

TESP 4 – The Christian Tradition
Department of Religious Studies
Fulfills **RTC 1** core curriculum requirement

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Office Location and Hours: Kenna 303, MWF 10:30-11:30 and by appointment

Course Meetings: Winter 2017, MWF 9:15 – 10:20 p.m. in Kenna 218

Course Description

This course, which fulfills the Religion, Theology, and Culture (RTC) 1 core curriculum requirement, introduces students to Christian theology, ethics, and spirituality, focusing on the role that Christian perspectives play in controversial issues throughout history and particularly in the world today. Students explore Christian theology through reading canonical and apocryphal gospels, as well as contemporary works, to understand who Jesus was and what Jesus means to a variety of Christian communities. Students explore Christian ethics through examining Christian ethical perspectives from a variety of denominations on a variety of current issues, and apply ethical positions to evaluate current public figures and policies on a particular issue of the students' choosing.

Course Objectives

After taking this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the most important contours of the history of the Christian tradition
2. Describe and give examples of religious practices and beliefs from several different Christian denominations in globally distinct regions.
3. Compare, contrast, and analyze primary sources such as New Testament passages that offer differing perspectives.
4. Analyze Christian theological and ethical perspectives from a variety of denominations on current issues, including arguing in support of a given work's strengths and critiquing its weaknesses.

Core Curriculum Learning Objectives – Religion, Theology, and culture (RTC) 1

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. (Knowledge of Global Cultures; Complexity of Content as well as Method; Ambiguity)
2. Students will be able to use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs and the religious dimensions of human existence. (Critical Thinking; Complexity of Method; Religious Reflection)

Religion Department Objectives

1. Students question and probe religion for what it reveals about human beings, their diverse societies, traditions, convictions and aspirations.
2. Students use diverse materials and demonstrate formal postures of inquiry into religion and in order to go beyond simple description of religion to a reflective engagement with it.
3. Students propose and investigate the "big questions" – that is, the meta-reflective questions that ask how and why we ask the questions that we do about religion.

Required Reading

Textbook:

Jacobsen, Douglas, *The World's Christians: Who They Are, Where They Are, and How They Got There*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. (Available at the SCU bookstore)

Other Readings:

Available on the course Camino website

Assignments

Participation/Attendance – 20%

Grade is based on attendance, submission of discussion questions, student self-evaluation of participation, and professor assessment of participation. Any unexcused absences, or any excused absences beyond the three allotted excused absences, will result in a 0 participation grade for the day.

Quizzes and Assignments on Readings – 20%

There will be in-class quizzes on the key concepts in each of the readings from the Jacobsen textbook, as well as short answer assignments on primary source readings. (*Core curriculum objective #1*)

Group Presentation – 15%

On seven Fridays during the quarter, a group of students will present on a controversial issue in Christianity, including preparing readings and/or videos and dynamic activities to engage the class in analysis and discussion of varying sides of the issue. (*Core curriculum objectives #1 & #2*)

Midterm Essay – 20%

Students analyze a current public figure, law, or policy based on the perspectives of two contrasting Christian ethicists and the student's own perspective. The midterm essay is a five-part assignment that includes an outline, a complete draft, peer feedback, HUB feedback, and a final draft. 5 pages. (*Core curriculum objective #2*)

Reflection Portfolio and Final Essay – 25%

- 1) Reflections are 1-page papers based on professor prompts and students' additional thoughts. In reflection papers, students demonstrate their grasp of key concepts and explore the varieties and nuances of Christian theology, ethics, and spirituality and relate them to students' own life journeys. Students choose from a variety of prompts and complete 6 reflection assignments throughout the quarter. They will be graded collectively as part of the final essay and portfolio assignment; however, students may request feedback on their reflection papers at any time during the quarter.
- 2) Students write a two-part essay based on their reflection assignments from the entire course. The first part answers the question "what is the most important thing that I learned and this class," and analyzes academically a theme the student identified in readings and class discussion, using examples from at least three diverse sources (2 pages). The second part answers the question "how did I grow as a result of this class," and presents the students' reflections on how they grew as a person or as a student. This section is based on excerpts from reflection assignments that illustrate an area of student growth. (2 pages). (*Core curriculum objective #1 & #2*)

Late Assignments

No late discussion question submissions will be accepted. Other assignments will receive a full-grade deduction for each day late. Thus an assignment turned in up to 24 hours late reduces an A assignment to a B, 24-48 hours late reduces an A assignment to a C, etc.

Absence

Students are allowed three excused absences. If you will be unable to attend a class because of illness or an unavoidable conflict, you must notify the professor before class. You will receive an excused absence for that session. An excused absence without prior notice will only be granted if the absence was due to an urgent matter that precluded prior notice and if the professor is notified as soon as possible.

Full Participation

Full participation is required to receive full credit. Please be in class and ready to go when class is scheduled to start. To facilitate attentive participation, please turn off and put away all cell phones, laptops, iPads, etc. before class starts.

Grading Scale

A	=	93-100
A-	=	90-92
B+	=	87-89
B	=	83-86
B-	=	80-82
C+	=	77-79
C	=	73-76
C-	=	70-72
D+	=	67-69
D	=	63-66
D-	=	60-62
F	=	59 or lower

Feedback

I provide individual feedback to students on short-answer writing assignments and midterm essays, pointing out successes and offering constructive feedback on ways to improve weaker areas. Because I post all grades on Camino, students will have ongoing access to information regarding their progress in the class. I encourage and welcome all students to contact me via e-mail or phone, stop by during office hours, and/or set up appointments with me to discuss their experience in the course and address any questions or struggles they might have.

Course Evaluation

I offer students three anonymous narrative evaluation opportunities: early in the course, halfway through the course, and at the end of the course. I use the first two evaluations to make immediate adjustments in response to student concerns wherever possible and reasonable.

Academic Integrity Pledge

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.

Disability Resources

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, (408) 554-4109, 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.

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/>

Reporting Practices

I want you to feel comfortable coming to me with issues you may be struggling with or concerns you may be having. At the same time, 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. 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.

Day	Date	Reading Due	Assignment
1	Mon., Jan. 9	None (Course introduction)	
2	Weds., Jan. 11	<i>Textbook Quiz:</i> Ch. 14, "The Ancient Tradition"	Disc. Question
3	Fri., Jan. 13	<i>Camino:</i> Jesus's Birth Narratives	Disc. Question Short Answers
Mon., Jan. 16 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday			
4	Weds., Jan 18	<i>Camino:</i> Narratives of Jesus's resurrection	Disc. Question Short Answers
5	Fri., Jan 20	<i>Camino:</i> Christian Perspectives on Pres. Trump	Disc. Question
6	Mon., Jan 23	<i>Textbook Quiz:</i> Ch. 1 "The Orthodox Tradition"	Disc. Question
7	Weds., Jan 25	<i>Textbook Quiz:</i> Ch. 2 "The Catholic Tradition"	Disc. Question
8	Fri., Jan 27	<i>Textbook Quiz:</i> Ch. 3 "The Protestant Tradition"	Disc. Question Reflection 1
9	Mon., Jan 30	<i>Textbook Quiz:</i> Ch. 4 "The Pentecostal Tradition"	Disc. Question
10	Weds., Feb. 1	<i>Camino:</i> Materials on Controversial Issue #1	Disc. Question
11	Fri., Feb. 3 - Midterm Writing Day: No Class		
12	Mon., Feb. 6	None (Midterm Peer Reviews in class)	None
13	Weds., Feb. 8	<i>Textbook Quiz:</i> Ch. 15 "The Great Division: 500-1000"	Disc. Question
14	Fri., Feb 10	<i>Camino:</i> Materials on Controversial Issue #2	Disc. Question Reflection 2
15	Mon., Feb. 13	<i>Camino:</i> The Jesus Sutras	Disc. Question
16	Weds., Feb. 15	<i>Textbook Quiz:</i> Ch. 16 "Rise of the West"	Disc. Question
17	Fri., Feb. 17	<i>Camino:</i> Materials on Controversial Issue #3	Disc. Question Reflection 3
Mon., Feb. 20 - President's Day Holiday			
18	Weds., Feb. 22	<i>Textbook Quiz:</i> Ch. 17 "Christianity - Global Era"	Disc. Question
19	Fri., Feb. 24	<i>Camino:</i> Materials on Controversial Issue #4	Disc. Question Reflection 4
20	Mon., Feb. 27	<i>Textbook Quiz:</i> Ch. 12 "North America"	Disc. Question
21	Weds., Mar. 1	<i>Camino:</i> Readings on the Amish	Disc. Question
22	Fri., Mar. 3	<i>Camino:</i> Materials on Controversial Issue #5	Disc. Question Reflection 5
23	Mon., Mar. 6	<i>Textbook Quiz:</i> Ch. 15 "The Middle East"	Disc. Question
24	Weds., Mar. 8	<i>Camino:</i> Readings on Palestinian Christians	Disc. Question
25	Fri., Mar. 10	<i>Camino:</i> Materials on Controversial Issue #6	Disc. Question Reflection 6
26	Mon., Mar. 13	None (Exploring The Bigger Questions)	None
27	Weds., Mar. 15	None (Exploring The Bigger Questions)	None
28	Fri., Mar. 17	None (Final Paper Discussions)	Final Paper