

TESP 4: The Christian Tradition

Fall Quarter 2016

Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 10:30 to 11:35

Professor J. Pinault

Classroom: Graham, room 163

Office: Kenna, room 315

Office hours: Tuesday, 3:00 to 5:00 and by appointment

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Course Description

What was the promise of Christianity at its birth in the turbulent Mediterranean religious and political landscape of the first century, two thousand years ago? And what is its promise today in our ever-more complex world? Through reading and discussing a rich collection of primary sources, from the late Bronze Age to the Reformation, from the Middle East, Africa, and Europe, we will investigate together ideas that have played a central role in Western culture and still resonate today in discussions about religion, ethics, politics, ethnic identity, social justice, literature, music, and art. And by becoming an active participant in this intellectual tradition, you will be able to contribute knowledgeably to any such discussion.

In addition, along the way, you'll meet figures whose words will help you make sense of the turbulent world around you and, as you reflect, give you the chance to explore more deeply your own spiritual landscape.

This fall we will pay particular attention to the following questions: How did people in this time period experience the Divine? How were ethics and religion connected--or not? What did people believe about the afterlife? How do these texts explain evil?

TESP 4 and Santa Clara University's Core Curriculum.

With these guidelines in mind, I would hope that in this course through reading the rich collection of sources from a variety of cultural and historical contexts you will form a nuanced picture of the origin and development of the afterlife in the western tradition. And having become a participant in this intellectual tradition, you will be able to evaluate critically and participate knowledgeably in current discussions about the afterlife and its relevance to issues in this life. I would also expect that from the close analysis of the readings at home and in class, for discussions and for papers, you will hone your ability to analyze and compare complex historic documents. Finally, it is hoped that the readings and class discussions in RSOC 159 will lead to a thoughtful reexamination of your own beliefs about the afterlife and help you with ethical choices in this life.

Class Format

Reading

The first step in the process of entering into the thought-world of this course is reading carefully the works on the syllabus. You are responsible for reserving time and energy for your reading assignments (not, for example, waiting until an hour before class). I expect you to underline important passages in your books and CAMINO printouts and to jot down responses and ideas in the margins. Bring all these materials to class to refer to during the discussion.

Because it's crucial that we all be on the same page, literally, when we are discussing texts, I am requiring you to use only the paper-copy editions and translations listed in the textbook section and available in the Santa Clara Bookstore. For ease in underlining passages, note-taking in the margins, and review, I encourage you to print out all CAMINO material for class. (Sometimes this is not possible, I realize, and should it be necessary, you may access CAMINO readings on your laptop--although they are the only readings permitted on your laptops in class.)

Review your thoughts before class and write them down--that way you'll more easily remember your insights and contribute to the discussion in class. If you still have questions about the readings after class, come see me during office hours. Remember, your first responsibility in this course is keeping up with the reading.

Reading assignments in a variety of genres, including scripture, myth, epic poetry, philosophical dialogues, and contemporary journalism, will build up the historical and cultural context for Christianity and show you how Christianity interacted with this matrix. Engaging with these challenging texts will expand your knowledge of global cultures and foster religious reflection.

Learning how to read ancient texts is not easy. It is my hope that working with these texts in this course will give you the confidence to return to them again and again over the years.

Another aspect of these texts that we will be considering is the technology involved in their creation--what were the materials on which they were written and what were the writing systems used to record the thoughts of people separated from us by a span of several thousand years.

Note-taking

For note-taking you will need to bring pens and pencils and paper or a notebook to class. That way you will be able to indicate easily the main points and connections in the class discussion and oral reports, rather than trying to produce a perfect transcript. Variations in handwriting--size, use of capitals, or, perhaps, color of ink or pencil--and signs--like arrow--will help you recall quickly the relative weight of ideas and connections between them when you are reviewing and studying. I also encourage you to write (lightly in pencil) in your texts to record your reactions and to use Post-its to flag important pages of your texts and notebook, as well as to jot down ideas about the readings and discussion between classes.

Class format

After the first class, we'll quickly review our discussion from the previous meeting, as a way of leading into the new topics to be covered. On the board you'll find key terms that will serve as an outline for the class. As soon as you come in, copy them down and get out the reading for the day and your notes. To provide the historical and theological context for each primary reading, I will either give you a short introductory briefing or for some classes assign introductory material from our secondary source, Justo Gonzalez' The Story of Christianity. Most of each class, however, will be spent in discussing the assigned primary reading.

Please make sure that you have completed the assigned readings in time for class. Also bring your books and photocopied materials and notes so that you will be ready to participate.

Class participation

Class participation is an important part of your final grade in this class--20%. From the preceding description of the class format, you can see that the success of this course depends on your being prepared by having read the assignment (as described above) and having jotted down notes on points that you thought important, intriguing, or problematic and your responses. Then together we can create a good discussion--but this can only happen if you participate in class discussions, using your notes.

How much you get out of this class will depend on your active participation in class. In addition, contributing to the discussion stimulates new ideas--both for you and for your classmates. If fellow classmates don't know the answer, help them out by speaking up. And if you don't know the answer, ask and that will get the discussion going, so that everyone will understand. Make it a goal to contribute to the conversation every class. And know that I will be calling on you, even if you do not raise your hand ("a cold call"). This is not personal, but in real life you'll be asked to contribute ideas. The cold calls in this class will help you get over any discomfort is speaking up when called. Remember, we create this class together.

Oral Presentations and Summaries

In addition to participating in classroom discussions, you'll contribute to your class participation grade by giving at least one short (three-minute) oral presentation or summary.

Criteria for Oral Presentations and Summaries:

Following instructions: For presentations--reporting on correct persons, events, etc. For summaries--giving a brief description of the correct characters, actions, and ideas in the assigned section of text; staying within the three-minute time limit; bringing two copies of the outline of your presentation to class.

Preparation: Quality of sources (list sources at bottom of outline); evidence of thoughtful investigation; organization of material for easy comprehension by audience.

Execution: Clarity of pronunciation; well-paced delivery for easy audience comprehension; crafting of sentence structure for audience interest; control of gestures and movements; ability to answer questions with poise.

Handout: Clear, easy-to-comprehend outline of material covered in oral presentation. Remember to bring in two copies (in addition to your working copy)--one that I can photocopy for students who may need a copy and one for me.

Just a reminder--all oral presentations will be counted toward your class participation grade.

Writing assignments

After careful reading and discussion, the next step in understanding these readings is to reflect on them in writing. Written assignments will consist of one ungraded essay and two graded essays--together worth 40% of your final grade.

We'll start with an ungraded essay that will give you a chance to introduce yourself to me and let me get to know you as a thinker and a writer. **Please note, failure to submit this assignment at the beginning of the second class will result in the lowering of your final grade for this course by at least one step (e.g., from B- to C+).**

All writing assignments must be typed, double spaced, 14-point type, and submitted in hard-copy (paper) format. I do not accept email or on-line submissions. Please include on each page of your essay a header with your name, a brief essay title, and the relevant page number. All work must be your own (See section below, "**A reminder about academic honesty.**")

With the first essay assignment, I'll be handing out my "Guidelines for a Successful Academic Essay." Study it carefully. If you are new to developing a thesis or have any questions about proving your thesis or linking paragraphs or any other points covered in the Guidelines, I encourage you to meet with me. I will be glad to read your rough draft, focusing on your thesis, your arguments and evidence to support your thesis, and the presentation of your ideas. Please take the time to proof your essays for grammatical mistakes, typographical errors, and careless wording, as these can negatively affect your grade.

For the first essay, I will allow you to revise and resubmit your essay. For subsequent essays, I only allow rewriting for an F grade.

Tests

Tests at the middle of the quarter and at the end will stimulate you to keep up with assigned readings. Together the two tests will determine 40% of your final grade.

The format of our first test will consist of identifying and discussing the significance of key passages from our reading and class discussions. Before the test, you will have a study sheet with the actual passages that may appear on the test. From the passages on the study sheet I will select a smaller number for the test, and from these you will be able to choose three to write on. You will be asked, first, to identify each passage and,

second, write a short essay, analyzing its significance. This will involve comparing and contrasting the ideas in the passage to earlier and later essential concepts and themes we have discussed in class throughout the quarter. In your significance essay you will have a chance to evaluate and apply insights from our study of these passages to open-ended questions facing contemporary society.

For your second test, you will be given a contemporary essay that will allow you to reflect on the way the men and women whose writings we have studied in this course experienced the Divine and how you can apply their insights to our world today, and if you wish, your own life.

Evaluation and weight of assignments

Your grade for the course will consist of the following elements:

Class participation	20%
2 tests, each worth 20%	40%
2 graded essays, each worth 20%	40%

Grade scale:

A	=	96 - 100%
A-	=	90 - 95%
B+	=	86 - 89%
B	=	80 - 85%
B-	=	76 - 79%
C+	=	70 - 75%
C	=	66 - 69%
C-	=	60 - 65%
D+	=	56 - 59%
D	=	50 - 55%
D-	=	46 - 49%
F	=	45 or less

How to Understand these Grades:

F: unacceptable. With regard to writing assignments, this is the only grade for which I permit a rewrite. The highest grade I will give a rewrite, however, is D.

D: acceptable, even if unsatisfactory.

C: adequate; satisfactory.

B: good; impressive work.

A: outstanding. Indicates work that excels in meeting the standards of thoroughness, creativity, and sustained and thoughtful engagement with the assigned subject matter.

Class participation, attendance, absences, late papers, and your grade

ONLY STUDENTS WHO ATTEND THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS ARE ELIGIBLE TO TAKE THIS COURSE. NO STUDENT WHO MISSES THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS WILL BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE IN THIS COURSE.

TO HAVE THE POSSIBILITY OF RECEIVING A PASSING GRADE FOR THIS COURSE, YOU MUST COMPLETE ALL THE COURSE REQUIREMENTS--THAT MEANS, TAKING ALL THE TESTS AND HANDING IN ALL THE REQUIRED ESSAYS.

Please note that missing class will hurt your final grade for the quarter. More than one unexcused absence over the course of the quarter will lower your **final grade** one step for each missed class (e.g., B becomes B-).

Of course, illness or personal circumstances may arise that make your absence unavoidable; if this occurs, please let me know as soon as possible so we can discuss your situation and how to help you stay on track. Also, don't forget to provide me with an appropriate written excuse from the proper source. (But be aware that a note from the Cowell Student Health Center does not automatically excuse your absence.) If you know in advance that you must be away, please notify me of this before class. If you suddenly and unexpectedly miss class for any reason, you must

contact me immediately (via email or a visit to my office) to explain why you missed class. This will not excuse your absence, but it will let me know you take your responsibilities seriously and plan to continue in our course. This is a courtesy to me, and I value courtesy.

(NB: Whenever you email me, be sure to include the following in the subject line: your name, our course title, topic of email, and date).

Note that I take attendance at the beginning of each class. If you are not present by the time I finish recording the day's attendance, I will consider you late. For the purpose of computing final grades, I use the formula: three late attendances equal one unexcused absence.

All papers must be handed in on time. The grade for a late paper will be lowered one step for each day it is late (e.g., B- becomes C+).

Regarding the ungraded first essay, failure to submit this assignment at the beginning of the second class will result in the lowering of your final grade for this course by at least one step (e.g., from B- to C+).

A reminder about academic honesty

Santa Clara University is committed to fostering a culture of integrity. Its 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.

Accordingly, please make sure that all written work for this class is your own. This means you should not look at the work or notes of anyone in the class, even "to get ideas," or work together on any writing project with anyone in the class before checking with me first. If you use anyone's published or unpublished ideas or phrasing (even if you change a word or two or rephrase a whole sentence or paragraph), you must acknowledge your source. If you do not, you are being academically dishonest. And the penalties will be severe. Your paper will receive an F and you will receive

an F for the course. I will also report the incident to the Office of Student Life and contact the Dean of Student Life to discuss further action.

Do not refer to any outside source for the papers you write in this course; you are not being asked to do original research. Rather, I am interested in hearing your own ideas as you analyze, compare, and contrast the complex readings we are working with in this course.

Performance feedback.

I will be giving you extensive and detailed written comments on your essays. These are designed to help you become a more confident and independent writer. This is just the starting point. You will need to study my comments, think about how to apply them to your next essay, and come to see me in my office to make sure you have a strong thesis, are able to make a convincing case for it, and are absorbing all the criteria in my "Guidelines for a Successful Academic Essay", which I will hand out with the first essay assignment.

In regard to class participation and oral reports, I urge you to meet with me to discuss how to participate more effectively and how to structure and deliver a strong oral presentation.

Disability accommodation policy

If you need academic accommodation for a disability, you must contact Disabilities Resources (Benson Center, room 216 (408) 554-4109) as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodation with the University. Leave enough time, as they will require you to provide appropriate documentation before you can register and receive accommodation. If you have already arranged an accommodation through Disability Resources, please discuss it with me during my office hours.

Policy on personal media in the classroom

Out of respect for others and for the material (I expect you to show the same reverence towards these ancient texts as you would towards ancient works of art in a museum), please make sure all laptops, tablets, smart phones, cell phones, pagers, etc. are turned off and out of sight during class. Use of any such device will result in your being counted absent for that day (an exception is the use of devices to read CAMINO material for class; any other use of your device, however, will result in an absence that day.) For note-taking you will need to bring pens and pencils and paper or a notebook to class. Students with special needs must bring me the required forms from the Disabilities Resources Office.

Food Courtesy

Always try to fortify yourself before class. If you do need a snack or drink, make sure it does not generate noise or odors and that you clean up after yourself. Any violation will result in your being counted absent for that day.

Classroom civility

In order for everyone to feel comfortable with the material being discussed in class, it is crucial that we all practice being courteous and gentle with each other in our words and tone. We are all pilgrims in this course.

Texts

The Bible: Authorized King James Version with Apocrypha (Oxford World's Classics), Oxford University Press, 2008.

Justo L. Gonzalez, The Story of Christianity, revised and updated, vol. 1: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation, 2010.

Saint Benedict, The Rule of St. Benedict, translation by Anthony C. Meisel and M.L. del Mastro. Doubleday, 1978.

The Portable Dante, translated, edited by Mark Musa, Penguin Books, 1995.

All available in the Santa Clara Bookstore. In addition, you'll need to obtain a copy of (or arrange to see) the 2016 film, Risen, starring Joseph Fiennes.

Some additional readings will be available on CAMINO (under "files").

Course Syllabus

(All reading assignments listed under each class date below are meant to be prepared for that class. Please make sure that you have completed the assigned readings in time for class. Also bring your books and photocopied materials and notes so that you will be ready to participate.)

Week One

Monday, September 19

Introduction to course: review of syllabus; discussion about what religion is and how one goes about the academic study of religion; the difference between primary and secondary sources; the difficulties involved in working with ancient primary sources, including the Bible; looking at the temporal and geographic parameters of our course; key terms for the ungraded written assignment.

Ungraded written assignment, due Wednesday, September 21. (Note that this is an ungraded assignment, but if you do not submit your completed essay at the beginning of class, Wednesday, September 21, your **final grade** for the course will be lowered at least one step (e.g., from B- to C+), and your **final course grade** will be lowered an additional step for each day this assignment is late.)

This ungraded written assignment (due Wednesday) will give you the opportunity to introduce yourself to me as a writer. Aim not for length, but for clear thinking and writing. The following section headings will provide a rough outline, and the questions that follow will help you get started with each section:

- I. Summary of a passage from Homer's Iliad (text attached to this syllabus). In your own words, as briefly and clearly as you can, describe what is depicted--that is, who does what to whom. Do not analyze, compare, or contrast in this section.

- II. Analysis. Analyze how the Greek gods in this passage interact with humans. What are the powers of each of the Greek gods mentioned? What are their limitations? How does Patroclus experience the Divine through them? Imagine hearing this passage recited year after year at a religious festival. How would it shape your understanding of your relation to the gods and how you felt about them?

- III. Brief description of your previous experience, impressions, and/or knowledge of Christianity. In addition, please include a statement in which you identify and briefly reflect on your own religious or philosophical world view, however you define this for yourself (whether in terms of denominational religious affiliation, unaffiliated spirituality, self-identification as an agnostic, skeptic, atheist, freethinker, etc.).

Please make sure not to use any outside sources-- this is not a research paper--I want to hear your ideas and get a sense of your signature style! Length of assignment: 500 to 1,000 words, typed, 14-point type, double spaced (and hard-copy, please--unless it is an emergency, I do not read electronic/digital submissions).

Wednesday, September 21

The Near Eastern context for Judaism. Discussion of the Jewish creation stories in Genesis. Foundation stories in Judaism and Christianity.

Ungraded essay due (text of the passage in the Iliad for your essay attached to the end of this syllabus)

Reading due for class, September 21: The creation, Genesis, Chapters 1-2; the story of Adam and Eve, Genesis 3-5; (all in your Oxford KJV Bible).

Friday, September 23

Does the pattern of evil continue?

Reading due for class, September 23: Cain and Abel, Genesis 4; the story of Noah, Genesis 6; the tower of Babel, Genesis 11 (Oxford Bible)

Week Two

Monday, September 26

God starts over, reaching out to humans with covenants, laws, prophets, and kings. In the readings, note how the Hebrew people experience the Divine and what prophets do. Oral reports: the story of David and Goliath and how David became the first king of the Israelites.

Reading due for class, September 26: Exodus 20; Leviticus 6. 1-19; 2 Samuel. 11-12; the first Book of Kings 17:17-24 (Oxford Bible).

Wednesday, September 28

The Hebrew world view meets its neighbors: the Babylonians, Persians, Greek, and Romans; the Babylonian exile and return, Hellenistic persecution, Jewish diaspora, and the uneasy relationship with Rome; Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, and zealots; Jewish ideas about the afterlife.

Reading due for class, September 28: Gonzales, "The Fullness of Time," The Story of Christianity, pp. 13-23. (available in SCU Bookstore); I Maccabees 1; Daniel 12 (Oxford Bible).

Friday, September 30

Jesus of Nazareth's ministry and teaching

Reading due for class, September 30: The Gospel of Mark 1-13; Matthew 25.14-30; Luke 16.19-31 (Oxford Bible). As you read, fill out the study sheet I will hand out to help you analyze the text.

First graded essay assigned.

Week Three

Monday, October 03

Jesus of Nazareth's death and resurrection. Discussion of Risen and Acts.

Reading due for class, October 03: Kevin Reynold's 2016 film Risen; Mark 14-16; selections from The Book of Acts (Oxford Bible)

Wednesday, October 05

Paul's understanding of Jesus and the first Christians' attempt to live together in a community: Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

Reading due for class, October 05: Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (before you start reading, go over the study sheet to orient yourself with the themes discussed in this letter) (Oxford Bible).

Friday, October 07

Greco-Roman philosophy as religion and therapy for the soul

Reading due for class, October 07: Epictetus, Discourses, Book One, Chapter 1; Book Two, Chapter 18. (Texts on Camino). As you read, note down when Epictetus's texts sound like religion (this would be a good time to review the definitions of religion on the handout I gave you during the first class), when philosophy, and when therapy.

First graded essay due at the beginning of class.

Week Four

Monday, October 10

Rome first notices the Christians: why did this lead to persecutions?

Readings due for class, October 10: Luke Timothy Johnson, "A Preliminary Profile of Greco-Roman Religion," Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity (Camino); Selections from Suetonius, Tacitus, Pliny, Trajan (Camino).

Wednesday, October 12

The apocalyptic tradition.

Reading due for class, October 12: Selections from Revelation (the Revelations of St. John the Divine, Chapters 1, 2.10, 4, 5, 6, 7, 21.4 (Oxford Bible)

Friday, October 14

Christian martyrdom in the Roman world. How did Perpetua experience the Divine, according to her journal? How as her view of the afterlife shaped by Jesus teaching in Mark and Luke? By Revelation?

Reading due for class, October 14: the prison journal of St. Perpetua of Carthage (Camino).

Last day to drop classes without a W.

Week Five

Monday, October 17

Is the body our enemy? Asceticism and Gnosticism in the Greco-Roman world and Christianity's response.

Reading due for class, October 17: "The Deposit of the Faith" (Introduction to Gnosticism, Doceticism, Marcion, and the orthodox Christian response; text of Apostles' Creed), in Gonzales, The Story of Christianity, pages 69-81; "Abstract of Main Gnostic Tenets," in Hans Jonas, The Gnostic Religion; introduction and text of Apocalypse of Peter (VII,3), from The Nag Hammadi Library (these last two on Camino).

As you read the Apocalypse of Peter, try to determine who is speaking and to whom. From the text, what is Jesus like? Does he differ from the Jesus you encountered in the Gospel of Mark? In what ways?

Second graded essay assigned.

Wednesday, October 19

The Great Persecution; the battle of the Milvian bridge and the conversion of Constantine; the Edict of Milan and its consequences; the Council of Nicea.

Reading due for class, October 19: "The Great Persecution and the Final Victory," in Gonzalez, The Story of Christianity, pages 119-126; "The Arian Controversy and the Council of Nicea," in Gonzalez, The Story of Christianity, pages 181-192; text of the Nicene Creed (Camino).

Friday, October 21

First test

Week Six

Monday, October 24

Developments in the fourth century, after Constantine, including St. Antony and the beginning of monasticism.

Reading for class, due October 24: selections from the Rule of St. Benedict (Santa Clara Bookstore): Chapters 1-4, 8-11, 33-43, 48, 54, 55, 57.

Wednesday, October 26

Jesus in Islam

Readings: handout in class.

Friday, October 28

NO CLASS

Week Seven

Monday, October 31

Introduction to Dante, The Divine Comedy.

Second graded essay due at beginning of class.

Wednesday, November 02

Reading due for class, November 02: Inferno, Cantos 1-5.

Friday, November 04

Dante, Inferno,

Reading due for class, November 04: Cantos 6, 7 10, 11, 12.

Oral reports on cantos 8 and 9 in class.

Last day to drop classes with a W.

Week Eight

Monday, November 07

Dante, Inferno,

Reading due for class, November 07: Cantos 13, 17, 18, 31-33.

Oral reports on cantos 20, 21-22, 23, and 24-25 in class.

Wednesday, November 09

Dante, Purgatorio.

Reading due for class, November 09: Purgatorio, Cantos 1, 2, 10, 11, 12

Oral reports on cantos 3-5 and 6-7 in class.

Friday, November 11

Dante, Purgatorio.

Reading due for class, November 11: Purgatorio, Cantos 15, 28, 30, 31,

33. Oral reports on cantos 13-14, 16, 32 in class.

Week Nine

Monday, November 14

Paradiso,

Reading due for class, November 14: Cantos 1, 11, 15, 16,
Oral reports on cantos 2-3, 12 in class.

Wednesday, November 16

Paradiso.

Reading due for class, November 16: Paradiso, 17, 30, 31, 32, 33.
Oral report on canto 20 in class.

Friday, November 18

Late Medieval Christianity and the changes in Christianity as a result of the Reformation.

**THANKSGIVING BREAK
(November 21-25)**

Week Ten

Monday, November 28

Class discussion on what these texts have to say to each of us today.

Wednesday, November 30

In-class review.

Friday, December 02

Second test.

Background, directions, and text of a passage from the Iliad for your essay, due next class, Wednesday, September 21

By way of background:

In the Greco-Roman world into which Christianity was born, there was not question about whether Gods (Divine powers) existed--just whether they were friendly or hostile and what their powers were. Some of the most important deities were the Olympian gods: Zeus, associated with the clear sky, wielder of lightning-bolts, and ruler of all the Olympian gods (Jupiter or Jove to the Romans); Hera, his wife (Juno to the Romans); Poseidon, ruler of the sea (Neptune to the Romans), Hades, ruler of the underworld (Pluto or Dis to the Romans); Ares, (Mars to the Romans), associated with warfare; Athena, associated with warfare, manual skills and crafts (Minerva to the Romans); Aphrodite, goddess of sexual love and passion in gods, humans, and animals (Venus to the Romans); Artemis, virgin goddess associated with aiding women in childbirth, protecting animals; Phoebus Apollo (also Apollo to the Romans), associated with the sun, poetry, healing disease as well as creating epidemics. There are many, many more major and minor gods and goddesses--all with their own cults, stories, and temples or modest shrines or spots in nature where they were worshipped, but this should get you started.

Although there was no one official account of these gods' origins and natures, everyone would have been familiar with stories about the gods. The most important story cycle was that of the Trojan war, a cataclysmic confrontation between the Greeks (also called Achaeans) and the inhabitants of the prosperous city-state of Troy, on the northern coast of what is today Turkey--dated by both the ancient Greeks and modern archeologists to the late Bronze age, approximately 1200 B.C.E.

The cause, according to myth, was the abduction of Helen, wife of one of the chief Greek warlords by a Trojan prince, Paris (inspired by the goddess Aphrodite, who had offered Paris the most beautiful woman in the world (Helen) if he chose her as the most beautiful goddess in a sort of beauty contest with Hera and Athena. This judgement of Paris led to the war--Helen was taken (or went willingly, depending on different traditions) to Troy, and

her husband Menelaus assembled an alliance of allies and armies from all over Greece, led by his brother Agamemnon, to sail to Troy, destroy the city, rescue Helen, then return to Greece.

There were many epic poems about these events, but the best and only entire remaining two are Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*--composed orally, and written down in the eighth century (700's) B.C.E. These poems tell only limited portions of the story. The *Iliad*, for example, covers events in the ninth and last year of the war, focusing on the wrathful anger of the chief Greek warrior hero Achilles and his withdrawal from battle after the commander-in-chief Agamemnon takes away his battle prize, the beautiful young woman Briseis--which humiliates and enrages Achilles. Achilles withdraws and sulks by the Greek ships, drawn up by the shore, refusing to fight until the Greeks are threatened by destruction by the emboldened Trojans. Achilles' best friend Patroclus then begs Achilles to let him put on Achilles' armor before returning to battle, hoping the Trojans, thinking he is Achilles, will pull back to their city walls. Achilles reluctantly agrees, but warns Patroclus not to go all the way to the walls of Troy. Attached is the passage recounting what happens next.

Directions for your essay:

First, give a brief summary as clearly and concisely as you can, of what happens in the attached passage from the *Iliad*. Do not analyze, compare, or contrast in this section.

Second, analyze how the Greek gods interact with humans. Analyze what kind of power each of these gods has as well as what their limitations are. How does Patroclus experience the Divine through these gods? Imagine hearing this passage recited year after year at a religious festival. How would it shape your understanding of your relation to the gods and how you felt about them?

Third, give a brief description of your previous experience, impressions, and/or knowledge of Christianity. In addition, please include a statement in which you identify and briefly reflect on your own religious or philosophical world view, however you define this for yourself (whether in terms of

denominational religious affiliation, unaffiliated spiritually, self-identification as an agnostic, skeptic, atheist, freethinker, etc.

Please make sure not to use any outside sources-- this is not a research paper--I want to hear your ideas and get a sense of your signature style! Length of assignment: 500 to 1,000 words, typed, 14-point type, double spaced (and hard-copy, please--unless it is an emergency, I do not read electronic/digital submissions).

Text of a passage from the Iliad on the following four photocopied pages.

He knew that Zeus had tipped the scales against him.

A rout—not even the die-hard Lycians stood their ground,
they all scattered in panic, down to the last man

when they saw their royal king speared in the heart,
Sarpedon sprawled there in the muster of the dead,

for men by the squad had dropped across his corpse
once Zeus stretched tight the lethal line of battle.

So then the Achaeans ripped the armor off his back,
Sarpedon's gleaming bronze that Menoetius' son

the brave Patroclus flung in the arms of cohorts
poised to speed those trophies back to the beaked ships.

And storming Zeus was stirring up Apollo: "On with it now—
sweep Sarpedon clear of the weapons, Phoebus my friend,

and once you wipe the dark blood from his body,
bear him far from the fighting, off and away,

and bathe him well in a river's running tides
and anoint him with deathless oils . . .

Then send him on his way with the wind-swift escorts,
twin brothers Sleep and Death, who with all good speed

will set him down in the broad green land of Lycia.
There his brothers and countrymen will bury the prince

with full royal rites, with mounded tomb and pillar.
These are the solemn honors owed the dead."

So he decreed

and Phoebus did not neglect the Father's strong desires.
Down from Ida's slopes he dove to the bloody field

and lifting/Prince Sarpedon clear of the weapons,
bore him far from the fighting, off and away,

and barked him well in a river's running tides
and anointed him with deathless oils . . .

dressed his body in deathless, ambrosial robes
then sent him on his way with the wind-swift escorts,

twin brothers Sleep and Death, who with all good speed
set him down in Lycia's broad green land.

But Patroclus,

giving a cry to Automedon whipping on his team,
Patroclus went for Troy's and Lycia's lines,

blind in his fatal frenzy—luckless soldier.

If only he had obeyed Achilles' strict command
he might have escaped his doom, the stark night of death.

But the will of Zeus will always overpower the will of men,
Zeus who strikes fear in even the bravest man of war

and tears away his triumph, all in a lightning flash,
and at other times he will spur a man to battle,

just as he urged Patroclus' fury now.

Patroclus—

who was the first you slaughtered, who the last
when the great gods called you down to death?

First Adestus, then Autonous, then Echeclus,
then Perimus, Megas' son, Epistor and Melanippus,

then in a flurry Elias, Mulus and Pyllartes—
he killed them all but the rest were bent on flight.

And then and there the Achaeans might have taken Troy,
her towering gates toppling under Patroclus' power

heading the vanguard, storming on with his spear.
But Apollo took his stand on the massive rampart,

his mind blazing with death for him but help for Troy.
Three times Patroclus charged the jut of the high wall,

three times Apollo battered the man and hurled him back,
the god's immortal hands beating down on the gleaming shield.

Then at Patroclus' fourth assault like something superhuman,
the god shrieked down his winging words of terror: "Back—

Patroclus, Prince, go back! It is not the will of fate
that the proud Trojans' cladel fall before your spear,

not even before Achilles—far greater man than you!"

And Patroclus gave ground, backing a good way off,
clear of the deadly Archer's wrath.

But now Hector,

reining his high-strung team at the Scæan Gates,
debated a moment, waiting . . .

should he drive back to the rout and soldier on?
Or call his armies now to rally within the ramparts?

As he turned things over, Apollo stood beside him,
 taking the shape of that lusty rugged fighter
 Asius, an uncle of stallion-breaking Hector,
 a blood brother of Hecuba, son of Dymas
 who lived in Phrygia near Sangarius' rapids.
 Like him, Apollo the son of Zeus incited Hector:
 "Hector, why stop fighting? Neglecting your duty!
 If only I outfought you as you can outfight me,
 I'd soon teach you to shirk your work in war—
 you'd pay the price, I swear. Up with you—fast!
 Lash those pounding stallions straight at Patroclus—
 you might kill him still—Apollo might give you glory!"

840

And back Apollo strode, a god in the wars of men
 while glorious Hector ordered skilled Cebriones,
 "Flog the team to battle!" Apollo pressed on,
 wading into the ruck, hurling Argives back in chaos
 and handing glory to Hector and all the Trojan forces.

850

But Hector ignored the Argive masses, killing none,
 he lashed his pounding stallions straight at Patroclus.
 Patroclus, over against him, leapt down from his car
 and hit the ground, his left hand shaking a spear
 and seized with his right a jagged, glittering stone
 his hand could just cover—Patroclus flung it hard,
 leaning into the heave, not backing away from Hector,
 no, and no wasted shot. But he hit his driver—
 a bastard son of famed King Priam, Cebriones

860

yanking the reins back taut—right between the eyes.
 The sharp stone crushed both brows, the skull caved in
 and both eyes burst from their sockets, dropping down
 in the dust before his feet as the reinsman vaulted,
 plunging off his well-wrought car like a diver—
 Cebriones' life breath left his bones behind
 and you taunted his corpse, Patroclus O my rider:

"Look what a springy man, a nimble, flashy tumbler!
 Just think what he'd do at sea where the fish swarm—
 why, the man could glut a fleet, diving for oysters!
 Plunging overboard, even in choppy, heaving seas,

870

just as he dives to ground from his war-car now.
 Even these Trojans have their tumblers—what a leap!"

And he leapt himself at the fighting driver's corpse
 with the rushing lunge of a lion struck in the chest
 as he lays waste pens of cattle—
 his own lordly courage about to be his death.
 So you sprang at Cebriones, full fury, Patroclus,
 as Hector sprang down from his chariot just across
 and the two went tussling over the corpse as lions
 up on the mountain ridges over a fresh-killed stag—
 both ravenous, proud and savage—fight it out to the death.
 So over the driver here and both claw-mad for battle,
 Patroclus son of Menoetius, Hector ablaze for glory
 strained to slash each other with ruthless bronze.
 Hector seized the corpse's head, would not let go—
 Patroclus clung to a foot and other fighters clashed,
 Trojans, Argives, all in a grueling, maiming onset.

880

As the East and South Winds fight in killer-squalls
 deep in a mountain valley thrashing stands of timber,
 oak and ash and cornel with bark stretched taut and hard
 and they whip their long sharp branches against each other,
 a deafening roar goes up, the splintered timber crashing—
 so Achaeans and Trojans crashed,
 hacking into each other, and neither side now
 had a thought of flight that would have meant disaster.
 Showers of whetted spears stuck fast around Cebriones,
 bristling winged arrows whipped from the bowstrings,
 huge rocks by the salvo battering shields on shields
 as they struggled round the corpse. And there he lay
 in the whirling dust, overpowered in all his power
 and wiped from memory all his horseman's skills.

900

So till the sun bestrode the sky at high noon
 the weapons hurtled side-to-side and men kept falling.
 But once the sun wheeled past the hour for unyoking oxen,
 then the Argives mounted a fiercer new attack,

890

fighting beyond their fates . . .

They dragged the hero Cebriones out from under
the pelting shafts and Trojans' piercing cries

and they tore the handsome war-gear off his back
and Patroclus charged the enemy, fired for the kill.

910

Three times he charged with the headlong speed of Ares,
screaming his savage cry, three times he killed nine men.

Then at the fourth assault Patroclus like something superhuman—
then, Patroclus, the end of life came blazing up before you,

yes, the lord Apollo met you there in the heart of battle,
the god, the terror! Patroclus never saw him coming,

moving across the deadly rout, shrouded in thick mist
and on he came against him and looming up behind him now—

920

slammed his broad shoulders and back with the god's flat hand
and his eyes spun as Apollo knocked the helmet off his head
and under his horses' hoofs it tumbled, clattering on
with its four forged horns and its hollow blank eyes

and its plumes were all smeared in the bloody dust.
Forbidden before this to defile its crest in dust,

it guarded the head and handsome brow of a god,
a man like a god, Achilles. But now the Father

gave it over to Hector to guard his head in war
since Hector's death was closing on him quickly.

930

Patroclus though—the spear in his grip was shattered,
the whole of its rugged bronze-shod shadow-casting length
and his shield with straps and tassels dropped from his shoulders,
flung down on the ground—and lord Apollo the son of Zeus
wrenched his breastplate off. Disaster seized him—
his fine legs buckling—

he stood there, senseless—

And now,

right at his back, close-up, a Dardan fighter speared him
squarely between the shoulder blades with a sharp lance.

Panthous' son Euphorbus, the best of his own age
at spears and a horseman's skill and speed of foot,
and even in this, his first attack in chariots—

just learning the arts of war—

he'd brought down twenty drivers off their cars.

940

He was the first to launch a spear against you,
Patroclus O my rider, but did not bring you down.

Yanking out his ashen shaft from your body,
back he dashed and lost himself in the crowds—

the man would not stand up to Patroclus here
in mortal combat, stripped, defenseless as he was.

Patroclus stunned by the spear and the god's crushing blow
was weaving back to his own thronging comrades,
trying to escape death . . .

950

Hector waiting, watching

the greathearted Patroclus trying to stagger free,
seeing him wounded there with the sharp bronze

came rushing into him right across the lines
and rammed his spearshaft home,

stabbing deep in the bowels, and the brazen point
went jutting straight out through Patroclus' back.

Down he crashed—horror gripped the Achaean armies.
As when some lion overpowers a tireless wild boar

up on a mountain summit, bawling in all their fury
over a little spring of water, both beasts craving

to slake their thirst, but the lion beats him down
with sheer brute force as the boar fights for breath—

so now with a close thrust Hector the son of Priam
tore the life from the fighting son of Menoethus,

from Patroclus who had killed so many men in war,
and gloried over him, wild winging words: "Patroclus—

surely you must have thought you'd storm my city down,
you'd wrest from the wives of Troy their day of freedom,

drag them off in ships to your own dear fatherland—
you fool! Rearing in their defense my war-team,

Hector's horses were charging out to battle,
galloping, full stretch. And I with my spear,

Hector, shining among my combat-loving comrades,
I fight away from *them* the fatal day—but you,
the vultures will eat your body raw!

970

Poor, doomed . . .

not for all his power could Achilles save you now—
and how he must have filled your ears with orders

as you went marching out and the hero stayed behind:
 'Now don't come back to the hollow ships, you hear?—
 Patroclus, master horseman—
 not till you've slashed the shirt around his chest
 and soaked it red in the blood of man-killing Hector!'
 So he must have commanded—you maniac, you obeyed."

980

Struggling for breath, you answered, Patroclus O my rider,
 "Hector! Now is your time to glory to the skies . . .
 now the victory is yours.

A gift of the son of Cronus, Zeus—Apollo too—
 they brought me down with all their deathless ease,
they are the ones who tore the armor off my back.

990

Even if twenty Hectors had charged against me—
 they'd all have died here, laid low by my spear.
 No, deadly fate in league with Apollo killed me.
 From the ranks of men, Euphorbus. You came third,
 and all you could do was finish off my life . . .
 One more thing—take it to heart, I urge you—
 you too, you won't live long yourself, I swear.
 Already I see them looming up beside you—death
 and the strong force of fate, to bring you down
 at the hands of Acaeus' great royal son . . .

Achilles!"

1000

Death cut him short. The end closed in around him,
 Flying free of his limbs
 his soul went winging down to the House of Death,
 wailing his fate, leaving his manhood far behind,
 his young and supple strength. But glorious Hector
 taunted Patroclus' body, dead as he was, "Why, Patroclus—
 why prophesy my doom, my sudden death? Who knows?—
 Achilles the son of sleek-haired Thetis may outrace me—
 struck by *my* spear first—and gasp away his life!"

With that he planted a heel against Patroclus' chest,
 wrenched his brazen spear from the wound, kicked him over,
 flat on his back, free and clear of the weapon.

1010

At once he went for Automedon with that spear—
 quick as a god, the aide of swift Achilles—
 keen to cur him down but his veering horses
 swept him well away—magnificent racing stallions,
 gifts of the gods to Pelus, shining immortal gifts.