

TESP 184: Jesus Across Cultures

Winter MWF 10:30-11:35

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Office Hours: Thursday 10AM-12PM

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 Learning Objectives

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 Goals

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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Daily Assignments and Participation (20%)

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

Examinations (60%)

There will be two examinations, worth 30% 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 objective #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 objective #1 and #2*). (No makeup exams).

Synthesis Paper (20%)

You will submit a 7 page synthesis paper at the end of the quarter. The paper aims to apply insights from the study of religion, especially from different cultural perspectives of Jesus, to open-ended questions facing contemporary society such as inter-religious dialogue, the liberation of the poor, and ethical concerns in a global context (*assessing course learning objective #1 and #2*). The paper also articulates the developments of Christologies as well as present the various Christologies in different historical and cultural contexts (*assessing course goals #2*).

Attendance Policies

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

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-

Pathways

This course is associated with the Race, Place & Social Inequalities Pathway: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PATHWAYS. You can find information about Pathways on the Core Curriculum website

<https://www.scu.edu/provost/core/> including specific Pathways, all courses associated with them, and the Reflection Essay prompt and rubric used to evaluate the final essay you will submit.

<https://www.scu.edu/provost/core/pathways/pathway-reflection-essay-instructions/essay-submissions/>

SAVE YOUR WORK FROM THIS CLASS

If you declare this Pathway, you may use a representative piece of work from this course as one of the Pathway materials you will upload via eCampus during your junior or senior year. Therefore, we recommend that you keep electronic copies of your work using Dropbox or Google Docs, in addition to saving copies on your own computer or flash drives. This may ensure you will have a range of choices for retrieving your saved files when you analyze and assemble your Pathway materials in preparation to write the Pathway reflection essay.

Academic Integrity

The Academic Integrity pledge is an expression of the University's commitment to fostering an understanding of -- and commitment to -- a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. 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. For more information about Santa Clara University's academic integrity pledge and resources about ensuring academic integrity in your work, see www.scu.edu/academic-integrity.

Disabilities Resources

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 during my office hours. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy may also be eligible for accommodations.

While I am happy to assist you, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology.

(Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule

proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

Accommodations for Pregnancy and Parenting

In alignment with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and with the California Education Code, Section 66281.7, Santa Clara University provides reasonable accommodations to students who are pregnant, have recently experienced childbirth, and/or have medically related needs. Pregnant and parenting students can often arrange accommodations by working directly with their instructors, supervisors, or departments. Alternatively, a pregnant or parenting student experiencing related medical conditions may request accommodations through Disability Resources.

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, I encourage you 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, bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through <https://www.scu.edu/osl/report/> or anonymously through Ethicspoint <https://www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethicspoint/>

Syllabus

Jan 9	Introduction to the course. Assignment: you write a one- page paper (single spaced) that will present your understanding of Jesus. (For example, where have you learned about him? Who is Jesus to you? (eg., a philosopher, teacher, friend, Son of God, mystical person, religious leader, revolutionary, republican, socialist, etc.). What image(s) of Jesus do you have in mind? What titles, symbols, or theological presentations of Jesus did you hear? What characteristics of Jesus that have inspired you?) If you come from non- Christian traditions, you can present your understanding of Jesus from your own tradition. (Paper due Jan 11).
Jan 11	Jesus in The Gospels In this class, we will explore how Jesus is presented in the four gospels: Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John. We will also discuss a) the differences between historical Jesus and Christ of faith; b) the similarities and differences between the gospels in presenting Jesus and how the early church understood Jesus? (Paper due)

Jan 13	<p>Video: <i>Images of Jesus</i> (50'). You will write a one-page (single spaced) reflection paper on this video and post on Camino.</p> <p>Discussion: a) historical and cultural developments of images of Jesus; b) your previous knowledge and your new understanding of Christian arts; c) how does the documentary help you understand Christian presentations of Jesus</p>
Jan 16	Academic Holiday
Jan 18	We will study the Mediterranean culture in which Jesus grew up and experienced. (John J. Pilch, <i>The Cultural World of Jesus</i> (handouts).
Jan 20	We continue to examine how the Mediterranean culture manifested in the gospel stories. John J. Pilch, <i>The Cultural World of Jesus</i> (handouts).
Jan 23	<p>Biblical Jesus</p> <p>This week, we will begin our exploration of how Jesus is presented and portrayed in the gospels. In this class we begin our study of the Gospel of Luke. We will look at 1) the dominant images, titles, and characteristics of Jesus presented in the Gospel of Luke; 2) groups of people associated with Jesus; 3) his teaching and ministry (paper due).</p>
Jan 25	Historical Jesus: <i>Jesus' Many Faces</i> (Video). We will watch another documentary to gain an understanding of Christology articulated by the church.
Jan 27	<p>Jesus in the Gospel of John</p> <p>How is Jesus presented in these chapters? How did he practice his self-giving love? What kind of human experience did Jesus go through? John: 13-21. We will be watching a short video, "Self-Giving Love According to John" (paper due).</p>
Jan 30	<p>Jesus in the Chinese Context</p> <p>This week, we will explore some interpretations of Jesus in the Chinese and Buddhist contexts. We will look at the history of Christianity in China and how the early church in China has incorporated Taoist and Confucian elements into the Christian teaching. Martin E. Brinkman, <i>The Non-Western Jesus</i>, 5 (paper due).</p>
Feb 1	<p>Jesus in The Buddhist Context</p> <p>Martin E. Brinkman, 6 (paper due)</p>
Feb 3	<p>Jesus in the Japanese and Korean Contexts</p> <p>Martin E. Brinkman, 7&8. We will watch a short video: <i>Three Pillars: Confucius, Jesus and Mohammed</i></p>

Feb 6	<p>Jesus in the Indian Context Themes to consider: Hindu and Christian understanding of God? Jesus and Krishna? Hindu and Christian understanding of the Trinity and salvation? Martin E. Brinkman, 9 & 10 (paper due).</p>
Feb 8	<p>Jesus in the Hindu Context (cont.) Brinkman, 11 (paper due).</p>
Feb 10	<p>Jesus in the Philippines (handouts). In this class, we will explore how Filipino Christians present Jesus. Particularly, we will study the role of the Crucifix in the Filipino religious devotion.</p>
Feb 13	<p>In -class Midterm #1</p>
Feb 15	<p>The African Jesus I This week, we will explore the different interpretations of Jesus from African perspectives. We will focus on a) the characteristics of African theology; b) African interpretations of the cross; c) images of Jesus presented by African theologians as well as the theological implications of new images of Jesus? Martin E. Brinkman, 15 (paper due).</p>
Feb 17	<p>The African Jesus II Martin E. Brinkman, 16 (paper due).</p>
Feb 20	<p>Academic Holiday</p>
Feb 22	<p>To gain a better understanding of Jesus in the African context, we will watch one of the fascinating films on Jesus in the midst of African struggle for political liberation. Movie: <i>Son of Man</i> (Reflection paper).</p>
Feb 24	<p>The African Jesus III (handout; paper due)</p>
Feb 27	<p>American Jesus I In this class, we will explore the various interpretations of Jesus in the US in the last couple of centuries. Themes to consider: a) Thomas Jefferson's understanding of Jesus and his contribution to reconstructing new interpretations of Jesus; b) the Jesus Seminar and Jefferson's approach? Prothero, <i>American Jesus</i>, Introduction & chapter 1 (paper due).</p>
Mar 1	<p>American image of Jesus in the 19th and 20th centuries Prothero, 2&3 (paper due).</p>

Mar 3	American Jesus II Themes to consider: a) the Jesus Movement and its impacts on American culture and religion; b) people who got involved in the Jesus Movement; c) American images of Jesus in the 60s and 70s and ; d) the distinction between cultural and religious icons. Prothero, 4.
Mar 6	The Black Christ As we begin to study the interpretations of Jesus from African American perspectives, please pay attention to: a) the roots of the Black Christ; b) the justification of slavery; c) the Christianization of slaves; d) African American understanding of Jesus; g) different interpretations of Christ within the Black community; and h) the Black Christ within the Black struggle movements.
Mar 8	Douglas, <i>The Black Christ</i> , 1&2: The Roots of The Black Christ (paper due)
Mar 10	Douglas, 3 &4: The Theological Development of The Black Christ (paper due).
Mar 13	Douglas, 5: An Evaluation of The Black Christ (paper due)
Mar 15	Latin American Jesus I Latin American interpretations of Jesus based on the Social Gospel and Liberation Theology (handouts). We will watch a film that presents how Jesus became a source of inspiration for Latin American liberation. Video: <i>Archbishop Romero</i> Your reflection paper will respond to these following themes: 1) the "Mystical body of Christ" manifested in the film "Romero?" 2) traditional images of Jesus in Latin America? 3) conscience according to Christian teachings is not merely making decisions between right and wrong; in what way did Archbishop Romero exercise his conscience? 4) the dominant images of Jesus presented in the film; 5) how does the gospel message contribute to shaping Romero's ethical choices? 6) the different or contradicting images/understandings of church in Latin America.
Mar 17	Latin American Jesus II John Sobrino, <i>Spirituality of Liberation</i> , (handouts) (<i>synthesis paper due</i>).
Mar 20-25	In-class second exam (TBA)