REL 6013 MODERN ANALYSIS OF RELIGION

Dr. Christine Gudorf
Email: gudorf@fiu.edu
Class: Mon 5-7:40 pm
Office: DM 305 B
Office Hours: M 3:00-5:00
Classroom: DM 164

DESCRIPTION:

This course has a dual purpose: that of teaching you various methods for studying religion, and that of introducing you to some of the classic texts within the academic study of religion from the different disciplinary fields that have produced those methods. Hence the course is inherently interdisciplinary. It will thus include readings from sociology, anthropology, history, theology, philosophy and psychology.

But not all the different approaches in the course will represent different academic disciplines. Various historical movements, themselves interdisciplinary, have also arisen and contributed perspectives important within the study of religion. These include marxism, feminism, and race studies. Undoubtedly there will be more.

At the same time that all of these perspectives are important for studying religion comprehensively today, it is also critical to remember that these methods were largely themselves products of modernity, and much has changed in the structure and organization of our world and its thought since Marx, Durkheim and Weber. We now live in what is called post-modernity, and the roiling, dynamic and complex perspectives of post-modernity that we call postmodernism will also form a (small) part of this course.

COURSE POLICIES:

Attendance is expected. Lateness to class is distracting to all.

Students are expected to have read the assigned readings before class, and may be questioned on them.

Assignments and tests are to be taken on time barring serious emergencies. (Waiting until the last day and then having computer problems is not sufficient.)

Late work, if accepted, will be penalized by 2 pts for every day late.

Written work must be turned in through turnitin.com in order to be graded.

IN grades must be requested one week prior to the final week of classes, and must be completed before enrolling in additional classes. In accordance with university rules, IN
grades may only be assigned when the majority of work in the class has been completed, and with a passing grade.

Plagiarism will be penalized with an F for the entire assignment, and in serious cases, an F for the course. Plagiarism includes submitting any work not one’s own without attributing that work to its author. This means that citing the ideas of another, even in one's own words, without citing the source of the ideas, is also plagiarism.

This course is web-assisted. Midterm and final exams will be taken online, and papers will be turned into turnitin.com online. Some articles will be posted online as well.

**READINGS:**

You will need to buy the *Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, edited by Hinnels ($45 at Amazon), as well as all the following that are not marked as provided online or in the library. Many are classics you probably already own or can find in various libraries.

Mark Chavez, “Rain Dances in the Dry Season” (Course Content)
Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Ch 7-10 (Course Content)
Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (used under $3 at Amazon)
Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (used under $1 at Amazon)
William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (excerpts in Course Content)
Karl Marx, *Communist Manifesto* (free online)
Emile Durkheim, excerpts from *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, and from *Suicide* (in Course Content separately)
Bronislaw Malinowski, "Magic, science and religion." (used $6-8 at Amazon) The essay, not the whole book, is assigned.
Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (used $5-7 at Amazon)
Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol 1* (excerpts in Course Content)
Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger, Preface-Ch 4*, (Course Content)
Christine Gadoff, “The Erosion of Sexual Dimorphism” (Course Content)
Clifford Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures* (Course Content)
Otto Maduro, "Religion Under Imperial Duress” (Course Content)
Rita Gross, "Effect of Feminism on Religious Studies” (Course Content)
Beverly Harrison and Carter Heyward, “Pain and Pleasure: Avoiding the Confusions of the Christian Tradition” (Course Content)
Thomas Tweed, *Crossings and Dwellings*, Chs. 1-9 (Course Content)
Audre Lorde, “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power” (Course Content)

There are additional readings posted in Course Content that are not required for this class, but have been used in other years of this class.
**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- Attendance and participation in class. 20% Includes presentations. One absence allowed.
- Successful midterm and final exam. 25% Midterm 25% Final Exam
- Submission of well done term paper. 30%

**COURSE POSTINGS:**

We will miss three Monday night classes this semester—the first due to Labor Day, the second due to Veteran’s Day, and the third due to the annual conference of the American Academy of Religion in Baltimore the Sat-Tues before Thanksgiving. We will also not meet on Oct 21, when you will be taking the midterm exam, and I will be unavoidably out of town. I will have additional lectures (mercifully short) posted online for the two holidays and the AAR meeting misses, and will require students to post at least one page of intelligent notes and questions on the readings and lecture for each of these dates. We will try to make up at least one of the missed classes—date to be determined at the first Sept meeting.

**TERM PAPER/BIBLIOGRAPHY/PROPOSAL**

Begin by finding a topic you want to research. Needless to say, the topic should be in Religious Studies, and should be one that connects in some way to one or more of the readings—either as the topic of the readings, or applying the method or theory in one of the readings to your topic from outside the course. Ideally you should formulate a question about this topic, but this assumes that you begin with enough knowledge to know what is still unknown about the topic that interests you. Once you have the topic, and have narrowed it down to something you can treat adequately in 15-20 pages, you will prepare an Annotated Bibliography of 20-30 sources that are DIRECTLY relevant to your topic. You will add additional entries later that refer to selected aspects of your topic, but in this initial group you should include all the major academic sources. Leaving out an important source will invalidate much of what you have to say. Make sure your annotations are clear and helpful to a reader, and that your bibliographic style is consistent. If you do not have a style manual, you should probably get one—you will need it for virtually everything you write. University of Chicago and MLA are the principal styles used in Religious Studies.

Once I have approved your Annotated Bibliography you should begin on a Paper Proposal. A proposal begins with a specific research question. (Note that good research questions cannot be simply answered with data or description. They ask not for What, or Who or When, but rather Why or How? They require analysis, comparison, evaluation.
You come up with a question that is not answered in the literature on your topic, or not answered adequately. You briefly survey existing literature on the subject, describing the \textit{lacuna}. You propose an answer to your question, and outline (Yes, outline) your argument answering the research question. (If others have proposed different answers to this question, you must elaborate how your answer is more adequate than previous ones.) Note that an outline that makes an argument must have sentences with verbs—not just lists of topics. The final part of the Paper Proposal is the bibliography, usually somewhat expanded since the proposal stage. The text of the proposal, not including cover page or bibliography, should not exceed 5 pages.

If you have successfully submitted your proposal, writing the term paper will be a snap. You already know from the proposal what your argument is, and with what data from the sources you are supporting it with.

Papers will be graded 15\% on research, 25\% on style, and 50\% on your persuasiveness. A lack of research will, of course, undermine your persuasiveness.

\textbf{ASSIGNMENTS:}

\textit{Many of you will have read a great deal of the primary sources in your undergraduate religion courses, or even philosophy or sociology courses, since many of these are classics of western civilization. For those of you who have not, the first two-thirds of the course will be heavy reading while you catch up. The last third of the course has a lighter reading load so that you can complete your term papers.}

\textbf{August 26} \hspace{1cm} \textbf{Introduction.} For August 24 class, read Ch 2 by Eric Sharpe in Hinnels, Ed. Also begin readings for next week.

\textbf{September 2} \hspace{1cm} \textbf{No class due to Labor Day. Theories of Religion.} Read Chs 3, 6 in Hinnels, Ed. and Rudolph Otto, \textit{The Idea of the Holy}, Chs. 1-12. Watch the posted short lecture, and post 1 page of comments and questions on the readings and lecture.

\textbf{September 11} \hspace{1cm} \textbf{Gender, Ethnicity and Other Differences.} Read Ch 12, 13, 15 in Hinnels, Ed. and online article by Gross.

\textbf{September 18} \hspace{1cm} \textbf{Feminist Theology and Ethics.} Harrison and Heyward, “Pain and Pleasure: Avoiding the Confusions of Christian Tradition;” and Gudorf, “The Erosion of Sexual Dimorphism;” and Lorde, “The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power.” All in Course Content.

\textbf{September 23} \hspace{1cm} \textbf{Hermeneutics.} Read Ch 21, 22 in Hinnels, and Douglas, \textit{Purity and Danger} selections in Course Content.

\textbf{September 30} \hspace{1cm} \textbf{Sociology of Religion I.} Read Ch 8 in Hinnels, Durkheim
selections, Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, and Marx’s *Communist Manifesto*.

**October 7**  
**Sociology of Religion II.** Read Ch 20 in Hinnels, Ch 1-2 of Eliade's *The Sacred and the Profane*, and Geertz, Chs. 1,2,8,9 10. (Course Content)

**October 14**  
**Anthropology and Psychology of Religion.** Read Chs. 9, 17 in Hinnels, Malinowski’s essay “Magic, Science and Religion,” and the selections from William James.

**October 21**  
**Online midterm in two parts available October 21, 12:01 am-October 26, 11:59 pm.**

**October 28**  
**Comparative Religion/Pluralism.** Read Chapters 11, 18 in Hinnels, and posted article by Otto Maduro. **Annotated Bibliography due October 28.**

**November 4**  
**Postmodernism I.** Read Ch 14 in Hinnels, Foucault selections, and the de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life.* (Foucault and de Certeau are in Course Content.)

**November 11**  
**No class—Veteren’s Day. Postmodernism II.** Read Jean Baudrillard, “Symbolic Exchange and Death;” and Chavez, “Rain Dances in the Dry Season.” **Proposal due November 11.**

**November 16**  
**Fundamentalism, Orientalism and Politics.** Read Ch 19, 24 in Hinnels. **Term Papers due at turnitin.com by November 22 midnight. Late papers lose 2pts a day.**

**November 23**  
**Thanksgiving. No class. Term papers due Nov 28 by 11:59 pm.**

**November 30**  
**Discussion of Term Papers.**

**Final exam in two parts online Dec 5, 12:01 am until Dec 9 at 11:59 pm.**