

Syllabus

STRA 4545 Saving Paradise , Spring 2012

Dr. Rebecca Parker, Instructor rparker@sksm.edu



San Clemente, Rome, 4th-12th C



Alincbrot, Calvary, 15th C. Museo Prado

Based on the work, [Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire](#), co-authored by Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker (Beacon, 2008), this course will engage students at the intersections of theology, ritual and the arts. We will examine the history of Christianity's visual worlds which shifted from first millennium images of Christ as a living presence in a vibrant landscape – paradise in this world—to images of a dead Christ in a wasteland—paradise lost. We will address the social, cultural, ecological and political impacts of shifting theologies and ritual practices in connection with these changes, with special attention to baptism and Eucharist, examining incarnation-centered theologies of redemptive beauty and crucifixion-centered theologies of redemptive violence. How do ritual and art embody and transmit responses to violence and suffering? Support or undermine stewardship of the earth? Establish or resist imperial agendas? Offer resources for reverence, healing, joy and human dignity? Or inscribe patterns of inequity and exploitation? What theologies and rituals are needed now to open a new future for Christianity? How might we approach rituals as part of creative multi-religious interchange? How will we work as ritual-makers in our communities and religious traditions so as to counter-oppressions

and create just and sustainable communities?

Learning Goals/Outcomes

1. Students will have deepened their knowledge of Christian history, ritual, and theology, with special attention to the place of Paradise in Christian imagination and its implications for spiritual practice, social justice work, ecological engagement, religious community life, and ritual performance.
2. Students will have exercised and strengthened their capacities a) for creative engagement with interdisciplinary scholarship that includes visual art, b) for teaching, presenting, and guiding discussion; c) for creating ritual, and d) for collaborative group process.
3. Students will have evolved new understandings (yet to be discovered and created!) of how religious leadership/ministry can function as counter-oppressive activities that create just and sustainable communities, and will have further developed their commitments to and critiques of theological frameworks that can support or hinder life-saving religion and spirituality.

Class Meetings SKSM Fireside Room

Wednesdays, March 7- May 16, 2012 9:40 a.m – 12:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 10, 2012 9:30 – 4 pm

(No class March 28, Spring Break)

Friday-Saturday, April, 6, & 7, 2012, Holy Week fieldtrips

Text

Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker, *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire* (Beacon Press, 2008), 552 pp.

ISBN 978-0-8070-6750-5

Website

<http://www.savingparadise.net>



Paradise Meadows, Mt. Rainier

To Successfully Complete This Course You Must:

1. Read *Saving Paradise*, including footnotes!
2. In partnership with another student prepare a talking paper (and/or power point) and a “cognitive map” and lead a 60 minute class session on one chapter of the book, relating it to contemporary issues in social justice work, spiritual community, public religious leadership, or ministry. Give particular attention to the questions and issues noted in the course descriptions above. See further description of how to prepare for your session below.
3. Participate in class discussions, reflection exercises, and field trips during Holy Week.
4. Support the class by doing two out of the three “class service” activities a) lead opening reflections one time, b) log one 60 minute session of the class and send log to class, and c) serve on the team to create and lead SKSM Chapel on May 8 (1:00-1:45). Optional: do all three.
5. Create a final project of your design, (due May 16 for graduating students, and May 23 for continuing students). Submit 1 hard copy and an electronic backup (if possible). Final projects could be...
 - A liturgy or ritual
 - A sermon
 - A research paper
 - A visual or musical art-work
 - Or...use your imagination!
6. Optional: Share your project with the class, May 9 or May 16. Speak with Dr. Parker to request a time to present your project.
7. Pass a final oral exam. The oral exam will be a 20 minute conversation with the instructor, designed to highlight what you have learned, to articulate how this course has informed your preparation for religious leadership and/or ministry, and to note what further questions for research and reflection you will carry forward beyond this course.

Office Hours

Professor Parker will be available to meet individually or with small groups of students at several points throughout the course. Students are encouraged to schedule an appointment if they wish to a) seek guidance on the preparation of the class session they will lead, b) talk over their ideas for their project, c) discuss plans and progress towards the May 8 Chapel to be led by the class, d) confer on any difficulties, concerns, or suggestions they have as the course proceeds, e) reflect on how the course is impacting their sense of calling to the ministry, religious leadership, prophetic witness, scholarship, etc. Or for any other reason pertinent to the course!

To schedule an appointment (indicate 15 or 30 minutes), contact jkrovontka@sksm.edu. Appointments will be held in person at the office of the president, or by phone, or by video-call (SKYPE). Indicate which when you make an appointment.

Office Hours Reserved for SP Students

March 16, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

March 23, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

April 26, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Final Exam Appointment Hours

May 17: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

May 18: 9:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m.

May 23: 9:00-3:00 p.m.

Schedule your 20 minute slot with jkrovontka@sksm.edu



Romero Chapel, El Salvador, Contemporary

Preparing to Lead a Session

The success of this course depends on each of us doing our part with depth and care. Each of us will be contributing not to our own learning only but to the learning of others as well. Let us be a blessing to one another, remembering that we are here for each other—the quality of our presence, our participation, and our leadership matters!

To prepare for the session you will lead in pairs:

1. Read the Chapter well in advance of your week to lead. Read the footnotes, and note primary and secondary sources you may want to consult further. Identify passages, themes, and questions you feel are especially relevant as sources that can inform ministry/religious leadership now.
2. Meet with your partner for the session. Discuss the Chapter and choose passages, themes, and questions you will lift up for the class session. Choose primary and secondary sources that you will consult further. Determine how to divide up the work of steps 3, 4, and 5 to prepare for the session.

3. Prepare a 400-800 word Chapter Summary (1 to 2 pages of 12 point type, single spaced) of the major themes, arguments, and issues in the Chapter. This should be in a form that can be distributed to the entire class as a hand out and/or projected visually. On the day of your session it should be sent electronically (e.g. a word document, or PDF) to everyone in the class for their future reference.

4. Prepare a “Cognitive Map” (1 page) – a diagram or chart that pictures some of the significant content of the chapter in visual form. This should be in a form that can be distributed to the entire class as a hand out and/or projected visually. On the day of your session it should be sent electronically (e.g. a word document, or PDF) to everyone in the class for their future reference.

5. Prepare one or two “Talking Points” for going deeper with the Chapter. This is where you focus in on specific ideas, issues, questions or concerns that can inform our present day practice of ministry and religious leadership, our prophetic witness, and/or our work to build just and sustainable communities that counter-oppressions. This is also where you are encouraged to bring in additional material from primary or secondary sources referenced in the Chapter, or material from your own research and religious leadership. Each Talking Point should take about 1 page of text to articulate (or a set of power point slides...) and should include a statement about why the point matters, background information that informs the point, and questions for discussion.

This should be in a form that can be distributed to the entire class as a hand out and/or projected visually. On the day of your session it should be sent electronically (e.g. a word document, power point, or PDF) to everyone in the class for their future reference. Incorporating visual images is encouraged!

6. Meet again with your partner and organize yourselves to present and lead in class. You will have 60 minutes, during which it is recommended that you spend approximately 5-10 minutes on presenting your Chapter Summary and Cognitive Map, and 15-20 minutes presenting your Talking Points, leaving 30-40 minutes for interaction and discussion with the class. You may want to design an approach that weaves discussion and interaction throughout the hour.

How to Log a Session

Students will take turns serving as the “Recorder” for a session. The Recorder’s task is to log the high points of the discussion, noting controversies, hot points, aha moments, and important questions. The Log should leave out specific names of who said what, but provide a record for everyone’s further reflection. Recommended length: one page per session, two at most. The Log should be completed and e-mailed to the class by the Monday following the session. We will begin each week by reviewing the Log—creating space for further reflection on important questions and issues raised. It also will be valuable for Session Leaders to review the log, so that questions and issues from previous class sessions can inform the preparation of their Talking Points.

Absences from Class

Your weekly presence is vital for the success of the class, for all concerned. Illnesses and emergencies do happen, however. If you must miss a class, please e-mail rparker@sksm.edu to let her know. If you miss more than two classes, or are absent without communication, the instructor may speak with you about your ability to complete the course for credit. You are responsible to check with a classmate to receive any information or material you may have missed.

If illness or an emergency disrupts your fulfillment of a class responsibility (logging a session, leading a session, offering opening reflections), you are responsible to find a substitute. It is understood that a serious and sudden illness or a profound emergency may preclude planning for a substitute – in which case, mercy and compassion will prevail!

Evaluative Reflections in Response to Each Session

Classmates will reflectively evaluate each session, using a simple form that will be copied for the professor's records and returned to the session leaders.

The Evaluative Response Form will note the following:

- 1) One of the key points your summary helped me understand:
- 2) Your "Cognitive Map" sparked the following insights and questions:
- 3) The Talking Points inspired me to consider following up further or thinking further about:
- 4) From you I gained an insight about ministry and religious leadership in the context that I work (or hope to work):



Medieval "Mappa Mundi"

Saving Paradise Week by Week

March 7: Introduction and Organization

March 10: All Day Workshop: Major Themes of Saving Paradise, 9:30-4:00 pm

March 14:

Opening Reflections 9:40-9:45 _____

Review of the Log (RP). 9:45-10

Session I: SP Ch. 1 "Paradise on the Earth" 10:00 - 11:00

Session leaders: _____ & _____

Session II: Ch. 2 "God So Generously Loved" 11:15-12:15

Session leaders: _____ & _____

Recorders _____ & _____

Closing Reflections

March 21:

Opening Reflections 9:40-9:45 _____

Review of the Log (RP). 9:45-10

Session III: SP Ch. 3: “So Great a Cloud” 10:00--11:00

Session leaders: _____ & _____

Session IV: SP Ch. 4 “The Church as Paradise in This World,” 11:15-12:15

Session leaders: _____ & _____

Recorders _____ & _____

Closing Reflections

March 28: Spring Break, No classApril 4:

Opening Reflections 9:40-9:45 _____

Review of the Log (RP). 9:45-10

Session V: SP Ch. 5, “The Portal to Paradise,” 10:00--11:00

Session leaders: _____ & _____

Session VI: SP Ch. 6, “The Beautiful Feast of Life,” 11:15-12:15

Session leaders: _____ & _____

Recorders _____ & _____

Closing Reflections

April 5: Good Friday Service, Allen Temple Baptist Church (noon to 3:00 p.m.)

April 7: Easter Vigil Service, Gregory of Nyssa (Saturday evening, TBA)

April 11:

Opening Reflections 9:40-9:45 _____

Review of the Log (RP). 9:45-10

Session VII: SP Ch. 7, "Gods Seeing Gods" 10:00--11:00

Session leaders: _____ & _____

Session VIII: SP Ch. 8, "Hidden Treasures of Wisdom" 11:15-12:15

Session leaders: _____ & _____

Recorders _____ & _____

Closing Reflections

April 18:

Opening Reflections 9:40-9:45 _____

Review of the Log (RP). 9:45-10

Session IX: SP Ch 9, "The Expulsion of Paradise," 10:00--11:00

Session leaders: _____ & _____

Session X: SP Ch 10, "Peace by the Blood of the Cross," 11:15-12:15

Session I

Recorders _____ & _____

Closing Reflections

April 25

Opening Reflections 9:40-9:45 _____

Review of the Log (RP). 9:45-10

Session XI: SP Ch 11, "Dying for Love," 10:00--11:00

Session leaders: _____ & _____

Session XII: SP Ch 12, "Escape Routes", 11:15-12:15

Session leaders: _____ & _____

Recorders _____ & _____

Closing Reflections

May 2

Opening Reflections 9:40-9:45 _____

Review of the Log (RP). 9:45-10

Session XIII: SP Ch 13, "Weeping Encounters," 10:00--11:00

Session leaders: _____ & _____

Session XIV: SP Ch 14, "The Struggle for Paradise," 11:15-12:15

Session leaders: _____ & _____

Recorders _____ & _____

Closing Reflections

May 9

Opening Reflections 9:40-9:45 _____

Review of the Log (RP). 9:45-10

Session XV: SP Epilogue, 10:00-11:00

Session leaders: _____ & _____

Recorders _____ & _____

Project Presentations

Closing Reflections

May 16 – Last Class Session – FINAL PROJECTS DUE FOR GRADUATES

Opening Reflections 9:40-9:45 _____

Review of the Log (RP). 9:45-10

Course Evaluation

Project Presentations

Closing Celebration of our Work Together!

May 17, May 18, May 23: SP Oral Exams, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Schedule your 20 minute slot with jkrovontka@sksm.edu

May 23: FINAL PROJECTS DUE FOR CONTINUING STUDENTS



Hiking Trail, Northern California

SP Opening Reflections Sign Up Sheet:

Opening Reflections: (Prepare for 5 minutes or less)

March 14 _____

March 21 _____

April 4 _____

April 11 _____

April 18 _____

April 25 _____

May 2 _____

May 9 _____

May 16 _____

SP Session Leaders Sign Up Sheet

March 14

SP Ch 1 _____ & _____

SP Ch 2 _____ & _____

March 21

SP Ch 3 _____ & _____

SP Ch 4 _____ & _____

April 4

SP Ch 5 _____ & _____

SP Ch 6 _____ & _____

April 11

SP Ch 7 _____ & _____

SP Ch 8 _____ & _____

April 18

SP Ch 9 _____ & _____

SP Ch 10 _____ & _____

April 25

SP Ch 11 _____ & _____

SP Ch 12 _____ & _____

May 2

SP Ch 13 _____ & _____

SP Ch 14 _____ & _____

May 9 SP Epilogue _____ & _____

SP Evaluative Response Form

Session ____, SP Chapter _____ Date _____

Session Leaders: _____

1) One of the key points your summary helped me understand:

2) Your “Cognitive Map” sparked the following insights and questions:

3) The Talking Points inspired me to consider following up further or thinking further about:

4) From you I gained an insight about ministry and religious leadership in the context that I work (or hope to work):

Evaluator Name/Signature _____

Saving Paradise, Spring 2012, Enrolled Students:

Eric Banner
Irene Boczek
Thomas Bozeman
Julie Brock
Caitlin Cotter
Patrice Curtis
Joann Green
Karen Green
Dru Howard
Leslie Jarzabski
Hassaun Jones-Bey
Marcus Liefert
Carl Magruder
Kerri Meyer
Randy Newswanger
Jennifer Nordstrom
Elizabeth Olson
Sheri Prud'Homme
Be Scofield
Abbey Tennis
Lindasusan Ulrich
Emily Webb
Lee Whittaker
Jennifer Whitten