

Special Topics in Christian Thought: Rene Girard and Theology  
CHTH 70970/80970/90970  
3 Semester Hours  
Harrison 204, May 16-20, 9am-5pm

Instructor: Charles Bellinger, [c.bellinger@tcu.edu](mailto:c.bellinger@tcu.edu), 817-257-7668, office hours by appt.; office in Library Graduate Study Room (3110)

Prerequisites: any course in theology or ethics; pre-course reading of *The Girard Reader*.

Course Description:

This course addresses the key themes in the writings of Rene Girard, with a view to the impact his thought has had on theological reflection. Particular attention will be paid to the topics of biblical revelation, christology, trinity, atonement, anthropology, and ethics.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Have a substantive understanding of René Girard's interpretation of psychology, culture, and the Bible, which they are able to articulate in response to analyzing some of his key writings.
2. Have a developing grasp of how Girard's thought provides a lens for interpreting the history of Christianity, particularly in its violent aspects, which they are able to articulate in speaking and writing.
3. Have a developing knowledge of the implications of Girard's thought for theological reflection and ministry, which they are able to demonstrate through a final paper.
4. Have a general awareness of the world of "Girard studies," the interpretation and application of his ideas in academia and in ministry contexts.

Class Procedures:

In-class meetings will employ a lecture and discussion format.

Requirements:

1. Attendance and class participation. (10% of grade)
2. Short response papers. (30% of grade)
3. Final paper (70970), 15-20 pp.; (80970/90970), 20-25 pp., with supplementary readings approved by instructor (60% of grade). Final papers are due by noon, May 31.

Texts:

Girard, Rene. *The Girard Reader*. New York: Crossroad Herder, 1996. ISBN: 978-0824516345, \$35

Girard, Rene, and Steven E. Berry. *Reading the Bible with Rene Girard: Conversations with Steven E. Berry*. Lancaster, Penn.: JDL Press, 2015. ISBN: 978-1514777510, \$19

Heim, Mark. *Saved from Sacrifice: A Theology of the Cross*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006. ISBN: 978-0802832153, \$25

Course Schedule:

Monday, May 16: *Girard Reader*

Tuesday, May 17: *Girard Reader*

Wednesday, May 18: *Reading the Bible*, and excerpts from 2ndary sources

Thursday, May 19: *Saved from Sacrifice*

Friday, May 20: *Saved from Sacrifice*

The instructor will provide short additional readings

Attendance Policy:

Given that this is an intensive course, attendance at all scheduled class meetings is required. Absences will only be excused for emergencies.

Nondiscrimination and Inclusion Statement:

Brite Divinity School is an institution that values diversity and challenges structures that intentionally or unintentionally encourage discrimination. As such, we do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, social class, age, disability status, citizenship status, membership or application for membership in a uniformed service, or any other category protected by applicable law. Where there are discrepancies with Federal and State policies, they supersede Brite's policies.

Practices that Support Inclusion:

Brite is committed to promoting a diverse and just environment, in which language and practices support the achievement of inclusion. Specifically, Brite seeks to remove all barriers to the maintenance and aspirations of its Mission Statement and

Non-Discrimination

Statement in the following ways:

- Brite Divinity School promotes the intentional use of Inclusive language. This includes reference to such matters as language about God and humanity as noted in our Nondiscrimination and Inclusion Statement. Inclusive language in the classroom, chapel, and in common discourse is expected of students, staff, and faculty.
- Brite Divinity School maintains nondiscrimination in all its programs and activities, admission to these programs and activities, financial aid, and housing.

Statement on Disability Services:

Brite Divinity School complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact TCU's Coordinator, Student Disabilities Services, located in Sadler Hall 1010. Accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Further information can be obtained from Student Disabilities

Services, Sadler Hall 1010, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at 817-257-6567.

Academic Misconduct (Sec. 5.14 of the Student Handbook):

Any act that violates the academic integrity of the institution is considered academic misconduct. The procedures used to resolve suspected acts of academic misconduct are available in the Student Handbook and the Office of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Specific examples from the handbook can be included.

TCU Campus Resources for Students:

Many resources exist on the TCU campus that may be helpful to students: Mary Coats Burnett Library (817-257-7117); Student Disabilities Services (817-257-6567, Sadler Hall 1010); the William L. Adams Writing Center (817-257-7221, Reed Hall 419; and 817-257-6520, Library Annex); Student Development Services (817-257-7855, Brown Lupton University Union 2003); and The Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (817-257-7830, Jarvis Hall First Floor).

Email Notification:

Only the official Brite student email address will be used for all course notification. It is your responsibility to check your email on a regular basis.

This syllabus represents current plans and objectives that are subject to change. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

**Brite Divinity School Mission Statement**

*Brite Divinity School educates women and men to lead in the ministry of Christ's church, the academy, and public life as witnesses to God's reconciling and transforming love and justice.*