

TESP4: The Christian Tradition

Section: #43271

TR: 12:00-1: 50am.

Instructor: Rev. Mark P. Fusco, S.J.

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Office Hours: Thursday 11-12 am

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Classroom: Kennan 310

Course Description: An exploration of fundamental theological themes presented through scriptural, scholarly and various artistic sources.

Purpose of the Core Course in Religious Studies

One of the central aims of the Core Curriculum is to aid the student's exploration and practice of spiritual practice, ethical action, personal identity and the academic study of religious belief from historical, cultural, and critical vantages.

Course Goals

1. Students will be able to express a critical understanding of the theological foundations of Christian tradition.
2. Students will better understand the historical, philosophical and theological elements of artistic explorations of the spiritual dimensions of the human person.
3. Students will be able to converse on at least two different unique cultural and artistic presentations of theological themes.
4. Students will be able to describe and evaluate the positioning of Christian themes, Catholicism in particular, within the larger practices of global religious and secular art worlds.
5. A rudimentary apprehension of the study of theological aesthetics will be grasped.

Religious Studies Department Goals (RSDG's)

1. Students will develop a critical vocabulary and approach to religious studies and its theological, anthropological, cultural, historical, social, political and artistic appropriations.
2. A variety of artistic mediums and genres will be employed to introduce the relationship between the arts and religious inquiry. Students will develop critical skills by reflectively engaging descriptive accounts of religious themes.
3. Dogmatic and meta-reflective questions concerning theological themes will be undertaken by the student.

Core Curriculum Learning Goals and Objectives (LO's)

- 1a. Students will be able to describe and compare the central ideas and practices from several religious traditions and from at least two globally distinct regions (Knowledge of Global Cultures; Complexity; Ambiguity). Hereafter cited as **LO1**.
- 1b. Students will be able to use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs and the religious dimensions of human existence (Critical thinking; Complexity; Reflection). Hereafter cited as **LO2**.

Core learning goal 1a (e.g. **LO1**) will be fulfilled by demonstrating an understanding of some of the central tenets, propositions, scriptural narratives, spiritual practices of Christianity, as well as, an understanding of how these elements were communicated artistically. In this way the student will better appreciate the philosophical, theological, historical, cultural and spiritual motivations behind various examples of religious art and further how artistic vision has a privileged place in exploring the mysteries of the Divine. The artwork studied in the course will be drawn from around the globe and reflect a variety of genres and materials—as directed in **LO2**. The course will provide the student with a rudimentary grasp of some of the key elements used in the discipline of theological aesthetics.

Required Books (Note: You must bring books to class as indicated on the Schedule):

The Catholic Study Bible, 2nd Edition, Donald Senior (Editor) and John J. Collins (Editor), New York: Oxford University Press, 2011 (ISBN-13: 978-0195297768, ISBN-10: 0195297768). Hereafter cited as *CSB*.

Wallace, David Foster. *This is Water: Some Thoughts, Delivered on a Significant Occasion, About Living a Compassionate Life*. Little Brown & Co. A recording of the work can also be found on YouTube.

Forte, Bruno. *The Portal of Beauty: Towards a Theology of Aesthetics*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K. 2008. Hereafter cited as Forte.

Robert P. Imbelli, *Rethinking the Christian Imagination: Theological Mediations for the New Evangelization*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 2014 (ISBN-10: 0814635504, ISBN-13: 978-0814635506). Hereafter cited as Imbelli.

William C. Placher and Derek R. Nelson, *A History of Christian Theology: An Introduction*, Louisville, KY: WJK Press, 2103 (ISBN: 978-0-664-23935-0 (pbk)). Hereafter cited as Placher.

Camino required materials:

Please check Camino for class notes, study questions, etc.

Assessment and Grading: 100 points possible

10 points: Informed participation: Students are required to participate regularly in class discussions. Full credit will be given for active, *informed* participation directly concerning the text, film, or website under consideration. This grade includes active listening, group work, and homework. In class, the professor will occasionally solicit and/or accept personal points of view to begin or encourage discussion, however, off-topic comments will not count in this grade as it is essential to the course of study to discuss ideas in readings and/or questions raised on the assignment topics. Only students who consistently demonstrate a close reading of the homework will receive an 'A' in this area. Three or more *unexcused* absences will reduce this grade to 0. (**LO 1** and **LO2**).

20 points: A Reflection Paper: A particular theological theme or question (e.g. Transfiguration, Suffering, Creation, etc.) will be explored by comparing two different artistic renderings or exploration into said event. The art chosen to explicate the theological concern must reflect two different cultural sources or historical periods. The paper will be 4-5 pages in length and follow MLA formatting dictates. Due: Monday, October 31. (**LO1**).

40 points: 4 Quizzes. Quiz may consist of short answers, fill in the blank, and/or essay. In-class. (**LO1** and **LO2**). Dates: Quiz #1: Monday, September 26, Quiz #2: Monday, October 10 and third quiz on Friday, November 11.

10 points: a critical response paper (1-2 pages). (**LO1** and **LO2**). The Critical Response Paper is due on Friday October 7th. In this paper the student will reflect on how a particular art form or work of art explicates their own understanding and personal experiences of one of the following mysteries: evil, suffering, divine revelation, sacrifice, the relationship between whole and part (universal and

individual), Trinitarian Identity, Creation, covenant and law, Jesus Christ or the immaterial order.

20 points: Test. Monday, October 24th.

ASSESSMENT/GRADING

A (95-100)	A- (90-94)	B+ (85-89)	B (80-84)	B- (76-79)
C+ (72-75)	C (68-71)	C- (64-67)		
D+ (60-63)	D 57-59	D- 54-56	F 53 and below.	

If accepted by the professor, a late paper will lose one letter grade for each day it is late. An explicit and defensible thesis statement that is argued in an organized and logically consistent manner focuses an “A” paper. English usage problems detract from such a paper, as would, a paper unable to anticipate possible objections to its point of view.

Extra credit is at the professor’s discretion.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is a component of one’s participation grade and a necessary facet of the dialogical and dynamic learning environment of university life. A missed class is excusable. Unexcused Absences and tardiness will reduce or erase your entire participation grade.

Disability Accommodations:

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. 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.

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://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.

NOTE: No taping of any kind may occur without explicit written permission from the professor or Disability Resources.

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](tel: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/](http://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 OF ASSIGNMENTS

This schedule may change and it is the student's responsibility to remain current in all assignments.

January

Tuesday 10: Introduction

David Foster Wallace, *This is Water* One. **(L02)**.

Thursday 12: Some Fundamental Philosophical Principles of Theological Investigation.

Read: Placher, *An Alliance With Philosophy*, 43-55.

Tuesday 17: Trinitarian Identity.

Read: Imbelli, *Chapter Two* and Placher, *The Beginning of Orthodoxy*, 33-42.

Thursday 19: Creation and Sacrifice: Movement, Fragment and the Whole

Read: *Genesis* 1-2: 1-25 and *The Catholic Study Bible* (hereafter cited: *CSB*), Lawrence Boadt, *The Pentateuch*, RG 85-100 (*CSB*), and Placher, *Hope of Israel*.

Quiz 1 (L01).

Tuesday 24: Covenant, Law and Community

Read: Forte, Chapter 1, *Divine Beauty: Augustine* and *Exodus*, RG 115-125 (CSB), *Exodus*: 20: 3-4 and Placher, *Augustine*, 91-102.

Thursday 26: Non-Material Presence.

Read: Placher, *The Fragile Synthesis*, 119-136.

Tuesday 31: Christology.

Read: Forte, Chapter 2, *The Word of Beauty: Aquinas*, Lk 3: 23-38 (Genealogy of Jesus) and Placher, *Truly Human, Truly Divine*, 55-72.

February

Thursday 2: The Prophets/ Social Justice

Read: Forte, *Tragic Beauty: Dostoevsky* and Placher, *Faith Alone*, 153-169.

Critical Response Paper due. **(L01 & L02).**

Tuesday 7: Glory: Divine Theophany

Read: Forte, Chapter 5, *The Glory of Beauty: Balthasar* and *Mk* 9: 2-9.

Quiz # 2 (L01 & L02).

Thursday 9: Theological Issues in Film.

Read: Forte, Chapter 6, *The Icon and Beauty: Evdokimov*.

Tuesday 14: Theological Issues in Film.

Read: Forte, Chapter 8, *Between Icon and Story: The Cinema and the Sacred* and Placher, *Light of The East*, 73-90.

Thursday 16: Mission and State of Life.

Read: Imbelli, Chapter Three, *Four* and *Jn* 13: 1-20 (Washing of the Feet).

Tuesday 21: Hermetic Tradition, Magic and Scientific Determinism.

Read: Placher, *Reason and Enthusiasm*, 203-18.

Quiz # 3.

Thursday 23: Miracles, Transfiguration and Free Faith.

Read: Imbelli, *Chapter One*, Mrk. 27: 1-26 and Placher, *The City on the Hill*, 219-32.

Tuesday 27: Test.

March

Thursday 2: Evil and Suffering.

Read: Forte, Chapter 3, *Beauty's Defeat: Kierkegaard*, Lk. 4: 1-13 (Temptation in Desert), Mt. 27: 11-26 (Christ Before Pilate) and Placher, *God's Governance*, 219-233.

Tuesday 7: Sacrifice

Read: Forte, Chapter 9, *Mortal Beauty at the Threshold*, Jn. 13: 21-30 and Placher, *Absolute Power*, 137-53.

Reflection Paper Due (L01 & L02).

Thursday 9: The Holy Spirit & the Classical: Art as Objective Order.

Read: Forte, Chapter 7, *The Spirit: Three Semantic Models*.

Centering Question: Gerardus van der Leeuw states of Bach that in him: "the artist is priest, is himself a theologian," ((Gerardus van der Leeuw, *Sacred and Profane Beauty: The Holy in Art*, trans. By David E. Green (NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963), 242)). How are the arts analogous to a liturgical event? How artists allow us to understand the cosmos as ordered and rational?

The Holy Spirit & the Romantic: Art as Subjective Order.

Centering Question: Karl Barth asked of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: "Why and in what respect can one call this man "incomparable"? In part, Barth answers his own question in claiming that Mozart's music is "free and freeing", "strong", "wise" and "sovereign". Indeed, Barth thought Mozart acts as a theologian of the doctrine of creation and eschatology. How do artists like Mozart help us to better understand the subjective and experiential aspects of spirituality? (L02).

The Holy Spirit & the Postmodern World: Art as Production.

Centering Question: Does advertisement reduce reason's ordination of the beautiful to a calculus driven by equations of consummation—sensual algorithms that

confuses the attractive with the vulgar, disordered feeling with taste, and appetite with authentic desire? Why or why not? (L02)

Tuesday 14: Contemplation: Silence as the Music of the Spirit.

Read: Placher, *The Path to Salvation*, 103-117 and the following three quotes on contemplation of the Divine:

(1) “It should be known that God dwells secretly in all souls and is hidden in their substance, for otherwise they would not last...Oh, how happy is this soul, which ever experiences God resting and reposing within it! Oh, how fitting it is for it to withdraw from things, flee from business matters, and live in immense tranquility, so that it may not, even with the slightest speck of dust or noise, disturb or trouble its heart where the Beloved dwells.” (Excerpts from: *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book 2: Chapter 7:8 *The Living Flame of Love*, Stanzas 4:14–15 from: John of the Cross. (2011). *Strength in Darkness: Wisdom from John of the Cross*. (M. Kerry, Ed.) (Pgs. 97–98). Boston, MA: Pauline Books & Media).

(2) “For me to become great is impossible. I must bear with myself and my many imperfections; but I will seek out a means of getting to Heaven by a little way—very short and very straight, a little way that is wholly new. We live in an age of inventions; nowadays the rich need not trouble to climb the stairs, they have lifts instead. Well, I mean to try and find a lift by which I may be raised unto God, for I am too tiny to climb the steep stairway of perfection. I have sought to find in Holy Scripture some suggestion as to what this lift might be which I so much desired, and I read these words uttered by the Eternal Wisdom Itself: “*Whosoever is a little one, let him come to Me.*” Then I drew near to God, feeling sure that I had discovered what I sought; but wishing to know further what He would do to the little one, I continued my search and this is what I found: “*You shall be carried at the breasts and upon the knees; as one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you.*” Thérèse of Lisieux, S., & Taylor, T. N. (1912). *The Story of a Soul* (p. 136). London: Burns and Oates.

(3) “When shall this soul of mine, entranced with love for God, look on herself as broken shards, yearn after God, and lose herself in Him, for “He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit”? When shall she cry out: “My flesh and my heart have fainted away; Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever”? Holy and happy is he who but once, for but one moment, has felt something like this in his mortal life; for this is no human happiness, it is life eternal so to lose oneself, as if one were empty of self, as if one were not. (Bernard of Clairvaux, S., Patmore, M. C., & Patmore, C. (1884). *Saint Bernard on the Love of God* (pp. 43–44). London: Burns and Oates).

Answer the following based on the quotes above: (1) How do Saint John of the Cross, Saint Thérèse of Lisieux and Saint Bernard understand the nature and contemplation of the Divine? Do you find any approach attractive—why or why not? (L02).

Thursday 16: Resurrection and Afterlife.

Read: *Hosea* 13:14 and 1 *Cor* 15: 50-54 and Read: Placher, *The Claims of History*, 233-49.

Quiz # 4.