

THEO 244: Vatican II

Fall 2025

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Office Hours: TBD

Meeting Times: Mondays 6:00–9:00

This is a draft syllabus, anything and everything is subject to revision and change. The only thing I guarantee will not change are the books you are required to purchase. This will allow you to secure them in advance of the start date without fear that you'll have bought something you don't need. Please note that the final syllabus will take precedence over any and all aspects of this one (including assignments, due dates, and policies), even if a student has made plans based on the draft, even if a student is confused about which syllabus to follow.

Course Description

No one doubts the significance of the Second Vatican Council for Catholic Christianity; knowledge of the history, theology, and consequences is essential for ministry. This course examines the central documents in detail in order to understand the theological positions adopted at the Council with special reference to current issues facing the Church. An elective course; formerly PMIN 208; 4units.

Learning Outcomes

This course meets two learning outcomes for the GPPM:

- Goal 1: Theological Foundation
 - Knowledge of the broad intellectual foundation for ministry in the areas of scripture, systematic and contextual theology, and spirituality; and incorporate theological reflection to enrich their ministerial practices across varying contexts.

- Goal 4: Diversity Fluency

- Awareness of and critical engagement with how one's own culture influences ministry, and then to engage in ministries that build the community of Christ and are sensitive to and respectful of all cultures and traditions, and individuals who vary by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and dynamics of wealth, poverty, and power.

Course Components

Class Participation: Active participation is essential to this class. Weekly class sessions will involve some presentation from the professor, but will mainly be an opportunity for student discussion of issues that are raised by the week's readings.

Reading Response: To promote a theological, critical, and reflective engagement with the course texts and to lay the ground work for fruitful contributions to class, each week students will produce a response to the readings which falls into five parts: central point; striking point; relevant point; sticking point; and remaining questions for discussion. More details will be provided on Camino. **All readings will be relevant for LO1, some will relate to LO4. Students are encouraged to consider matters of diversity and justice throughout the course, though.**

"The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same": At some point in the quarter, students will write a brief (500–1000 words) paper on a council document of their choice, and consider how it relates to previous and subsequent church teaching (LO1). The goal is to consider how the teaching of the church both does and does not change, thereby instilling a more nuance and accurate understanding of church teaching and historical consciousness (LO4). In other words, where are the continuities and discontinuities both before, during, and after the council? This paper may be completed at any point during the quarter, since we'll be considering council documents throughout the term. It must be turned in by the time your final paper is due, but that deadline does not mean that you are forced to procrastinate. Having two papers to write at the same time is avoidable and entirely at your discretion.

Final Project: Your final project will be related to the course material, and should be pastorally appropriate for your present or future ministry. By the fourth week of class, you should present me with a one page proposal in which you indicate the nature and scope of your project. This will allow me to approve the suitability of the project and point you towards appropriate resources. By week seven, you will provide me with an outline of your project.

Option One: A Research Paper

This option consists of a research paper exploring an academic topic of interest, directly focused on one or more central theological theme explored in the course (Learning Objectives 1 and 4). The paper should represent original research, insights, and interpretation and be 2500 to 3000 words in length (not including the cover page and bibliography).

Option Two: A Pastoral Project for a Specific Parish Community

Through the creation of the pastoral project, the student will demonstrate theological competency and pastoral application of the course readings, lectures, class discussions.

This project has two parts: 1) all the elements needed for the pastoral project and 2) a paper (1500–2000 words) that articulates the theological themes related to it (Learning Objective 1). The paper will also include a pastoral analysis of the parish community and presentation of the hoped-for effectiveness of the pastoral project. (Learning Objective 4).

Required Texts

Flannery, Austin, Ed. *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents, A Completely Revised Translation in Inclusive Language*. Costello Publishing Company, 1996. ISBN: 0-918344-37-9

Gaillardetz, Richard R., Ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Vatican II*. Cambridge University Press, 2020. ISBN: 978-1-108-45763-7

Other readings will be provided via Camino.

Schedule

Our course will follow a roughly thematic progression, beginning with the context of the council, before moving through an articulation of its central theological commitments. Throughout we will consider conciliar documents in relation to their predecessor documents and to their conciliar afterlife.

Monday 9/22 *Towards the Council*

- Pope John XXIII's Opening Address (Camino)
- Mark Francis, "Church Life in the First Half of the Twentieth Century" (Cambridge Companion)
- Gabriel Flynn, "Theological Renewal in the First Half of the Twentieth Century" (Cambridge Companion)
- Ormond Rush, "Conciliar Hermeneutics" (Cambridge Companion)

Monday 9/29

The Church, Mystery and People of God

- Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, chapters 1–2, 7–8.
- Gerard Mannion, "The Pilgrim Church: An Ongoing Journey of Ecclesial Renewal and Reform" (Cambridge Companion)
- Brian Flanagan, "The Word and Spirit Co-Instituting the Church" (Cambridge Companion)

Monday 10/6

Hearing the Word of God: Revelation

- Vatican I, Constitution on the Catholic Faith, *Dei Filius* (Camino)
- Vatican II, Constitution on Revelation, *Dei Verbum*
- Richard Gaillardetz, "Revelation" (Cambridge Companion)

Monday 10/13

Indigenous Peoples' Day. No Class.

Monday 10/20

The Church in Worship

- **Professor will be out of the country. Class will be a combination of a pre-recorded lecture and a planned discussion activity among students on Zoom. More details will be provided on Camino.**
- Vatican II, Constitution on the Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*
- David Turnbloom, "Liturgy" (Cambridge Companion)
- Pope Francis, *Desiderio Desideravi* (Camino)

Monday 10/27

The Church in the World, Part One: Mission

- Vatican II, Decree on Mission, *Ad Gentes*
- Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, chapter 4

- Vatican II, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*
- Stephen Bevans, “The Church in Mission” (Cambridge Companion)
- Amanda Osheim, “The Christian Faithful” (Cambridge Companion)

Monday 11/3

The Church in the World, Part Two: Presence

- Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, part 1.

Monday 11/10

The Church's Hierarchical Structure

- Vatican I, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Pastor Aeternus* (Camino)
- Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, chapter 3
- Thomas Rausch, “Leadership and Governance in the Church” (Cambridge Companion)
- Richard Lennan, “Ministry in the Church” (Cambridge Companion)

Monday 11/17

The Church and the Churches

- Vatican II, Decree on the Eastern Churches, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*
- Vatican II, Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*
- Pope John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint* (Camino)
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Iesus* (Camino)
- Susan Wood, “Ecumenism” (Cambridge Companion)

Monday 11/24

Thanksgiving Break. No Class.

Monday 12/1

The Church and Non-Christians

- Vatican II, Decree on Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*
- Vatican II, Decree on Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis Humanum*
- Edmund Kee-Fook Chia, “The Church and Other Religions” (Cambridge Companion)

Policies

Grading Scale

- The grade for this course will be calculated as follows:
- 25% – Class Participation
- 20% – The More Things Change
- 15% – Reading Responses
- 40% – Final Project

Attendance

Regular attendance is an important part of any class, and is factored into your participation grade. Attendance is all the more essential in a course like this where we meet only once a week. In general, this course observes the following policy:

- Students in the Dioceses of San Jose, San Francisco, and Oakland are required to attend class in person. Students in other locations may attend via Zoom.
- I will gladly excuse absences if they are for documented legitimate causes (medical treatment, jury duty, University mandated travel, bereavement). Please submit documentation from a medical professional, the appropriate University office (e.g., Student Life, Athletics), clerk of court, etc. Whenever possible, students should let me know about absences beforehand. In general, work and other classes are not grounds for an excused absence. (In other words, you can ask, but the answer may be no.)
- I will overlook one excused absence each quarter.
- Excused absences beyond the first will result in a half letter grade reduction of your course grade (not just participation).
- Any unexcused absence will result in a half letter grade reduction of your course grade.
- If your absences (excused or not) are interfering with your ability to effectively participate in course we will discuss the possibility of withdrawal in order to protect you from a failing grade.

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.

Academic integrity is part of your intellectual, ethical, and professional development. I expect you to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this class. I will clarify expectations on academic integrity for all assignments and exams in this course. If you have questions about what is appropriate on any assignment, please let me know before you hand in work. For more resources about ensuring academic integrity in your work, see this [LibGuide on Academic Integrity](#).

Please note that I do not permit the use of generative AI under any circumstances for any assignment at any stage of your work on the assignment. [Assignments that violate this policy will receive zero credit.](#)

Late Work

If some emergency arises which makes compliance with the due date policies spelled out in the syllabus impossible in a given instance, the student must discuss the situation *in advance* with the instructor and work out some alternative. Students who miss class(es) because of involvement in university-sanctioned activities or because of the fulfillment of a legal obligation must make arrangements with the instructor for alternative assignments.

Late assignments will receive a half letter grade less than they earn for each day they are late. They will not be accepted if more than a week late excepting major personal emergencies, which must be documented. Extensions are given only in the most exceptional of circumstances. If it's a circumstance that's happening, it's unlikely to be exceptional.

Writing support

The GPPM is happy to offer the assistance of Dorothy Suarez who works for our program to help to be sure that your writings reflect your best possible work. She is skilled, knowledgeable, and experienced having worked with many students to help them to shine. We think you will find her a delight to work with. Dorothy can be reached at 408-828-9204 or GPPM.Dorothy@gmail.com.

Classroom Environment

In a class like this, our success or failure turns upon your engagement with the material. The point is less "you come here and acquire a bunch of facts to remember (at least until the exam)," and more, "we come together and engage with each other and ideas." We're

not learning information so much as we are learning how to think well. For this reason, your participation in class is essential for the class's success. The process of our class discussions will have more to do with what you learn than any information the professor might give you in a lecture.

So, in the interest of having the best possible classroom discussions, I expect students to conduct themselves in a professional, courteous, and respectful manner at all times. We can summarize this with four basic rules for our classroom:

Be Attentive, Be Intelligent, Be Reasonable, Be Responsible.

To put a finer point on some of this: it is especially important that respect and courtesy be extended to your classmates, because in order to truly engage with ideas, our classroom needs to be a safe place to do so. To that end:

- a. We will be discussing potentially controversial ideas (including religion), which may be challenging to your own thoughts, beliefs, and opinions. It is important that even when we disagree with each other, or the material (or whatever) that we do so in a respectful manner. So there will be no disparaging comments about anyone on the basis of religion (or lack of religion), sex/gender/orientation, ethnicity, political viewpoints, and so on. We will be discussing (and even arguing) about ideas, not people.
- b. Think of the classroom as an opportunity to try on new ideas. You're not bound to anything you say in the classroom (though see point a above, about what sorts of remarks are permitted). Feel free to experiment with and abandon ideas.
- c. A safe space means that you are free from personal attack or marginalization. It does not mean that you are free from hearing or engaging with ideas with which you disagree, or even ideas that you find offensive.
- d. Respectful conversation means allowing others the time and opportunity to share their viewpoints. If you are monopolizing the conversation, I will ask you to give others a chance.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct (Title IX)

Santa Clara University is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment free of all forms of discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence.

Please know that as a faculty member, California law and University policy require me to report any information brought to my attention about incidents of sexual harassment or misconduct to the SCU [Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX](#), (408) 551-3043. This

includes, but is not limited to, disclosures in writing assignments, class discussions, and one-on-one conversations.

Should you need support, SCU has dedicated staff trained to assist you in navigating campus resources, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and filing a formal complaint with the University or with law enforcement. Please see the [Student Resources](#) page for more information about reporting options and resources.

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence and wishes to speak to a **confidential** resource who is not required to report, please contact one of the following SCU resources for support:

- [SCU Wellness Center](#)
- [CAPS](#)
- Any individual (clergy, counselors) acting in a professional capacity for which confidentiality is mandated by law.

I am happy to help connect you with any of these resources.

Accommodations for Pregnant and Parenting Students

Santa Clara University is committed to creating and maintaining a non-discriminatory learning environment for all students, including students who are pregnant or parenting. Absences due to medical conditions relating to pregnancy and childbirth will be excused for as long as deemed medically necessary by a student's doctor, and students will be given the opportunity to make up missed work. Students needing accommodations can often arrange accommodations by working directly with their instructors, supervisors, or departments. Students needing accommodations can also seek assistance with accommodations from the [Office of Accessible Education](#) (OAE) or from the [Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX](#). This [resource page](#) from the Title IX Office provides information regarding support for students and employees who are pregnant or parenting.

Office of Accessible Education

If you have a documented disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact the Office of Accessible Education oea@scu.edu, <https://www.scu.edu/oea> as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already

arranged accommodations through OAE, please be sure to request your accommodations through your my OAE portal and discuss them with me during my office hours within the first two weeks of class. To ensure fairness and consistency, individual faculty members are required to receive verification from the Office of Accessible Education before providing accommodations. OAE will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assistive technology.

Students with approved accommodations of time and a half should talk with me as soon as possible. The Office of Accessible Education must be contacted in advance (at least two weeks' notice recommended) to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations.

In light of shifting health advisories related to COVID-19, exams may be administered online. Students with approved testing accommodations should contact me (at least two weeks' notice recommended) prior to the exam date to notify me of their intent to use their testing accommodations on the upcoming exam to ensure their accommodations are effectively implemented.

Safety Measures

In order to meet our learning objectives, we will adhere to the highest standards for safety and mutual respect. University policy allows faculty to require the use of face coverings in their classrooms. I may request that students wear face coverings occasionally or throughout the academic term. Failure to comply with my request is a violation of the [Student Conduct Code](#), which I will need to report. As we are online this quarter, this will not apply for our class, but since it's required to have this statement in the syllabus, it is still included here.

Use of Classroom Recordings

All online class meetings will be recorded and made available on Camino. As is stated in the [Student Conduct Code](#): "...Dissemination or sharing of any classroom recording without the permission of the instructor would be considered "misuse" and, therefore, prohibited. Violations of these policies may result in disciplinary action by the University. At the instructor's discretion, violations may also have an adverse effect on the student's grade."

Copyright Statement

Materials in this course are protected by the United States copyright laws. I am the copyright holder of the materials I create, including notes, handouts, slides, and videos. You may make copies of course materials for your own use and you may share the

materials with other students enrolled in this course. You may not publicly distribute the course materials without my written permission.

Technology Support

SCU can provide you with technical assistance, and you can also reach out to our providers directly for questions. For Camino (SCU's branded instance of Canvas) support, contact caminosupport@scu.edu or call 408-551-3572.

You can also find support resources via the help button within the Camino platform (on the left-hand navigation) to access after-hours support via email, chat, or phone.

For Zoom assistance, contact Media Services at mediaservices@scu.edu or 408-554-4520. You can also get support from the [SCU website](#) or the [Zoom Help Center](#) website.

For SCU network and computing support, contact the SCU Technology Help Desk at techdesk@scu.edu or 408-554-5700. They can provide support for MySCU Portal, Eduroam, Duo, hardware and software issues, and more.