

RSOC 9: Ways of Understanding Religion (Honors)
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Winter Quarter, 2016
11:45-12:50 (27590) Kenna Hall 109
Office Hours: W, 2-3:00 p.m.; F 10-11:00 a.m.,
& 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 write about that interest from within different traditions--Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Atheism (although we will challenge this classification) and develop categories through which to analyze those readings and think about the issues they raise. The course includes an independent project on religion in Silicon Valley that takes students off campus several times during the quarter.

Texts

- Gregory Boyle, S.J., *Tattoos on the Heart* (Free Press, 2010)
- 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)
- Martin Luther King, selections from sermons and speeches, posted on Camino
- Eboo Patel, *Acts of Faith* (Beacon Press, 2010)
- Elie Wiesel, *Night* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006)
- Other short readings posted on Camino

While they do contain information, our readings are not textbooks, and so 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 independent reflections. These texts reward multiple readings; if students have read one before (e.g. *Night*, or MLK's aBirmingham Jail Lettere), this course provides the opportunity to reflect on the text in a new context.

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 outcomes for all RTC 1 courses, calling them ylearning 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.d (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 its hcentral ideas and practicess), this course was designed to help students engage those objectives. For instance, we will 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 religious and spiritual life, their own and others.

The instructor has set outcomes for this particular course as well:

- Students will want to replace generalizations about religions with specific questions about particular religious persons.
- 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 classes, and return to them, and those above, throughout the quarter.

Engaging Those Outcomes

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, meeting outside of class, and completion of online quizzes. 15% of final grade
- *Midterm Exams:* (two, weeks 6 and 11 [during a portion of our assigned final exam slot]). 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* (nine + one). Students demonstrate they can analyze readings, identify salient issues, think critically and independently about them, and write clearly, succinctly and carefully in short reflections (approximately 350 words) due prior to each Monday class (the d+oneu reflection due in the 11th week). 20% of final grade
- *Course Project:* A community-based independent project related to religion in Silicon Valley begun early in the quarter and completed in stages, including in-class presentations the 10th week. 25% of final grade

Students who wish to do so during the quarter can use this rough guide (based on the section on grades in the 2015-16 *Undergraduate Bulletin*, pp. 446-447) to transpose percentages to a letter grade: A range grades =90-100% (excellent); B range grades =80-89% (good); C range grades =70-79% (adequate), D range grades =60-69% (barely passing). Students are welcome to talk with the instructor anytime about the grade we think they have for the course based on their work to date. A letter grade for the course will be assigned at the end of the quarter based on weighted scores on the requirements students complete.

The university and wider community offer an abundance of programs and experiences that could relate to this course e.g. the 43i installations can be approached through a category we will use to interpret Wiesel's *Night*, memorial. A list of a few illustrations will be posted on Camino, and students are invited to find their own. As an incentive to engage the class beyond what we have here, students can earn up to 5 (five) bonus points for participation in such events. Along with the list of illustrations, the document on Co-curriculum posted on Camino will include instructions for documenting their participation.

Outside the Classroom Resources for this Class

The Camino site for this course includes resources that students should use to prepare readings for class, 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. Students are expected to use these resources regularly and actively on their own, and take

the initiative to let the instructor know if they are having problems with them. Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor outside of class to go over any of these materials (individually or in groups).

Students will also be introduced to a Library-generated resource page to support their work on the course project in the fourth week of the quarter.

Students have the opportunity to work on their writing through the weekly reflections and the course project. In addition to consultation with the instructor about their writing, students are strongly encouraged to utilize the Hub, SCU's writing center (www.scu.edu/provost/writingcenter/).

Respect the Class: Classroom policies

Most students will complete more than 40 classes before they leave SCU and, presumably conclude their formal education. This is one of them. While this class was conceived and developed by the instructor, it really does not work without the active engagement of students. Here is a twofold exhortation offered in lieu of policies 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: sleep, bathroom breaks, texting loved ones, preparing for other classes, catching up with news but the twofold exhortation tells us they should not happen during our time together. Rather than the instructor monitoring student behavior on these fronts, students are asked to take responsibility for their own behavior; the easiest way to do that is to ask, Am I respecting the class?

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 feedback on what is and is not working for them throughout the quarter. Communication is an important responsibility we share; this is our course.

Disability Accommodation Policy

Students with DR approved academic accommodations should meet with the instructor during the first week of classes to discuss options or concerns in order to make appropriate arrangements. To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must register with and provide documentation of a disability to Disabilities Resources, located in Benson 216 (408 554 4109). For further information, consult www.scu.edu/studentlife/disabilities/.

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 2015-16 *Undergraduate Bulletin* (pp. 456-457)

and the protocol available on the University website.

www.scu.edu/provost/facultydevelopment/teaching-advising/academic-integrity/

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 (www.scu.edu/mediaservices/itrs/), and can assist students as well.

Schedule

The schedule below is arranged by the weeks in the quarter and the sections of the course. 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; assigned work (submission via Assignments on Camino), quizzes, project stages (see Project Handout), and exams are in **Bold Red font**. Monday reflections are due on Camino by Monday before class (Adjustments due to holidays are noted in the schedule.). 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/or on Camino.

WEEK 1	Introductions/Religion in Public Life: Perspectives, including Jesuits
M 1-4	Syllabus, Roster, Survey, Course Project Informal Reflection for Introduction: Location/Background and How I <i>think about</i> Religion (i Me and Religion) (submit on Camino, Assignments, Informal Reflection)
W 1-6	Religion and Public Life: 3 Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immanuel Kant, bWhat Is Enlightenment?n http://www.mnstate.edu/gracyk/courses/web%20publishing/KantOnEnlightenment.htm • Jesuit Education with a focus on SCU's Relationship with El Salvador <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignacio Ellacuria, 1982 Commencement Address, SCU http://www.scu.edu/Jesuits/ellacuria.html • Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, uTrue Solidarity,i America, February 5, 2001 http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=1906 • Michael Eng, S.J., The El Salvador Martyrs: Crosses To Liberate the Poor, =Mission (Spring 2010), p. 24 http://www.jesuitscalifornia.org/Document.Doc?id=424 • McCutcheon, Russell, i Case Study: 'Religion' and the Politics of Classificationonn (excerpts; see Camino) from <i>Studying Religion: An Introduction</i>, Religious Studies Dept., University of Alabama http://www.as.ua.edu/rel/studyingreligion.html
TR 1-7	Quiz
F 1-8	Religion and Public Life: Presidential Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas Jefferson's Bible (http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/how-thomas-jefferson-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)) • John F. Kennedy, rSpeech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association,i September 12, 1960. (Video and Transcript: http://www.ifklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/ALL6YEBJMEKYGMCntrSCvg.aspx) • Barak Obama, Keynote at the Call to Renewal's Building a Covenant for a New America Conference in Washington, D.C. (aka, Speech on Faith and PoliticsI) (2006) http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/28/us/politics/2006obamaspeech.html (also available on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tdoQr3BQ1g) • Barak Obama, Remarks at National Prayer Breakfast, 2/5/15, https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/05/remarks-president-national-prayer-breakfast
COURSE PROJECT: assignment, sites and groups	

WEEK 2	Religion in Public Life: Race, Religion, Civil rights
M 1-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday Reflection • James Baldwin, oLetter from a Region in My Mind,l The New Yorker (November 17, 1962), excerpts posted on Camno; www.newyorker.com/magazine/1962/11/17/letter-from-a-region-in-my-mind • James Baldwin, oA Letter to My Nephew,l The Progressive (December 1962; reprinted December 4, 2014) http://www.progressive.org/news/2014/12/5047/letter-my-nephew
W 1-13	Classic MLK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Luther King, vLetter from a Birmingham Jailr (April 16, 1963) • http://mlk-

	<p>kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/resources/article/annotated_letter_from_birmingham/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Luther King, nI Have a Dream Speech,c Washington, D.C. (August 28, 1963) http://mlk.kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documententry/doc_august_28_1963_i_have_a_dream/
TR 1-14	Quiz
F 1-15	<p>Assessing MLK's Legacy: Ta-Nehishi Coates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Luther King, cI've Been to the Mountaintop,a Memphis, Tennessee (April 3, 1968) http://mlk.kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documententry/ive_been_to_the_mountain_top/ • Ta-Nehisi Coates, eLetter to My Son,c adapted from <i>Between the World and Me</i>, for <i>The Atlantic</i>, July 15, 2015. http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/07/tanehisi-coates-between-the-world-and-me/397619/ • 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/ (not required, but you may want to follow the link to an excerpt from Michael E. Dyson's <i>I May Not Get There With You: The True Martin Luther King</i>)

WEEK 3	Religion in Public Life: Further Explorations/ Thich Nhat Hanh's Peace
M 1-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOLIDAY
W 1-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday→Wednesday Reflection • Thich Nhat Hanh, <i>Peace Begins Here</i>, Foreword, Introduction, Chs. 1-2 • Martin Luther King, Nobel Prize Nomination letter for Thich Nhat Hanh (January 25,1967) http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/025.html
TR 1-21	Quiz
F 1-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thich Nhat Hanh, <i>Peace Begins Here</i>, Chs. 3-4 • Thich Nhat Hanh, TThe Sutras on Dependent Co-Arising and Great Emptiness,l March 19, 1998 Dharma Talk, Plum Village (http://www.buddhist-canon.com/PLAIN/TNHSUTTA/1998%20Mar%2019%20%20Dependant%20Co-arising%20&%20Great%20Emptiness.htm) <p><i>Course Projects: Stage One</i></p>

WEEK 4	Thich Nhat Hanh's Peace/ Greg Boyle's Tattoos
M 1-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Monday Reflection • Thich Nhat Hanh, <i>Peace Begins Here</i>, Chs. 5-6 • Thich Nhat Nanh. PIn Search of the Enemy of Man (addressed to (the Rev.) Martin Luther King).NIn Nhat Nanh, Ho Huu Tuong, Tam Ich, Bui Giang, Pham Cong Thien. Dialogue. Saigon: La Boi, 1965. P. 11-20. http://www.aavw.org/special_features/letters_thich_abstract02.html • Catherine Cornille, sDouble Religious Belonging: Aspects and Questions,. <i>Christian Buddhist Studies</i> 23 (2003), pp. 43-49 (Camino) https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/buddhist-christian_studies/v023/23.1cornille01.html
W 1-27	Boyle, <i>Tattoos</i> , Preface, Introduction, Ch. 1-2 (xi-60)
TR 1-28	Quiz
F 1-29	<i>Course Project: Workshop on Library Research and Developing Questions for your project (Library, Computer Lab 206)</i>

WEEK 5	Greg Boyle's Tattoos
M 2-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday Reflection Boyle, <i>Tattoos</i>, Chs. 3-5 (61-128)
W 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boyle, <i>Tattoos</i>, Chs. 6-7 (129-165)
TR 2-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiz
F 2-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boyle, <i>Tattoos</i>, Chs. 8-9 (167-212)

WEEK 6	Freud on Religion
M 2-8	Midterm One
W 2-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freud, <i>Future of an Illusion</i>, Chs. 1-2 Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter <i>Laudato Si</i>, On Care for our Common Home, selections related to Nature http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html (Pdf on Camino)
TR 2-11	Quiz
F 2-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freud, <i>Future of an Illusion</i>, Ch. 3 (4 optional)
	<i>Course Project: Stage Two</i>

WEEK 7	Freud on Religion I and a papal encyclical
M 2-15	* HOLIDAY
W 2-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday (→ Wednesday) Reflection Freud, <i>Future of an Illusion</i>, Chs. 5-6, 8 (7 optional)
TR 2-18	Quiz
F 2-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freud, <i>Future of an Illusion</i>, Chs. 9-10 Albert Camus, <i>The Myth of Sisyphus</i> (1942) (http://dbanach.com/sisyphus.htm)

WEEK 8	Eboo Patel's Identity
M 2-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday Reflection Patel, <i>Acts of Faith</i>, Introduction and Chs 1-3
W 2-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patel, <i>Acts of Faith</i>, Chs. 4-6
TR 2-25	Quiz
F 2-26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patel, <i>Acts of Faith</i>, chs 7-8 Samuel Huntington, <i>The Clash of Civilization</i>, <i>Foreign Affairs</i> (Summer 1993), excerpts (https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/1993-06-01/clash-civilizations)
	<i>Course Project: Stage Three</i>

WEEK 9	Elie Wiesel's Memory
M 2-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday Reflection Elie Wiesel, <i>Night</i>, (main text in its entirety) (do not read foreword, preface, Nobel speech yet)
W 3-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elie Wiesel, <i>Night</i>, Preface Elie Wiesel, Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, included in <i>Night</i>, pp. 117-120 Francois Mauriac, <i>Night</i>, Foreword Elie Wiesel, Congressional Gold Medal Award and Acceptance Speech (April 19, 1985) http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/RR4_19_85.html
TR 3-3	Quiz
F 3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Samantha Power, <i>A Problem from Hell</i> (2002) (excerpts) http://www.amnestyusa.org/amnesty-magazine/summer-2002/a-problem-from-hell-america-and-the-age-of-genocide/page.do?id=1105427 Albert Camus, Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1957/camus-speech.html (annotated version on Camino) Elie Wiesel, Remarks at the Dedication of Yad Vashem's Holocaust History Museum (March 15 2005, Jerusalem, Israel) http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/eliwieselyadvashemdedication.htm

WEEK 10	Course Project Presentations
M 3-7	<i>Project Preparation</i>
W 3-8	<i>Course Project: Stage Four PK SLIDES DUE BEFORE CLASS</i>
	<i>Course Project: Stage Four in class PK Presentations</i>
F 3-10	<i>Conclusions, TBD</i>

WEEK 11	Finals Week
T 3-14	Monday Reflection: Reflection on Reflections due
W 3-15, 1:30	Examinations (http://www.scu.edu/studentrecords/upload/2015-2016-Final-Exam-template-10_22_14-4.pdf)
TR 3-16	<i>Course Project: Stage Five (due before 5:00 p.m.)</i>