

TESP 184: Jesus Across Cultures
Winter 2016 TTh 12:10 pm-1: 50pm

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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.

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) Additional handouts will be posted on Camino.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Daily Assignments and Participation (25%)

Active participation in class discussions is a requirement of this class. Students will be required to prepare in advance reflections on course readings, discuss them in small groups, and present the keys points of their discussions to the class. Each class day, students are required to write a one-page paper (single space) and two (2) thoughtful questions on the assigned readings for group discussion. Each class, five (5) to seven (7) students will be randomly chosen to present your papers and questions. Chosen students' papers will be graded as pass/fail. 5% of your participation and assignment grades will be subtracted for each fail paper.

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*). Exam format: there will be two essay questions for each exam. Students have one hour to write their essays (*No makeup exams*)

Synthesis Paper (15%)

You will submit a 10 page synthesis paper during the exam week. 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*).

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; if you earn a C with two unexcused absences, your final grade will be D. Four (4) additional unexcused absences will lower your final grade from A to C; B to D, and C to F. 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

Week 1: Historical Jesus and Christ of Faith.

Jan 5

Introduction to the course and its requirements.

You write a one- page paper (single space) 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? 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 Jan 7)**

Jan 7

In this class, we will explore how Jesus is presented in the four gospels: Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John. We will also discuss the differences between historical Jesus and Christ of faith. We also discuss the similarities and differences between the gospels in presenting Jesus and how the early church understood Jesus? (Video Clips: *The Face: Jesus in Arts*). (paper due)

Week 2: Jesus According To The Gospel of Luke

This week, we will explore how Jesus is presented and portrayed in the gospel of Luke. We also study some cultural characteristics of the Mediterranean world in Jesus' times.

Jan 12

Gospel of Luke: chapter 1-8; John J. Pilch, *The Cultural World of Jesus* (handouts)

Study Questions: what are the dominant images of Jesus presented in these chapters? What groups of people did Jesus relate to? What are Jesus' main teachings? How did he relate to women? Based on John Pilch's research, please point out some differences between Jesus' culture and yours? (paper due)

Jan 14

Gospel of Luke: chapter 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 22, 23, 24

Study Questions: how is Jesus portrayed in these chapters? What are the similarities and differences in presenting Jesus in these chapters and the previous ones? Who killed Jesus? Why? What happened afterwards? (paper due) *Video Clip: Jesus of Nazareth*

Week 3 Jesus in the Chinese and Buddhist Contexts

(From now on, further study questions will be posted on Camino regularly)

Jan 19

This week, we will explore new interpretations of Jesus in Chinese and Korean contexts and Hindu. Martin E. Brinkman, *The Non-Western Jesus*, chapter 5&6. (paper due)

Video Clips: *Jesus and Confucius*

Jan 21

First Exam

Martin E. Brinkman, *The Non-Western Jesus*, chapter 8 (No paper)

Week 4: Jesus in the Indian and Indonesian Contexts

Jan 26

Martin E. Brinkman, *The Non-Western Jesus*, 9 & 11 (paper due)

Study questions: what are Hindu theological concepts that can be found in Christianity? How would Hindu concepts such as Trinity, Incarnation, and salvation resonate with Christian doctrines?

Jan 28

Martin E. Brinkman, *The Non-Western Jesus*, chapter 12&13 (paper due)

Study Questions: Indonesian religious and political contexts? What are some Indonesian images of Jesus? How do Indonesian Christians engage in dialogue with Muslim? What is "Piring Natzar"? How do Moluccans employ the so-called "*pela*" to respond to conflicts? What are the similarities between Moluccan rituals of *pela* and Christian celebrations of the Eucharist? How do Muslims understand Jesus?

Week 5: The African Jesus

Feb 2

Martin E. Brinkman, *The Non-Western Jesus*, chapter 15 & 16 (paper due)

What are the characteristics of African theology? What are the African interpretations of the cross? What are images of Jesus commonly presented by African theologians? Why are theological interpretations of these images?

Feb 4

Movie: *Son of Man* (No paper)

Week 7 American Jesus

Feb 9

Prothero, *American Jesus*, chapter 1 & 2 (Enlightened Sage & Sweet Savior). we will explore the various interpretations of Jesus in the US in the last couple of centuries. Please read *American Jesus*, chapter 1 & 2 and pay

attention to the following themes: a) Thomas Jefferson's understanding of Jesus and his contribution to reconstructing a new image of Jesus; b) What is the Jesus Seminar? How is the Jesus Seminar related to Jefferson? c) What are some particular images of Jesus (chapter 2); d) who contributed to interpreting/presenting American images of Jesus? (*paper due*)

Feb 11

Second Exam

Prothero, *American Jesus*, chapter 3 (Manly Redeemer) (*no paper*)

Week 8 American Jesus (cont.)

As we begin our exploration of recent interpretations of Jesus in the US, please read chapter 4 " Superstar" in *American Jesus* and discuss a) the Jesus Movement and its impact on American culture and religion in the last 4 decades; b) who got involved in the Jesus Movement? (For example, were they church leaders or lay men and women? c) images of Jesus in these decades; d) the distinction between cultural and religious icons; h) how does the reading help you understand better American culture and religion in the 1960s and 70s.

Feb 16 Prothero, *American Jesus*, chapter 4 & 5 (*paper due*)

Feb 18 Douglas, *The Black Christ*, chapter 1&2 (The Roots of The Black Christ) (*paper due*)

As we begin to study the interpretations of Jesus from African American perspectives, please examine 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.

Week 9 The Black Christ (cont.)

Feb 23 Douglas, ch. 3&4 (The Theological Development of The Black Christ) (*paper due*)

Feb 25 Douglas, ch. 5 (A Womanist Approach to The Black Christ and Asian Feminist Christology) (*paper due*)

Week 10 Latin American Jesus

Mar 1 John Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation*, chapter 11 &12 (*paper due*)

Please discuss the characteristics of Christ discussed by John Sobrino? How are these images and characteristics presented in the film *Archbishop Romero*? Please respond to these following themes: 1) The Mystical body of Christ is a theological term. How is the "Mystical body of Christ" manifested in the film "Romero?" 2) What are the traditional images of Jesus in Latin America? Why are these images criticized by liberation theologians? 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) What are the dominant images of Jesus presented in the film? 5) How does the gospel message contribute to shaping Romero's ethical choices? 6) Please discuss the different or contradicting images/understandings of church in Latin America?

Mar 3

Third Exam

Week 11

Mar 8 Video: *Archbishop Romero*

Mar 10 Class discussion about *Archbishop Romero* film (one-page reflection paper on the film due)

Week 12

Synthesis paper due (TBA)