W	Night Supplements	
	• Elie Wiesel, <i>Night</i> , Preface	
	• Elie Wiesel, Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, included in Night, pp. 117-120	
	Francois Mauriac, Night, Foreword	
TR	• Quiz	
	Study Session, 5:15 p.m., RS Department, Kenna 323	
F	MIDTERM EXAM 1	

Week Six	Freud's Future
5, 8-12	
Μ	Monday Reflection
	Freud, Future of an Illusion, Chs. 1-2
W	Freud, Future of an Illusion, Ch. 3 (4 optional)
TR	Quiz
	Progress Report on Course Project
F	Conferences re course, course project, etc.

Week Seven	Freud's FutureJames Cone's African American Religious Experience
5, 15-19	
М	No Monday Reflection this week
	Freud, Future of an Illusion, Chs. 5-6, 8 (7 optional)
W	Freud, Future of an Illusion, Chs. 9-10
	Albert Camus, "The Myth of Sisyphus" (1942) (Camino) (<u>http://dbanach.com/sisyphus.htm</u>)
TR	Ouiz
F	James Cone, The Cross and the Lynching Tree, Chapter One
F	James Cone, The Cross and the Lynching Tree, Chapter One

Week Eight	James Cone's African American Religious Experience
5, 22-26	
М	Monday Reflection
	James Cone, The Cross and the Lynching Tree, Chapter Three
W	MLK Texts
	 Martin Luther King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (April 16, 1963) (Camino) <u>http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/resources/article/annotated_letter_from_birmingham/</u>
	 Martin Luther King, "Tve Been to the Mountaintop," Memphis, Tennessee (April 3, 1968) (Camino) <u>http://mlk-</u>
	 kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/ive_been_to_the_mountaintop/ Ta-Nehisi Coates, presenting on The Atlantic website a clip from a MLK talk, http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/06/martin-luther-king-makes-the-case-for- reparations/372696/ (you may want to follow the link to an excerpt from Michael E. Dyson's I May Not Get There With You: The True Martin Luther King.)
TR	Quiz
F	James Cone, The Cross and the Lynching Tree, Chapter Five, Conclusion

Week Nine	Thich Nhat Hanh's Peace
5, 29-6,2	
М	• HOLIDAY
W	Wednesday Monday Reflection Thich Nhat Hanh, <i>Peace Begins Here</i> , Foreword, Introduction, Ch. 1, and Practices: "Mindful Walking" (123-126) and "The Five Mindfulness Trainings" (155-157) Martin Luther King, Nobel Prize Nomination letter for Thich Nhat Hanh (January 25,1967) (Camino) <u>http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/025.html</u>
TR	Quiz
F	Thich Nhat Hanh, Peace Begins Here, Chs. 2-3 and Practices: "Deep Listening & Loving Speech" (133-136)

Week Ten	Thich Nhat Hanh's Peace
6, 5-9	
М	Monday Reflection
	Thich Nhat Hanh, Peace Begins Here, 4 and Practices, "Beginning Anew" (141-143)
	Thich Nhat Nanh. "In Search of the Enemy of Man (addressed to (the Rev.) Martin Luther King)." In Nhat
	Nanh, Ho Huu Tuong, Tam Ich, Bui Giang, Pham Cong Thien. Dialogue. Saigon: La Boi, 1965. P. 11-20.
	(Camino) http://www.aavw.org/special_features/letters_thich_abstract02.html
W	Thich Nhat Hanh, Peace Begins Here, Chs. 5, 6
TR	Quiz
	Study Session, 5:15 p.m., RS Department, Kenna 323
F	MIDTERM TWO

Week Eleven	Finals Week
6,12-16	https://www.scu.edu/registrar/undergraduate-final-exams-schedule/
Μ	Reflection on Reflections due
W	Course Project: Submit final PK presentation and interview via Google Drive; and
	Abstract/Bibliography and Research Reflection via Camino