

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
Department of Religious Studies
REL 4030 Methods in Religious Studies, U01
Spring 2017

Instructor: Mr. Daniel Alvarez
Office Hours: MW, 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Class Hours: MWW, 11:00-11:50 a.m.
Class Room: DM 323

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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:

Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process* (Aldine 1995) **ISBN:** 978-0202011905 [Anthropology]
Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Dover, n.d.) **ISBN:** 978-0029080108 [Sociology]
Lloyd Easton & Kurt Guddat, editors, *Writing of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society* (Hackett, 1997) **ISBN:** 0872203689 [Sociology]
Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (Princeton University Press, 2005) **ISBN:** 978-0691123509 [Phenomenology-History of Religions]
Wilfred C. Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (Fortress Press, 1991) **ISBN:** 978-0800624750 [History of Religions]
Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (Galaxy Books, 1958) **ISBN:** 978-0195002102 [Phenomenology]

RECOMMEND BOOK:

Daniel Pals, *Nine Theories of Religion* (Oxford, 2015)

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*
Max Weber, selections from his writings

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, "Epistemology 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 & Power"

_____, "Governmentality"

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. Power-point presentation summarizing research project (to be uploaded to Blackboard).

2. One 2-page (double spaced) presentation on the reading for a particular week.

A	95-100	C	72-75
A-	91-94	C-	69-71
B+	88-90	D+	67-68
B	83-87	D	63-66
B-	79-82	F	0-62
C+	76-78		

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1

Introduction: Syllabus, Requirements, Textbooks, Overview of course

Required Reading: Alvarez, "The Study of Religion in the West: From Schleiermacher to the Present" (in two separate handouts); "Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology" (1898) and "The Place of Christianity Among the World Religions" (1923) (Blackboard).

Recommended Readings: Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious" (from *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*; (Blackboard); Ernst Troeltsch, "Half a Century of Theology: A Review";

Week 2

Selections from Marx & Engels, *On Religion*:

Required Reading: *Introduction to Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (41-58); *Theses on Feuerbach* (69-72); Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany* (97-118).

Recommended Reading: Engels, *Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* (213-268); Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Blackboard); *Estranged Labor* (Blackboard).

Selections from Easton & Guddat, *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*.
Required Reading: *The German Ideology* (403-442).

Recommended Readings: *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (283-337); *The Holy Family* (361-398).

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).

Selections from Max Weber, *Essays in Sociology*.
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).

Recommended Reading: Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*.

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

Week 5

Selections from Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (1-71; 109-142; 175-178).

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

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Week 6

Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (1-92; 93-162).

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

Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism" (Blackboard); Jürgen Habermas, "Religion in the Public Square"; Selbo, "Religion and Rationality: Review of Habermas' *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*."

Week 7

Selections from Wilfred C. Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (15-79; 119-153; 154-169; 193-202).

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. Defflem, “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 & 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

- Tala Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (John Hopkins, 1993).
- Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1977).
- Berger, Peter. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. New York: Anchor Books, 1967.
- De Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. U of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Easton & Gudat, *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*. New York, Anchor, 1971.
- Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: the Nature of Religion* New York: Harper & Row, 1961.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. *Theories of Primitive Religion*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.
- Evans-Pritchard, Edward. *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande*. Clarendon Press, 1976
- Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schussler, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*. New York: Crossroad, 1983.
- Foucault, Michel. *Religion and Culture*. Taylor & Francis, 1999.
- Foucault, Michel, *The Order of Things*. New York, Pantheon, 1971.
- Frazer, James George. *The Golden Bough*. London: Macmillan & Co., 13 vols, 1890-1915; Abridged edition in one volume entitled *The New Golden Bough*. New York: Anchor Book, 1961.
- Freud, Sigmund: 'Chapter 3. Animism, magic and the omnipotence of thought' .Totem and taboo [1913]. (online version at the group).
- Geertz, Clifford. 1957. "Ethos, World View, and the Analysis of Sacred Symbols." *The Antioch Review*. 17: 4. 401-437.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1993 [1966]. "Religion as a cultural system." Pp. 87-125 in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. London: Fontana Press.
- Gross, Rita. *Feminism and Religion: An Introduction*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.
- Hervieu-Leger, Danièle. *Religion as a chain of memory*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2000.
- Hinnells, John, ed. *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*. London / New York: Routledge, 2005. (Paperback, isbn: 0-415-33311-3).

- James, William. 1958 [1902]. "The Reality of the Unseen." *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. New York: Penguin Books. 58 - 75." Also online: <http://www.psywww.com/psyrelig/james/toc.htm>
- Jung, Carl Gustav. *Four Archetypes: Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, Trickster*. London, New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Structural Anthropology*. 1963.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Totemism*. 1963.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Myth and Meaning*. London: Routledge, 1978.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Anthropology and Myth*. 1987.
- Maduro, Otto. 2004. "Religion" under Imperial Duress: Post colonial Reflections and Proposals. *Review of Religious Research*, Volume 45:3 pp. 221-234.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1954. *Magic, science and religion, and other essays*. With an introd. by Robert Redfield. Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday.
- Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*; translated by John W. Harvey. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1957.
- Otto, Rudolf. *Religious Essays: A Supplement to 'The idea of the holy'*. London: Oxford University Press, 1931.
- Pals, Daniel L. *Eight Theories of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. (Paperback, 2nd edition, isbn: 978-0-19-516570-8)
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich, *On Religion*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Sharma, Arvind. *Methodology in Religious Studies: The Interface with Women's Studies*. New York: University of New York Press, 2002. (Paperback, isbn: 0-7914-5348-0).
- Troeltsch, Ernst, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*. London, Allen & Unwin, 1931.
- Troeltsch, Ernst, *Writings on Theology and Religion*, edited by Robert Morgan & Michael Pye, Atlanta, John Knox, 1977.
- Tylor, Edward B. 1958[1871]. *Primitive Culture*. London: Murray.
- Weber, Max. 'Ch. VI 'Religious groups (The sociology of religion)'' In: *Economy and society: an outline of interpretive sociology*. University of California Press, 1978 pp. 399-634

