COURSE DESCRIPTION
The course will analyze different theories and methods in the study of religion. This area of study necessarily demands an interdisciplinary approach to the subject, taking into account the different disciplinary approaches. We have identified important perspectives coming from History, Theology, Philosophy, Psychology, Psychoanalysis, Sociology and Anthropology; our course will present a panorama of these approaches, with special emphasis on anthropological, sociological, theological, philosophical, and historical approaches. The course will develop key issues and concepts on the study of religion. It will be taught in a seminar format.

TEXTBOOKS
Required books:

RECOMMEND BOOK:

READINGS ON BLACKBOARD:
Jonathan Z. Smith, “Religion, Religions, Religious” (from *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*)
History-of-Religions Methodology:
Ernst Troeltsch, “Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology”
________, “The Place of Christianity Among the World Religions”
________, “Half a Century of Theology: A Review”
Anthropological Methodology:
Clifford Geertz, “Religion as a Cultural System”
________, “Thick Description: Toward and Interpretive Theory of Culture”
T. Asad, “The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category” [on Geertz]
M. Deflem, “Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion” [on Victor Turner]
**Sociological Methodology:**
Peter Berger, selection from *The Sacred Canopy*

**Phenomenological Methodology:**
Martin Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism”
Jurgen Habermas, “Religion in the Public Sphere”
Selbo, “Religion and Rationality: Review of Habermas’ *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*

**Liberation Theology Methodology:**
Clodovis Boff, Épistemology and Method of Liberation Theology”
Peter Phan, “Method in Liberation Theologies”

**Feminist Methodology:**
Rosemary Ruether, “Feminist Theology: Methodology, Sources, and Norms”
Mernissi, “The Hijab and the Veil,” from *The Veil and the Male Elite*
Mahmoud, “The Subject of Freedom,” from *The Politics of Piety*

**Post-Structuralist Methodology:**
Michel Foucault, “Truth & and Power”
Lemke, “Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique” [on Foucault]
C. Gordon, “Governmental Rationality: An Introduction” [on Foucault]

**Psychological Methodology:**
Kroeber, “Totem and Taboo in Retrospect” [on Freud]

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES**
1. Research paper (10-12 pages) on a course topic or one agreed in advance with the instructor (40% of grade).
2. One 2-page (double spaced) presentation on the reading for a particular week.

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**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Week 1**
Introduction: Syllabus, Requirements, Textbooks, Overview of course


Ernst Troeltsch, “Half a Century of Theology: A Review”; “Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology” (1898) and “The Place of Christianity Among the World Religions” (1923) (Blackboard).

**Week 2**
Selections from Marx & Engels, *On Religion:*
Introduction to Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right (41-58); Theses on Fenerbach (69-72); Engels, The Peasant War in Germany (97-118); Engels, Fenerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy (213-268); Marx & Engels, The Communist Manifesto (Blackboard); Estranged Labor (Blackboard); The German Ideology (Blackboard)

Selections from Easton & Guddat [link on Blackboard], Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society:
Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 (283-337); The Holy Family (361-398); The German Ideology (403-442).

CASE STUDY I: The Bhagavad Gita

Week 3

Selections from Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life:
Introduction (13-33); Preliminary Questions (37-63); Origins of these Beliefs-End (235-262); Conclusion (462-496).

Bureacracy (196-244); The Sociology of Charismatic Authority (245-252); The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism (302-322).

CASE STUDY II: Early Catholicism

Week 4

Olson, pp. 342-353, Ch. 8: “Psychology of Religion” (Blackboard); Sigmund Freud, Civilization and its Discontents (23-101).

Freud, Civilization and its Discontents (103-149).

Kroeber, “Totem and Taboo in Retrospect” [on Freud, Blackboard]

Week 5


Olson, pp. 100-124, Ch. 4: “Phenomenology and the Science of Religion” (Blackboard); L. E. Schmidt, “The Making of Modern ‘Mysticism’” (Blackboard).

Week 6


Olson, pp. 157-160, Ch. 5: “History of Religions” (Blackboard); Northrup Frye, “Review: World Enough without Time” (Blackboard).


Week 7


T. Asad, “Reading a Modern Classic: W.C. Smith’s The Meaning and End of Religion” (Blackboard).
Week 8
Clifford Geertz, “Religion as a Cultural System” and “Thick Description: Toward and Interpretive Theory of Culture” (Blackboard); T. Asad, “The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category” [on Geertz, Blackboard];

Selections from Victor Turner, The Ritual Process
“Liminality and Communitas” (94-130); “Communitas: Model and Process” (131-165); M. Deflem, “Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion” [on Victor Turner, Blackboard].

Week 9
Selection from Peter Berger, The Sacred Canopy
Chapter 1, “Religions and World Construction”; Chapter 2, “Religion and World Maintenance” (Blackboard).

CASE STUDY III: Kingship Propaganda in Ancient Israel

Week 10
Liberation Theology
Clodovis Boff, Epistemology and Method of Liberation Theology” (Blackboard).
Peter Phan, “Method in Liberation Theologies” (Blackboard).

CASE STUDY IV: Prophetic Critique of Kingship in Ancient Israel; Luther’s and Calvin’s Critique of Roman Catholicism in the Reformation

Week 11
Spring Break (no classes)

Week 12
Feminism
Rosemary Ruether, “Feminist Theology: Methodology, Sources, and Norms” (Blackboard); Mernissi, “The Hijab and the Veil,” from The Veil and the Male Elite (Blackboard); Mahmoud, “The Subject of Freedom,” from The Politics of Piety (all on Blackboard).

Week 13
Post-Structuralism
Olson, pp. 548-557: Preface to Ch. 11, “Poststructural/Postmodern Approaches to Religion” (Blackboard).

Michel Foucault, “Truth & and Power”, “Governmentality” (Blackboard); Lemke, “Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique” [on Foucault, Blackboard]; C. Gordon, “Governmental Rationality: An Introduction” [on Foucault, Blackboard].

Week 14
Concluding Discussion and Presentations

Week 15
Presentations (continued) and RESEARCH PAPERS DUE
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY


Freud, Sigmund: ‘Chapter 3. Animism, magic and the omnipotence of thought’. *Totem and taboo* [1913]. (online version at the group).


Weber, Max. 'Ch. VI ‘Religious groups (The sociology of religion)” In: *Economy and society: an outline of