



SCU GRADUATE PROGRAM IN PASTORAL MINISTRIES

PMIN 208

THE HEBREW BIBLE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

SPRING 2025

**ONLINE CLASS: THREE SATURDAY ZOOM RETREAT SESSIONS
AND THURSDAY ZOOM CONVERSATIONS**

BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: J. David Pleins

Email: jpleins@scu.edu

Office Location and Hours: Zoom by appointment

Meeting Times: (Zoom link to be provided to course participants)

Saturday Zoom Retreat Sessions: 4/5, 5/10, 6/7, 9:00 am-3:00 pm (PST)

Thursday Zoom Conversation Sessions: 6:00-8:00 pm (PST)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND THEMES

Central Focus: Does the Hebrew Bible speak to justice issues today? This class invites students into conversations about the Hebrew Bible's concern for social justice in its own context, in relation to pressing issues of our time, and as it connects to each student's ministry aims.

Saturday Retreat Sessions: The Saturday sessions are structured as "retreats," with time for private reflection, small group conversations, and brief lectures devoted to three major topics involving the following:

- Saturday #1: Exploring four major justice themes in the Hebrew Bible
- Saturday #2: Group presentations on Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching
- Saturday #3: Final Saturday ministry project presentations (individual)

Evening Zoom Conversations: Using a discussion format based on four online module Ministry Projects, the evening Zoom sessions engage four key biblical perspectives on social justice and relate these perspectives to practical ministry situations. (See below for the course schedule.)

Major Course Themes

- (1) **Unmasking** the Powers: The Bible in Times of Dislocation
 - (2) **Envisioning** Exodus Freedom: Building a Just Society and Covenant Community
 - (3) **Protesting** the Plight of the Poor: Let Justice Roll Down!
 - (4) **Acting** in Solidarity: Suffering and Hope
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REQUIRED TEXTS (New / Used / Rent New / Rent Used / Ebook)

Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*. Second Edition. (Fortress Press, 2001). ISBN 978-1506449302.

Stephen Mitchell, *The Book of Job* (Harper, 1987). ISBN 978-0060969592.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS (New / Used / Rent New / Rent Used / Ebook)

Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures (Jewish Publication Society, 1985). ISBN 978-0827603660.

The Scripture Documents: An Anthology of Official Catholic Teachings (Liturgical Press, 2002). ISBN 978-0814625910.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND CAMINO MODULES

I. Unmasking the Powers: The Bible in Times of Dislocation

April 5: Saturday #1: Ministry and the Quest for Justice

April 10: Exilic Realities: Social Dislocation Then and Now

April 17: No Class Session (Maundy Thursday)

II. Envisioning Exodus Freedom: Building a Just Society and Covenant Community

April 24: Oppressive Pharaohs and Exodus Freedoms: Liberation Then and Now

May 1: Prep Session for Group Presentations

May 8: Practice Session for Group Presentations

May 10: Saturday #2: Scripture Meets Catholic Social Teaching

May 15: No Class Session

III. Protesting the Plight of the Poor: Let Justice Roll Down!

May 22: Prophetic Social Criticism: From Grief to Hope

IV. Acting in Solidarity: Suffering and Hope

May 29: The Book of Job: From Protest to Action

June 5: Consultations: Final Individual Projects

June 7: Saturday #3: Partners in Suffering and Agents of Hope

SCU GPPM COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

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 2: Pastoral Proficiency

Familiarity with ministerial practices in various manifestations of church life, expressed in **concrete pastoral applications** which include discernment, compassion, and ministries of accompaniment.

Goal 3: Servant Leadership

A commitment to **identify injustices** and developing skills to work individually and in collaboration with other ministers, in **accompanying those in need and in service to the poor, the marginalized, and the alienated**, both within and outside the Church.

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**.

CAMINO COURSE MODULES

A website on Camino forms the core of the course, providing ready access either on or off campus to the course syllabus and other overview materials. While there are assigned textbooks for this course, the majority of the information will be found in the Camino course session modules.

Structure of the Module Pages

- **Module Overview Pages:** Every class session has a module with an overview page on Camino. This page gives session information, the readings, background information on the topic, and describes the assignments.
- **Reading and Assignments Before Sessions:** The readings listed under each day's session should be read *before* that class. These readings will provide the basis for written assignments and class discussions. Note that the readings are a combination of "primary" sources (e.g., biblical texts), and "secondary," those of modern scholars (e.g., Brueggemann). Try to skim each reading if time is tight and focus on segments that appear to be most useful for your Ministry Projects.

Using Camino

Camino is the University online learning management system. See "Where to Find the Readings" above for login directions. Course enrollment automatically adds our class to your list of classes on Camino. Camino is the repository for all course readings that are not in the required textbooks. Camino is also the site where you will upload your written work for this class. Please upload all work in Microsoft Word format (not Apple Pages) so that the professor can use Track Changes to provide feedback as needed.

Accessing Camino

When the reading is on the Camino course page, you can access Camino using your SCU user ID and password in one of three ways: directly from the Camino login page (<https://camino.instructure.com>), from the general SCU login page (<https://www.scu.edu/login/>), or from the Camino link on our course website.

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COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments: There are two types of assignments in this course.

1. **Evening Ministry Projects:** There are 4 of these assignments.
2. **Saturday Retreat Presentations:** 2 presentations (1 group, 1 individual).

Evening “Ministry Projects” (4 Projects, 13 Format Options)

- **Overview:** Below you will find 13 Format Options for the four evening Ministry Projects. These formats offer a variety of ways to experiment with different approaches for grappling with the readings and related theological questions.
Limit: No more than 2 Ministry Projects in any one format.
- **Projects with a Purpose:** These Ministry Projects are intended to invite you to deepen your knowledge of the subject and for you to develop materials or activities that will be useful to you in your ministry/work. The Ministry Projects are not intended to be “busy work” or a waste of your time: Remember, only you can make choices that matter to you in your learning and ministry! Consult with the instructor as needed.
- **Selection Guidelines:** For each of these Ministry Projects, **indicate the format number and category** you select. You may repeat formats throughout the quarter, but no more than two times for any specific format. (Exceptions can be made for Artistic Expression projects with the approval of the instructor.) This will ensure that you produce a range of ways to engage course issues.
- **Hebrew Bible Focus:** Ministry Projects (and presentations) **must** focus on the Hebrew Bible, **not** the New Testament. Find Hebrew Bible equivalents for any New Testament theme or idea that you wish to cover.
- **Content and Effort:** Ministry Projects should represent the equivalent amount of work one might put in for a paper of no more than 500 words in length. When referencing sources, use fragment quotes from the readings (indicating source and page numbers) rather than whole sentence to economize.

Evening “Ministry Project” Format Options: Indicate the Number and Title

- Format 1: **Workshop** (Outline, Activities, Aims, PowerPoint).
- Format 2: **Seasonal Retreat (or Retreat Session)**: Lent, Advent, Triduum, etc.
- Format 3: **Guided Meditation**: Based on Biblical Text (PowerPoint encouraged)
- Format 4: **Artistic Expression**: Music, Painting, Film, Sculpture, Poetry
- Format 5: **Scripture: Passage Study**: Specific Segment from One Biblical Book.
- Format 6: **Scripture: Book Study**: Key Texts and Overall Themes.
- Format 7: **Scripture: Theme or Issue Study**: Across Several Books.
- Format 8: **Scripture: Lectio Divina or Visio Divina**
- Format 9: **Scripture: Homily** (Based on the Lectionary)
- Format 10: **Class Learning Activity or Unit**: K-12, University, Campus Ministry
- Format 11: **Research Paper**: Use External Commentaries, Articles, Books
- Format 12: **Personal Reflection Essay**: Put Your Own Experience and the Course Issues in Dialogue
- Format 13: **Free Choice**: Invent a Setting or Format Not Found in Formats 1-12!

Ministry Projects Grade Submissions vs. Discussion Board Posts

Note that you **submit the same Ministry Project in two places!**

- **Ministry Project**: For the evening Zoom sessions that have a Ministry Project, you are to prepare and post your Ministry Project assignment for grading by the deadline in the assignments page.
- **Discussion Board Post and Comments**: You are also to post your assignment in the Discussion Board and comment on the Ministry Projects of others in the class.

Saturday Retreat Presentations (Goal 1, A and Goal 4, A-B).

- **Saturday #2: Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching**: For Saturday #2, students will develop **group** presentations related to Catholic Social Teaching.
- **Saturday #3: Final Individual Ministry Project and Presentation**: For the third Saturday, each student will develop an individual Ministry Project and presentation on any aspect of the Hebrew Bible and Social Justice. These final Ministry Projects and presentations should adapt the regular Ministry Project formats.

MASTERY BASED GRADING

Grading Percentages

- Class Participation/Contribution (attendance, in-class work, oral comments): 10%
- Evening Ministry Projects and Mid-Term Group Presentation: 80%
- Final Saturday Ministry Project and Presentation: 10%

Mastery Grading Scale: Please be aware that this class uses a **quality based scale** factored against three levels of quality. Each assignment will be given a number designation (3, 2, 1, 0) and the final grade will be calculated in relation to these numerical designations (as an average of the total quality factors received). For your convenience, the numerical grade is also given here in relation to its letter grade equivalent.

- 3 = Full Mastery Attained = A
- 2 = Approaching Mastery = B
- 1 = Not Yet (Requires Revised Assignment Material) = C
- Less than 1 = Has Not Achieved Mastery = F

Proportional Points Grading: Keep in mind that “3” points per Ministry Project may seem rather small, but this number represents a level of mastery and not points as such. Each assignment could instead be 30, 300, or 3000 as the proportional math would not matter. However, bear in mind that each assignment contributes proportionally to the total course mastery level and thus the final course letter grade!

Scale Percentages Related to Grades: According to the mastery scale used here: .66 is a B and .33 is a C since this is a mastery based scale and **not** the typical 100% scale where .80 is a B, .70 is a C, etc. A mastery scale is not curved grading despite the broad range of percentages.

Assignment Completion: Students are to complete the Camino modules and Ministry Projects prior to the class for which they are assigned. Students are also encouraged to complete revisions suggested by the instructor to improve their level of mastery.

Class Contribution and Participation

- **Discussion Contribution:** The theological exploration in this class occurs through dialogue rather than lecture. Thus, regular contributions to class discussions are expected. Class meetings can include brief lectures but will mainly be structured with periods of silent reflection, breakout groups for small-group conversation, and large group discussions.
- **Instructor's Role:** The instructor is a guide raising questions for class exploration (with occasional lecturing) and not a sage dispensing answers through lecture. You may wish to select a different section of this course if this

approach does not suit you. In this class, all informed opinions matter as well as knowledge based on ministry experience.

- **Zoom Attendance:** Engaged attendance and participation (with Zoom video on) is expected (see below for attendance policy). It is not a substitute for engaged attendance to watch a recording of the class; this will still count as an absence because you are not present to interact with and learn from your colleagues.
- **Discussion Boards:** Engaged participation also includes making comments on the submissions of other students on the discussion board. These comments are posted prior to the class session.
- **Class Participation/Contribution:** 10% of grade. (We will practice all learning objectives in class.)

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INSTRUCTOR POLICIES SPECIFIC TO THIS COURSE

Writing Assistance

It is expected that all written assignments reflect graduate level writing. Writing assistance is available for all students. Please contact The Hub, SCU's Writing Center, at www.scu.edu/hub/. Please seek appropriate writing assistance before submitting assignments. It is expected that all students use at least the free version of Grammarly to be sure that punctuation and grammar are addressed before submitting an assignment to either the instructor or the writing mentor. The GPPM is happy to offer the assistance of writing mentors who work for the GPPM to be sure that your writing reflects your best possible work. They are skilled, knowledgeable, and experienced having worked with many students to help them to shine. We think you will find them easy to work with and responsive to your requests given enough time to assist you. Writing mentors can be reached by contacting Margaret Schroth at 408-813-1351 or margaretschroth@hotmail.com

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

Evaluation of the Course

You will have a chance to assess the course at the end of the course through an online numerical evaluation, a narrative evaluation, and a Student Assessment of Learning Gains (SALG).

Attendance

If you're sick or some event prohibits participation, please notify the professor in advance by email. You are allowed one absence with no impact to your grade. If you miss three classes (30% of our meetings), it will not be possible to pass the course. The class will not automatically be recorded for viewing unless a student gives several days' advance notice of the absence. Note that viewing a recorded class is not a substitute for your engaged presence in class and will be considered an absence (except in the case of illness).

Zoom Policy

Zoom etiquette and practices are indicated on the Camino pages for each session. In general, this is a participatory class that expects video to be on during the session.

AI Use Statement (Artificial Intelligence)

Bearing in mind the previous statement on Academic Integrity, note that the use of AI such as ChatGPT and other generative programs is permitted in this course with limitations. AI of this sort can be useful for generating ideas and outlines when you are stuck. But the overwhelming percentage of any work you submit must be self-created and independently researched apart from an AI writing generator. Spellcheck and grammar check are certainly recommended! To be clear about AI usage in assignments, you must report in your assignment the AI generator that you used and which elements resulted from the use of AI (much as you would cite a research source). Bear in mind that supposed sources generated by AI are often simply made up by the platform (essentially fake sources) designed to fill out the writing and may not actually exist or be quoted accurately when they do exist! It falls to the student to do actual research into the sources and to ensure that they are quoted accurately.

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UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATEMENTS

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 -- including the use of AI tools such as ChatGPT and course sharing sites 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](#).

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 SB 493 requires me to report any information brought to my attention about incidents of sexual harassment or misconduct to the SCU [Equal Opportunity and Title IX Office](#) (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 does not discriminate against any student on the basis of pregnancy or related medical conditions. 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 Office](#). This [resource page](#) from Title IX provides information for students and faculty regarding pregnancy rights.

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.

Use of Classroom Recordings

Online class meetings may 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, Edoam, Duo, hardware and software issues, and more.

In addition to the required syllabus statements above, statements addressing diversity, equity and inclusion, and student wellness such as those below are strongly recommended.

Syllabus Statements on Diversity, Inclusion, Wellness

Santa Clara University syllabi are encouraged to include information for students to promote a more inclusive classroom. Below are recommended examples of syllabi statements that faculty may use. For more on developing an inclusive syllabus and

course see this campus resource on [Inclusive Teaching](#) and this [Toolkit from the Association of College and University Educators \(ACUE\)](#).

Land Acknowledgment

Santa Clara University occupies the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ohlone and Muwekma Ohlone people.

Respect for Diversity

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diverse identities (e.g., those based on gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, religion, and culture). Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you.

Gender Inclusive Language

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you go by a name different from what is on the class roster, please let me know. Using correct gender pronouns is important to me, so I encourage you to share your pronouns with me and correct me if I make a mistake. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. For more on personal pronouns see www.mypronouns.org

Wellness Statement

I know you will do the best you can in this class (and all of your classes); however, it should never be at the expense of your own mental and physical health and your overall well-being. Jesuit education is grounded in cura personalis, concern for the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. What does this mean for you? Be kind to others, and more importantly, be kind to yourself. Attend to your sleep (quantity and quality); drink lots of water; move; get outside; and pay attention to beauty that isn't coming to you on a screen. Eat good food, laugh, enjoy friends and family, look for opportunities to connect with others in new ways, pray, meditate, or otherwise attend to your spirit. And ask for help, even if you don't think you need it. Lots of folks, including me, are here to support you. It's never too late to reach out, and I am committed to helping you. SCU has many resources and programs to support you. These resources may be especially helpful:

Wellness Center: <https://www.scu.edu/wellness/>

The Wellness center provides resources to aid and promote student well-being across the eight dimensions of wellness, including student peer groups for healthful living, violence prevention, and recovery.

CAPS: <https://www.scu.edu/cowell/counseling-and-psychological-services-caps/>

Santa Clara students are provided confidential counseling sessions at no cost through Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Students have access to clinically appropriate, short-term therapy; group therapy; and other resources for care. A new 24/7 support line is also available: **408-554-5220**.

SCU Culture of Care: <https://www.scu.edu/osl/culture-of-care/>

If you are concerned for the mental or physical welfare of one of your peers, the [Office of Student Life Culture of Care](https://www.scu.edu/osl/culture-of-care/) website provides resources for recognizing and helping someone in distress.

Academic Concerns

If you are concerned with your progress in this class, please contact me so that we can find solutions together. [Drahmann Center](#) can also offer support with issues regarding your academic progress more broadly.

SCU also has multiple options for free academic tutoring. Students can make appointments to discuss work in a range of courses:

- [Drahmann Tutoring](#) (for many courses in the College of Arts & Sciences including Natural Sciences, Modern Languages, Economics, and Computer Science)
- [The HUB Writing Center](#) (Writing and Public Speaking)