

SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

TESP (Theology, Ethics, and Spirituality) 137

RTC (Religion, Theology, and Culture) 3

Theology of Death

FALL 2016 Prof. Frederick Parrella

SYLLABUS

“The great and sad mistake of many people...is to imagine that those whom death has taken, leave us. They do not leave us. They remain. Where are they? In darkness? Oh, no! It is we who are in darkness. We do not see them, but they see us. Their eyes, radiant with glory, are fixed on our eyes...Oh, invisible consolation! Though invisible to us, our dead are not absent. They are living near us, transfigured—into light, into power, into love.”

—Karl Rahner (1904–1984)

“Life is only genuinely alive insofar as it...grows beyond itself, lets go of itself. It is rich only in so far as it can be poor, insofar as it loves... Death will not allow itself to be pushed to the end of life; it belongs right at the center, not in mere knowledge, but in action. Death characterizes our breakthrough into a life that is ever greater. It is through this positive death that we amass life.”

—Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–1988), citing F. Ulrich, *Leben in der Einheit von Leben und Tod*

“The world is a beautiful and terrible place. Deeds of horror are committed every minute and in the end those we love die. If the screams of all the earth’s living creatures were one scream of pain, surely it would shake the stars. But we have love. It may seem a frail defence against the horrors of the world, but we must hold fast and believe in it, for it is all we have.”

—P. D. James (1920–2014)

“When it came down to reality, what mattered except the lives of those who love? All that was precious was made up of actions and of love, of belief in the purpose beyond the habits of living from day to day.”

—Anne Perry (1938–)

“A professor is one who talks in someone else’s sleep.”

—W. H. Auden (1907–1973)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is to assist the student in reflecting theologically, philosophically, and personally on the mystery of life and death. The meaning of life makes little sense unless a person also reckons with the mystery of death—of the self, of relationships, of loved ones, of time and opportunity, and of human beings and nature. It seeks to help the student discover the deeper meaning of Christian symbols concerning human destiny: dying as a human activity, judgment, heaven, hell, purgatory, the resurrection of the

body, and the return of all creation to God through Jesus the Christ and the Spirit. Intended for the mature individual, the course should allow the student to delve more deeply into a specific theological topic while ideally serving as a synthesis of other courses in religious studies.

THE THIRD COURSE IN THE RELIGION, THEOLOGY, AND CULTURE CURRICULUM

Building on the first two courses, the third course in RTC applies insights from the study of religion to difficult, open-ended questions of vital interest to contemporary societies. From historical or current perspectives, this course takes critical engagement to a creative level either in theory or practice.

LEARNING GOALS FOR RELIGION, THEOLOGY AND CULTURE 3

- Critical Thinking: The ability to identify, reflect upon, evaluate, integrate, and apply different types of information and knowledge to form independent judgments.
- Ethical Reasoning: Drawing on ethical traditions to assess the consequences of individual and institutional decisions.
- Religious Reflection: Questioning and clarifying beliefs through critical inquiry into faith and the religious dimensions of human existence.
- Perspective: Seeking out the experience of different cultures and people, striving to view the world through their eyes.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR RELIGION, THEOLOGY AND CULTURE 3

3.1 Identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions. (Critical Thinking; Ethical Reasoning; Perspective)

3.2 Evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society. (Critical Thinking; Religious Reflection)

- At the center of the student's responsibility is a careful reading of texts and a thoughtful, creative analysis of these texts in papers on themes the students select. The ability to express one's ideas clearly and coherently in written form is essential in the learning process.
- As the last course in Religious Studies and in the Core Curriculum requirement in Religion, Theology, and Culture, this third course should serve as an "capstone," giving students the opportunity to bring together both their core and disciplinary knowledge, their acquired analytic skills, the intellectual challenge of current issues, and the "meta-questions" that will invoke ethical and ontological concerns.

REQUIRED READING

Bloom, Metropolitan Anthony. "On Death." *Sobernost* 1, 2 (1979): 8-18 (in reading packet).

Albom, Mitch. *Tuesdays with Morrie*. New York: Doubleday, 1997 (purchase).

Steindal-Rast, David. "Learning To Die," in *Parabola* 2, 1 (1977): 22-31 (in reading packet).

- Tillich, Paul. "Symbols of Faith." In *Dynamics of Faith*, 41-54. New York: Harper and Row, 1957. Reprinted in *Main Works*, vol. 5, *Writings on Religion*, edited by Robert Scharlemann, 250-256. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988 (in reading packet.)
- Boros, Ladislaus. *The Mystery of Death. The Human Person in the Final Encounter*, translated by Gregory Bainbridge. New York: Herder and Herder, 1965 (in reading packet).
- "Last Things in Recent Theology." Typed notes, 1-6. Originally appeared in *Herder Correspondence*, April 1965 (in packet).
- Lane, Dermot. *Keeping Hope Alive: Stirrings in Christian Theology*. New York: Paulist Press, 1996. Reprint: Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2005.
- _____. "A Theology of the Paschal Mystery," in *Christ at the Centre* (New York: Paulist, 1991): 103-129 (in reading packet).
- Gleason, Robert. "The Meaning of Hell." Excerpt from *The World To Come* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1958), 115–127 (in reading packet).
- Tillich, Paul. "Symbols of Eternal Life." The Ingersol Lecture, 1962. *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 26, 3 (1962): 1-10 (in reading packet.)
- _____. "Forgetting and Being Forgotten," in *The Eternal Now* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963): 26-35 (in reading packet.)
- Parrella, Frederick J. *Theology of Death*, Unpublished manuscript, Santa Clara University, 2002–2014 (in reading packet).

ASSIGNMENTS

• **Four (4)** graded papers are required for the course, and one non-graded paper. The graded papers must follow the form used in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers* by Kate L. Turabian, Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. This contains all the information on the mechanics of a term paper: capitalization, footnotes or endnotes, spelling, punctuation, bibliographies, typing, etc. Also recommended for style and good writing is William Strunk and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*, 3rd ed., New York: Macmillan, 1979 (1935). This classic work contains chapters on elementary rules of usage, principles of composition, formation of style, matters of form, and words and expressions commonly misused in writing. There will be no examination.

PRELIMINARY PAPER

A personal essay of no more than two double-spaced typed pages, that attempts to answer this question: Am I anxious of death? If not, why not? If so, why? How does this anxiety manifest itself in my life?

Paper due: Monday of the second week.

While this paper will not receive a grade, failure to submit it will be detrimental to the student's final grade. The paper will be returned with comments and the student is re-

quested to resubmit the paper with the final paper at the end of the term with any comments he or she might like to add after completing the course.

PAPER ONE

An essay, six (6) pages minimum, on the meaning of death, using the story of Morrie's story, Judy's Story, and the readings from Anthony Bloom and David Steindl-Rast. You may also correlate the readings to a personal experience of death, if you have had one. How do the readings resonate with your experience of life? What do you think is our culture's reaction to the wisdom in the texts? You must refer to the texts extensively in developing your essay. Citations must appear in foot/endnotes according to *the Chicago Manual of Style*.

Objectives Fulfilled: 3.1. *Identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions.* In examining two stories of death, and the wisdom of both the Western and Orthodox tradition, students will gain a broader insight into how cultures have faced death as well as a spirituality of dying.

Paper due: Wednesday, 3rd week. (The fall quarter has 12 weeks because of the Thanksgiving holiday. This does not count as one of the weeks of the quarter.)

PAPER TWO

An essay, six (6) pages minimum, on the meaning of eschatology, either individual or corporate, based on your readings from Lane and Boros. You may choose one or more of Boros's philosophical arguments for the final decision in death from *The Mystery of Death*; select a theme from the chapters assigned of Lane's *Keeping Hope Alive*.

• *Regardless of your topic, you must use some of Boros's ideas in your paper.*

Paper due: Monday, 7th week.

Objectives Fulfilled: 3.2. *Evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society.* TIME magazine in a June 2012 featured on its cover "How to Die." Exploring a 21st century theology of death and after-life will help the student cope with the universal mystery of death, the anxiety that death produces, and help the student seek an answer to the question of "how to die."

PAPER THREE

A theological essay, minimum six (6) pages, on death and the four last things, based upon Tillich, Boros, and Lane. Select a theological question such as the meaning of death or the symbols of judgment, hell, heaven, or purgatory. Tillich's interpretation of symbols and myths is essential here.

Paper due: Monday, 10th week.

Objectives Fulfilled: **3.1.** *Identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions.* **3.2.** *Evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society.* By critically examining the classic symbols of the “four last things” in the Christian tradition, students will move beyond the unrealistic images of death and afterlife in Christian theology and in the popular imagination to discover an existential meaning of symbols of death, judgment, heaven, and hell that resonates with their contemporary experience in a postmodern psychological world. Students will also learn the real meaning of every ethical decision as the search for their lost essential self that is hidden within their ego-driven existence; put differently, the manner of death is reflected in the manner of ethical living.

PAPER FOUR

A theological essay, minimum six (6) pages, on a topic of your own choice from the reading material assigned in the course or from additional reading suggested on the bibliography. Since the course is theological in nature, include some theological perspective from the readings.

- From a Christian perspective, you may want to connect the Eucharist and the Paschal Mystery to the eschatological destiny of humankind. You may develop a theme from Boros or Lane that answers a specific theological question you have raised in your own life.

- If you are from another religious tradition, or have no particular tradition, you may want to explore the meaning of death in other religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, or Judaism. Perhaps a comparative methodology will be helpful, comparing and contrasting the ideas from the course with the other tradition you have chosen. There are books on your bibliography that examine death in other religious and cultural traditions.

- You may also include psychological, sociological, historical, philosophical, and personal perspectives that you find helpful. For example, consider an interdisciplinary paper:

- an English major may want to examine death in literature

- a fine arts major may want to explore death by considering the major Requiems (music), or death in iconography (art), or the theme of death in plays (theatre).

- a science major may want to compare and evaluate the religious/theological understandings of death with medical/ scientific interpretations.

- a sociology or psychology major may want to consider death from these specific disciplines

- many other examples could be given; think of one that is special and unique for you, your life experience, and your major interests and goals in life.

Whether your focus is purely theological or not, you must reveal to the reader an in-depth knowledge of the assigned readings in the course.

- Please consult with me—in person, on the phone, or by email—if you need help with this final paper.

Paper due: Wednesday of the examinations week.

Objectives Fulfilled: **3.1.** *Identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions.* **3.2.** *Evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society.* By choosing their own topic, students will explore death from a variety of disciplines, allowing them to see death from “diverse perspectives” and as the one completely “open-ended question.”

A SECOND ASSIGNMENT OPTION

Upon consultation, it is possible to combine papers three and four, so that the student will submit a thoughtful, reflective, and scholarly 12-page paper (minimum). This option is not for every student but for those who want to create a more in-depth, focused, and scholarly piece of work.

Anyone choosing this option must submit a proposal by email with the topic and a brief outline or summary of your paper by the beginning of the ninth week of the quarter.

NOTE WELL ABOUT PAPERS

On form:

(1) Be sure to number the pages of your paper and have a title page with your name and the title of the paper. The title page is NOT page 1.

(2) No bibliography or “works cited” page is required. All the information is contained in the footnotes. Learn to do footnotes in the proper manner. For this, consult the writing guides in your reading packet at the very beginning of the packet. This will give you all the information as well as a template for books and articles, chapters in books, et al..

(3) All papers must be double-spaced with no additional space between paragraphs. (Go into “Paragraph” under the “Format” menu and be sure that “Spacing” on the lower left has 0 pt. under “Before” and “After.”)

On deadlines:

(1) The first three papers must be received by the last scheduled class of this course, quarter, Wednesday of the 10th week. *No exceptions can be made.*

Note well: there are deadlines and there are consequences if the student does not submit his or her paper on time. Very late papers may be returned with a grade but without comment. Late work is usually substandard work.

(2) The final paper is due no later than **Wednesday of examinations week.**

ATTENDANCE

A student is expected to attend **all** classes and the material covered and announcements are the student’s responsibility. There are often reasons a student *cannot* or *does not* attend class. Failure to attend class means that the student will be unfamiliar with the assigned reading material as well as ideas presented and discussed in class

for the required papers. This cannot but help have a negative impact upon the student's final grade. Classes are given only once: if you miss class, it is your responsibility to keep up to date with the course.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Please observe the following rules of professional conduct in a class:

- Students should make every effort to arrive at the classroom on time.
- Students should be suitably dressed for an academic forum.
- No one is permitted to leave the class without permission of the professor until the class has been dismissed except for a *serious* medical emergency. Restroom facilities are available before and after the class, *not* during the class.
- Electronics: cell/smart phones, iPhones, iPods, iPads, electronic tablets, et al. may *never* be used during class time, **except for course material**. Please be sure your cell phone is turned off. You would NEVER want your phone to ring in my class. Do not leave cell phones on your desk or on your lap. ***If the professor sees you texting, you will be asked to withdraw from the course immediately.***
- You may use your computer to take notes. Again, if the professor sees you using your laptop for any other purpose than the work of this class, ***you will be asked to withdraw from the course immediately.***

Thank you for observing these simple and necessary rules.

GRADING POLICY

(1) Grades will be based on two factors: (i) the **four** papers required for the course—100% (ii) class attendance and participation will be a qualitative factor at the discretion of the professor.

Weight of papers: Paper 1: 25%; Paper 2: 25%; Paper 3: 25%; Paper 4: 25%

(2) Papers will be evaluated on the basis of the student's ability: (a) to reveal to the reader his/her command of the assigned readings in both depth and breadth; (b) to develop a clear and coherent argument of the student's choosing based upon the required readings. *References to the texts—citations or direct quotations—are essential to a successful grade in all of the papers.*

(3) The grade of Incomplete will be given out only under special and unusual circumstances. Any student requesting an "I" must have a serious reason for doing so. For students who receive a grade of *Incomplete*: All work required for the course must be submitted no later than the beginning of the fourth week of the next term. Failure to do so means that the grade will automatically be turned over to an "F" by the Office of Student Records at the beginning of the fifth week.

(4) Students who do not attend class on a consistent basis, so that they are known by the professor and other students to be a member of the course in good standing; students who fail to contact the professor with the reason for missing class: if you do not withdraw before the required date to receive a "W", you will **not** receive a passing grade or suffer a severe reduction in your grade, whether you submit any work at the end of the term or not.

GRADES AND NUMERICAL EQUIVALENTS

The numerical equivalents are based on the University's 4.0 grading system:

A = 4.00; A- = 3.7; B+/A = 3.5; B+ = 3.3; B/B+ = 3.15; B = 3; B- = 2.7; C+/B = 2.5; C+ = 2.3; C/C+ = 2.15; C = 2.00; C- = 1.7, D/F = 0.7.

Cheating can take many forms. Please be aware that if you are caught in a situation of academic dishonesty, you will receive an F in the assignment or the exam. The most common form of cheating is plagiarism. Note carefully: *whenever you use the precise words or **even** the ideas of another, you must give a complete reference* (author, title, city, publisher, date, page number) *to your source text either in a footnote or endnote.* You may also *not* plagiarize another student's ideas or words.

At the same time, it is perfectly legitimate, even desirable, for students to talk over their topics, exchange ideas, and edit each other's papers. This is an important part of the process of learning: sharing your creative ideas with your peers. This presumes that all students collaborating with others both give and receive from such fruitful collaboration.

Santa Clara University is implementing an Academic Integrity pledge designed to deepen the understanding of and commitment to honesty and academic integrity.

The Academic Integrity Pledge 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."

I ask that you affirm this pledge and apply these principles to your work in this class.

DISABILITIES RESOURCES

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.

Sexual Harassment and Discrimination (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 and dating violence or stalking, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please go to www.scu.edu/studentlife/about/osl.cfm 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.com or <http://stage-www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethics-point/>

Extended Statement on Title IX and Reporting Practices (adapted, with permission, from Scott Lewis, J.D.)

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 involving 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 Office of Student Life.

If you would like to reach out directly to the Office of Student Life 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](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.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 Wellness Center, 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 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 READINGS

The quarter is ten weeks long. The following is a tentative reading schedule so you will know how to plan your reading intelligently. For the *week* of:

Week 1	Bloom; Albom; Steindl-Rast; Judy's Story
Week 2	Bloom; Albom; Steindl-Rast; Lane, <i>Keeping Hope Alive</i> , chapters 1-4.
Week 3	Boros, Part I; Tillich, "Symbols of Eternal Life"

Week 4 bols of	Lane, <i>Keeping Hope Alive</i> , chapters 4-8; Boros, Part II; Tillich, "Sym- Faith"
Week 5	Boros, Part II;
Week 6	Boros, Part III; Lane, <i>Keeping Hope Alive</i> , chapters 9-11;
Week 7 Paschal	Boros, Part III; Tillich, "Forgetting and Being Forgotten"; Lane, "The Mystery"
Week 8	Lane, <i>Keeping Hope Alive</i> , chapters 12-13.
Week 9	Review Tillich, Lane's book and chapter; Boros
<i>Thanksgiving Week Holiday</i>	
Week 10	Work on final paper
Week 11 inations	Exam week: the final paper is due on Wednesday of the 11 th or exam- week.

CONSULTATION

My office is in **Kenna Hall, Suite 300 H**. If you wish to consult with me at any time about your papers or any other issue related to the course, please make an appointment after class or by phone for a mutually convenient time. You may call me at home on any day of the week with questions you have. Be sure to leave your telephone number if you reach my voice mail or answering machine.

Email: fparrella@scu.edu

Home telephone: 408.259.8225

Cell: 408.674.3108

Office telephone: 408.554.4714

A final word: this is a very personal course and you will find it valuable only as far as you apply yourself to the readings, attend class faithfully, and submit your papers in a timely manner.

*"When I shall be dead, tell the kingdom of the earth that I
have loved it much more than I have ever dared to say."*

The theology of death will be considered under three main headings: (1) the problem of death, i.e., the apparent contradictions that arise when man tries to understand the phenomenon of human death; (2) the mystery of death, i.e., the answer to this problem as it is contained in divine revelation (this will have two main aspects, death a consequence of sin. and death transformed by the dying and rising of Christ); (3) theological understanding of the mystery of death, i.e., an endeavor to penetrate the meaning of the answer supplied by revelation to the problem of death. Man's knowledge of death on the human level comes only from external observation. No one has experienced death and then explained to other men the nature and meaning of this experience. Death of God theology is a predominately Christian theological movement, originating in the 1960s, in which God is posited as having ceased to exist, often at the crucifixion. It can also refer to a theology which includes a disbelief in traditional theism, especially in light of increasing secularism in parts of the West. In a technical sense he maintained, based on the Kabbalah, that God had "died" in creating the world. However, for modern Jewish culture he argued that the death of God occurred in Auschwitz. Although the literal death of God did not occur at this point, this was the moment in time in which humanity was awakened to the idea that a theistic God may not exist.