Santa Clara University Religious Studies

TESP 4: The Christian Tradition
Winter 2017

Instructor: Dr. Pearl Maria Barros
Email: pbarros@scu.edu
Phone: 408-551-3625
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 1 PM – 2 PM and By Appointment

Meeting Times: MWF 2:15 PM – 3:20 PM
Location: Kenna 218
Office: Kenna 300K

Course Description

The term "tradition" evokes a variety of responses. If you have ever seen *Fiddler on the Roof* you might be familiar with the ways "TRADITION!" can be used to justify current practices – however unjust – by claiming that that is how they have "always been." But the twentieth-century Protestant theologian Paul Tillich would correct us, noting that such an understanding of tradition is not "tradition" at all but rather "tradition*alism*." For Tillich, a tradition – like the Christian tradition – is called to be a living, dynamic entity capable of keeping continuity with its past while also being capable of change. But how does Christianity do this? Are there instances in its past and present in which it has confused tradition with traditionalism? And how can we tell the difference? In this course, we will examine the ways the Christian tradition attempts to be a living tradition by tracing its theological developments throughout history (albeit an abbreviated timeline!). We will pay particular attention to the issues and debates that have shaped Christian thinking about Jesus, God, humanity, salvation, and Church.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Engage in the *academic* study of religion: interpreting religious traditions through careful reflection and critical approaches

2. Understand the various historical and cultural contexts from which Christian theology emerges

3. Improve writing and oral presentation skills

Core Curriculum Learning Goals and Objectives

This course fulfills Santa Clara University's Core Requirement Religion, Theology, and Culture 1.

The RTC 1 Course Description

The first course in RTC aims to enhance critical reflection on religious belief and practice. It introduces students to the basic approaches by which scholars seek to understand what religion reveals about human beings—their societies, traditions, convictions, and aspirations. It provides an opportunity for students to enrich their understanding of their own religious lives and to better comprehend the diverse local and global communities of which they are a part. By attending to the cognitive and affective dimensions of human experience, this component of the Core supports Knowledge of Global Cultures, Complexity, Critical Thinking, and Religious Reflection.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to describe and compare the central religious ideas and practices from several traditions or within one, and from at least two globally distinct regions.

2. Use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs and the religious dimensions of human existence. (Critical Thinking; Complexity of Method; Reflection)

Required Books

Books are expensive. I have tried to ensure that the cost associated with this course will not be prohibitive. Therefore, I only list as "Required Books" those from which we will be reading numerous selections.

- Mark Salzman, *Lying Awake*
- Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God*
- All Other Course Readings available on Camino

Assessment and Grading

Active and Informed Participation: Read all assigned materials carefully. Take notes that will help you engage in class discussions. Active, informed participation in class discussions is *indispensable*. I also welcome questions – do not be afraid to ask them!

Group Presentation: The class will be divided into 7 groups (3-5 people per group) that will each take responsibility for leading a Friday class discussion of a "controversial" topic in Christianity. Topics are listed on the syllabus. Each group

must research and submit **two articles** (one Pro and one Con) regarding the assigned topic that **use the Christian tradition** to support their arguments. These articles must be submitted to Dr. Barros **NO later than 7 PM Tuesday** of the week they will be presented. Dr. Barros will then post the articles on Camino for the entire class to read for Friday. On Friday, the group presenting will provide a brief synopsis of each text's main arguments (20 minutes) and then open the conversation to the entire class by offering three to five questions for discussion. (**Core Objective 1 and Course Objective 3**)

Weekly Discussion Questions: Every student will bring a set of three discussion questions to class on the **Wednesday of each week**. These questions are to be in response to the week's assigned readings, ALL of which are to be read by class time on Wednesday. The discussion questions are to be typed and the professor will periodically collect them. **NOTE**: these questions are **not** in response to the articles assigned for Friday's "controversial" topic. (**Core Objectives 1 and 2 and All Course Objectives**)

Midterm Exam: There will be one take-home midterm exam in the course during the sixth week of classes. It will consist of multiple short answer questions that will constitute 5-6 double-spaced pages of writing. Students will submit it online through Camino. **The Midterm Exam is due February 17th by 10 PM**. (**All Core Objectives and All Course Objectives**)

Final Paper: Write a paper that compares and contrasts how two of the authors we have read this semester understand the Christian tradition. **Important: the first author must be from Weeks 2-5 and the second author must be from Weeks 7-10!** What influence have these thinkers had on how people understand such topics as Jesus, God, humanity, salvation, Church? **You should not speak to all of these topics; instead, choose one or two that most interest you and that are relevant to the authors you are comparing**. The quality of the essay will show evidence of having engaged class materials closely and carefully. Remember that this paper is supposed to be an *analysis*: you must make an argument rather than simply summarize the texts. The paper is to be 8-10 standard pages, double-spaced, 12-point font. It should follow *MLA Style Manual* OR *Chicago Manual of Style* conventions. **The Final Paper is due March 22nd by 5 PM.** (**Core Objectives 1 and 2 and All Course Objectives**)

All Midterms and Final Papers are to be submitted to me through the course website on Camino. You will find the online dropboxes under the "Modules" tab. BE SURE TO UPLOAD YOUR WORK TO THE APPROPRIATE DROPBOX! Using Camino allows me to type my comments directly on your papers and return them to you faster. It also saves trees.

Grade Distribution and Scale

Weekly Questions:	10%
Group Presentation:	20%
Midterm Exam:	30%
Final Paper:	40%

Grading Scale

94.0–100 A	87.0–89.9 B+	77.0–79.9 C+	67.0–69.9 D+
90.0–93.9 A-	83.0–86.9 B	73.0–76.9 C	63.0–66.9 D
	80.0–82.9 B-	70.0–72.9 C-	60.0–62.9 D-

Assessment of the Course

Students will be asked to assess the course via narrative evaluations at the end of the quarter.

Policies

Attendance

If you are sick or something comes up, please notify the professor in advance or within a day of the missed class. Coming to class while sick will not only worsen your illness but also possibly infect others: not cool! Take care of yourself and know that the work can be made-up. Absences count against you if you do not communicate with the professor about them. After the first excused absence, and for all unexcused absences, your attendance and class participation grades will be affected. At two or more *unexcused* absences your entire grade for the course begins to drop. Daily roll will be taken.

Cell Phone, Laptop, Tablet Use in the Classroom

Please keep your cell phones on silent (not vibrate) during class. Cell phones should be kept away from view; place them in your bag, pocket, etc. If you have a situation that demands that you keep your phone within view, please discuss this situation with the professor at the beginning of class. Laptops and tablets are only to be used in the classroom for taking notes. They are not to be used for checking social media, shopping, and/or surfing the web. Recording lectures and/or discussions is not allowed unless you have approved accommodations through the Disabilities Resources Office.

Academic Integrity

According to the Oxford Dictionary, plagiarism is: “the practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’s own”

(www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/plagiarism). Your work should be YOUR work! Take pride in it. Of course, you will engage other thinkers and sources throughout your studies, but you need to properly cite them in your work by either using the *MLA* or *Chicago Manual of Style* formats. For some helpful tips about how to properly use sources see: "Harvard Guide to Using Sources" http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k70847&pageid=icb.page342054. If you are caught plagiarizing on a required assignment, you will receive an "F" on the assignment and in the course, and the matter will be forwarded for further action to the Office of Student Leadership. 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://scu.edu/studentlife/resources/upload/Academic-Integrity-brochure-2014.pdf. In order to avoid the sanctions applied to cases of academic dishonesty, please make sure that you properly cite all sources that you utilize in your writing, including works that are directly quoted or paraphrased, as well as works used as a source of information. This includes both print and online sources. Your paper submissions must consist of your own writing, and any direct quotations or paraphrasing from other works must be properly cited.

Disability Accommodations

I am committed to meeting the learning needs of all students. If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, 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 within the first two weeks of classes. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy or parenting may 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.

Title IX Syllabus Statement

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 and dating violence or stalking, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please go to www.scu.edu/studentlife and click on the link for the University's Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie at 408-554-3043 or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.comhttp://stage-www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethics-point/.

Reporting Practices

While I want you to feel comfortable coming to me with issues you may be struggling with or concerns you may be having, please be aware that there are some reporting requirements that are part of my job at Santa Clara University.

For example, if you inform me of an issue of harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, I will keep the information as private as I can, but I am required to bring it to the attention of the institution's EEO and Title IX Coordinator. If you inform me that you are struggling with an issue that may be resulting in, or caused by, traumatic or unusual stress, I will likely inform the campus Student Care Team (SCU CARE).

If you would like to reach out directly to the Student Care Team for assistance, you can contact them at www.scu.edu/osl/report. If you would like to talk to the Office of EEO and Title IX directly, they can be reached at 408-554-3043 or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.com. Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to the Office of Student Life (OSL), Campus Safety Services, and local law enforcement. For confidential support, contact the Counseling and Psychological Services office (CAPS), the YWCA, or a member of the clergy (for example, a priest or minister).

Finally, please be aware that if, for some reason, our interaction involves a disruptive behavior, a concern about your safety or the safety of others, or potential violation of University policy, I will inform the Office of Student Life. The purpose of this is to keep OSL apprised of incidents of concern, and to ensure that students can receive or stay connected to the academic support and student wellness services they need.

Schedule

Week 1*: *Introductions: How do we study religion?
1/9: Introductions and Course Logistics

1/11: Mark Salzman, *Lying Awake*, 3-92 (It is a novel so it reads quickly!)

1/13: Be prepared to discuss Mark Salzman, *Lying Awake*, 95-181

Week 2: Beginnings of a Tradition: Early Stories, Many Voices
1/16: No Classes: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

1/18: **Weekly Discussion Questions Due!**
Karen King, "Factions, Variety, Diversity, Multiplicity: Representing Early Christian Differences for the 21st Century." *Method and Theory in The Study of Religion*. 23, no. 3-4 (2011): 216-237.

The Gospel of Mark **OR** The *Acts of Paul and Thecla*

1/20: ****Group 1 Presentation****
TOPIC: Women's Ordination

Week 3: Theological Developments: Augustine
1/23: Augustine, *Confessions*, Books 1 and 2

1/25: **Weekly Discussion Questions Due!**
Augustine, *Confessions*, Books 8 and 13

1/27: ****Group 2 Presentation****
TOPIC: Clerical Celibacy

Week 4*: *Theological Developments: Aquinas
1/30: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, **First Part**, Question 13 "The Names of God," **Articles 1 and 2**

2/1: Weekly Discussion Questions Due!
Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* **First Part**, Question 92 "The Production of Woman"

2/3: **Group 3 Presentation**
TOPIC: Birth Control

Week 5*: *Protests and Responses: Luther and Trent
2/6: Martin Luther, *Disputation of Doctor Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences*, (95 Theses)
See: http://www.luther.de/en/95thesen.html

2/8: Weekly Discussion Questions Due!
Council of Trent, Sixth Session, *Decree on Justification*

2/10: **Group 4 Presentation**
TOPIC: Just War

Week 6*: *Twentieth-Century Shifts: Holy Mystery in Our Midst
2/13: Midterm Exam Distributed
Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, **Preface and Introduction**

2/15: NO Weekly Discussion Questions Due!
Johnson, *Quest*, Chapter 2 **OR** Karl Rahner, "The Hearer of the Message," in *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*

2/17: No Class: MIDTERM EXAM due at 10 PM!

Week 7*: *Speaking of God, Speaking of Ourselves: 20th and 21st Century Theological Anthropologies
2/20: No Classes: Presidents' Day

2/22: Weekly Discussion Questions Due!
Johnson, *Quest*, Chapter 4

Ivone Gebara, "Women's Experience of Salvation" in *Out of the Depths: Women's Experience of Evil and Salvation* **OR** María Pilar Aquino, "Latina Feminist Theology: Central Features," in *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology: Religion and Justice*

2/24: **Group 5 Presentation**
TOPIC: Poverty and Economic Justice

***Week 8*: *Theological Anthropologies* (**Continued**)**
2/27: James Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, Chapter 1

3/1: Weekly Discussion Questions Due!
M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being*, Chapters 1 and 2

3/3: **Group 6 Presentation**
TOPIC: Capital Punishment

***Week 9*: *Theological Anthropologies* (**Continued**)**

3/6: Johnson, *Quest*, Chapter 5

3/8: **Weekly Discussion Questions Due!**
Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation" **OR** Marcella Althaus-Reid, "Doing a Theology from Disappeared Bodies: Theology, Sexuality, and the Excluded Bodies of the Discourses of Latin American Liberation Theology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology*

3/10: ****Group 7 Presentation****
TOPIC: Same-Sex Marriage

Week 10*: *Concluding Conversations: How would YOU define the Christian tradition?

3/13: Andre Dubus, "Sacraments," in *Meditations from a Movable Chair*

3/15: **Weekly Discussion Questions Due!**
Joan Chittister, "On the Third Day, He Rose Again from the Dead," in *In Search of Belief*

3/17: Concluding Conversations: How would **you** define the Christian tradition based on the readings we have studied?

Final Paper is due Wednesday, March 22nd by 5 PM!