

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
Department of Religious Studies
Capstone Seminar: Theories and Methods in Religious Studies
REL 4030
Spring 2013

Instructor: Steven M. Vose
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Office Hours: MW 1:00-2:30 or by appointment
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Class Hours: MWF 10:00-10:50
Classroom: PC 447

Course Description

This Capstone Seminar will examine some of the most influential theories and methodologies in the study of religion. Beginning with an investigation into the historical meanings of “religion” and the modern construction of it as a discrete category of academic discourse, the course will proceed to examine some of the major works that have brought various perspectives to bear on the development of new theories of religion or of aspects of religious behavior. The theories and schools investigated in this seminar include: phenomenology, mysticism, psychology, history of religions, sociology, anthropology, ritual studies, feminism, hermeneutics, lived religion, structuralism and post-structuralism. Each theoretical work is paired with a salient critique to show how the field has developed and progresses. Students lead class discussions and present their research papers at the end of the course.

Course Grading and Requirements

1. Weekly Response Papers, 2-3 pages, due Fridays at 5:00 PM. (25%)
2. Class Participation (25%)
3. Discussion Leader and 4-page outline of texts (sign-up 1st class) (20%)
4. Research Paper, ~15 pages, topic selected with instructor (30%)
 - a. Paper Topic: Due Mon., Feb. 4 at 9:00 AM (5%)
 - b. Annotated Bibliography: Due Mon., Mar. 4 at 9:00 AM (5%)
 - c. Title & Abstract: Due Mon., Apr. 1 at 9:00 AM (5%)
 - d. Final Draft: Due Tue., Apr. 23 at 5:00 PM (85%)

-Weekly Response Papers take the place of a final exam. They are **due on the Friday of each week at 5:00 PM**, posted to Turnitin. They may address any aspect of that week’s readings relevant to your interests, but must also demonstrate your understanding of the main ideas in one or more of the readings (cite passages!). Students are encouraged to make connections between readings within and across weekly topics. Late papers will receive no credit.

-Class Participation is crucial to a successful seminar—this is the course in which you transition from student to scholar by working collaboratively with your colleagues to understand the texts and develop your individual research questions. Come to class with the readings completed; bring questions and make connections with other readings. Mark passages that speak to a particular topic of class or personal interest, or that were difficult to understand. Students must attend all class meetings; absences will only be excused in case of extenuating circumstances with appropriate documentation.

-Each student will *lead discussion* of one week's readings. A sign-up sheet will be circulated during the first class meeting. The weekly discussion leader must **submit to Turnitin by the Friday at 9:00 AM** of his/her week an *outline* of **no more than four pages** to be distributed to the class, summarizing the main readings for each week, highlighting their contributions to the field of scholarship, and explaining the critiques of those theories. The leader should present a 5-minute summary of the main text discussed in each class and generate questions to facilitate class discussion. Additionally, the presenter should give a brief overview of the scholar's career, referencing other major writings. The discussion leader **does not** have to submit a response paper on the week that s/he leads class discussion.

-The *Research Paper* will be **due on Tuesday, April 23 at 5:00 PM, posted to Turnitin**. The final week of class will be a symposium in which students will make 10-minute presentations of their research with 5 minutes for questions. There are deadlines to submit a topic, annotated bibliography, and abstract (all submitted to Turnitin) over the course of the semester (see above). **Students must discuss their paper topics with the instructor by Wednesday, February 27**. Late papers will lose a full letter grade for each day they are late, and will in no case be accepted after three days beyond the due date. No extensions will be granted.

Required Texts

-Carl **Olson**, *Theory and Method in the Study of Religion: A Selection of Critical Readings* (Thompson/Wadsworth, 2002), ISBN: 978-0-534-53474-5.

-Wilfred Cantwell **Smith**, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (Fortress Press, 1991), ISBN: 978-0-800-62475-0.

-All other readings are on Blackboard (**Bb**) or are **e-books** available through the library website.

*Bold terms indicate how readings will be marked in the Schedule of Readings below.

Schedule of Readings and Class Meetings

Constructing Religion

Week 1 (Jan 7-11): What is "Religion"? How (and Why) Do We Study It?

Monday: Introductions, Overview of course, Sign-up for discussion leaders

Read for Wed: 1) Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious," from *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, 15 pp. (e-book);
2) Olson, Ch.1, "Introduction" (pp. 1-15).

Read for Fri: Olson, pp. 15-48: Ch. 2, "Religious Studies as an Academic Discipline;" S. Gill, "The Academic Study of Religion;" J.Z. Smith, "Religion and Religious Studies: No Difference at All;" M. Gerhart, "Dialogical Fields in Religious Studies;" D. Wiebe, "Why the Academic Study of Religion?"; M. Miles, "Becoming Answerable for What We See."

Week 2 (Jan 14-18): The Birth of "The Comparative Science of Religion;" and From "Religion" to "Religious Traditions"

Read for Mon: 1) Olson, pp. 49-53, 70-84: Ch. 3, "Quest for the Origins of Religion;" Max Müller, "From *Chips from a German Workshop* and *Introduction to the Science of Religion*;" T. Masuzawa, "From *In Search of Dreamtime*;"
2) Girardot, "Max Müller's 'Sacred Books' and the Nineteenth-Century Production of the Comparative Science of Religions" (37 pp.) (Bb).

Read for Wed: W.C. Smith, from *The Meaning and End of Religion*, pp. 15-50.

Read for Fri: W.C. Smith, from *The Meaning and End of Religion*, pp. 119-169, 193-202.

Phenomenology

Week 3 (Jan 21-25): *Mysterium Tremendum*: Phenomenology and Mysticism

*Monday: **No Class**, Martin Luther King Day

Read for Wed: Olson, pp. 100-124: Ch. 4, "Phenomenology and the Science of Religion;" R. Otto, "From *The Idea of the Holy*;" Idinopulos, "Counterpoint."

Read for Fri: L. E. Schmidt, "The Making of Modern 'Mysticism'" (29 pp.) (Bb).

Week 4 (Jan 28-Feb 1): Psychology and Psychoanalysis

Read for Mon: Olson, pp. 342-353, 378-393: Ch. 8, "Psychology of Religion;" William James, "From *The Varieties of Religious Experience*." S. Thistlethwaite, "Counterpoint."

Read for Wed: Olson, pp. 353-370: Sigmund Freud, "From *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works and Future of An Illusion*;" M. Torgovnick, "Counterpoint."

Read for Fri: 1) J. Lacan, "God and ~~The~~ Woman's *Jouissance*," and "A Love Letter" from *Seminar XX*, *Encore* (25 pp.).
2) M. Cook, "The Missionary Position: A Reading of the Mystic Woman in Lacan's Seminar XX," *Tessera* 27 (8 pp.).
3) Amy Hollywood, "Jacques Lacan, *Encore*: Feminine *Jouissance*, the Real, and the Goal of Psychoanalysis" from *Sensible Ecstasy* (23 pp.) (all on Bb).

Week 5 (Feb 4-8): Myth, Time, and History (of Religions)

Paper Topic Due Monday, Feb 4 at 9:00 AM on Turnitin

Read for Mon: Olson, pp. 157-176: Ch. 5, "History of Religions;" Mircea Eliade, "From *The Sacred and the Profane and The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion*;" R. Shaw, "Counterpoint."

Read for Wed: Olson, pp. 177-191: J.Z. Smith, "From *Map Is Not Territory*;" Gill, "Counterpoint."

Read for Fri: Olson, pp. 192-208: Wendy Doniger, "From *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts and The Implied Spider*;" J. E. Llewellyn, "Counterpoint."

Sociology

Week 6 (Feb 11-15): Sociology of Religion I: Historical: Marx, Weber

Read for Mon: Marx, Introduction to the *Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, 'Estranged Labor' and other selections from *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, "Theses on Feuerbach," and (with Engels) "Bourgeois and Proletarians" from *The Communist Manifesto* (Bb).

Read for Wed: Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Author's Introduction, Chs. 1 & 2 (Bb).

- Read for Fri: 1) Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Chs. 3 & 5 (Bb);
2) Olson, pp. 235-237: Roth, "Counterpoint."

Week 7 (Feb 18-22): Sociology of Religion II: Fieldwork: Tylor, Frazer, Durkheim

Read for Mon: Olson, pp. 54-69, 84-99: Tylor, "From *Primitive Culture*," Frazer, "From *The Golden Bough* and *Totemism and Exogamy*," and Lévy-Bruhl, "From *How Natives Think*," J.Z. Smith, "Counterpoint: I am a Parrot (Red)."

Read for Wed: Olson, pp. 209-229: Ch. 6, "Sociology of Religion," Durkheim, "From *Elementary forms of the Religious Life*," Clarke & Byrne, "Counterpoint: From *Religion Defined and Explained*."

Read for Fri: Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Bk. 2, Ch. 7, "Origin of the Notion of the Totemic Principle, or Mana" (pp. 207-241), Conclusion (pp. 418-448) (Bb).

Anthropology

Week 8 (Feb 25-Mar 1): Cultural Analysis from the Field

Read for Mon: Olson, pp. 238-268: Ch. 7, "Anthropology," Malinowski, "From *Magic, Science, Religion and Other Essays*," Radcliffe-Brown, "From *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*," and Penner, "Counterpoint: The Poverty of Functionalism."

Read for Wed: Olson, pp. 285-297: Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System" (from *The Interpretation of Culture*).

Read for Fri: Olson, 298-307: T. Asad, "Counterpoint: The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category (from *Genealogies of Religion*)."

Week 9 (Mar 4-8): Ritual, Ritual Studies, and "Ritualization"

Annotated Bibliography Due Monday, Mar 4 at 9:00 AM on Turnitin

Read for Mon: Olson, pp. 268-284: Turner, "From *The Ritual Process*;" Bynum, "Counterpoint: From *Fragmentation and Redemption*."

Read for Wed: C. Bell, from *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, Chs. 4 & 5, pp. 69-117 (Bb).

Read for Fri: 1) C. Bell, from *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, Ch. 9, pp. 197-223;
2) F. Staal, "The Meaninglessness of Ritual" (20 pp.) (Bb).

Week 10 (Mar 11-16): SPRING BREAK!!!

Feminism Across the Disciplines

Week 11 (Mar 18-22): Recovering the Female Religious Subject

Read for Mon: 1) Olson, pp. 476-496: Ch. 10: "Feminist Perspectives on Religion," M. Daly, "From *Gyn/Ecology*," M. Hewitt, "Counterpoint;"
2) Amy Hollywood, "Beauvoir, Irigaray, and the Mystical" (27 pp.) (Bb).

Read for Wed: 1) Mernissi, Preface, Introduction and Ch. 5, "The *Hijab*, The Veil," from *The Veil and the Male Elite* (pp. vi-ix, 1-11, 85-101) (Bb);
2) Mahmoud, Ch. 1, "The Subject of Freedom," pp. 1-39, Ch. 2, "Topography of the Piety Movement," pp. 40-78, from *The Politics of Piety* (Bb).

*Friday, March 22: **No Class.** Instructor at Conference.

Language and Structure

Week 12 (Mar 25-29): Structuralism Comes to Anthropology

Read for Mon: 1) C. Lévi-Strauss, "Introduction: History and Anthropology" from *Structural Anthropology*, (27 pp.) (Bb).

2) F. de Saussure, excerpts from *A Course in General Linguistics* (pp. 1-23, 65-78, 78-100) (Bb).

Read for Wed: C. Lévi-Strauss, Ch. 2, "Structural Analysis in Linguistics and Anthropology" from *Structural Anthropology*, (23 pp.) (Bb)

Read for Fri: Olson, pp. 325-341: C. Lévi-Strauss, "From *Structural Anthropology*," I. Strenski, "Counterpoint,"

Week 13 (Apr 1-5): Post-Structuralism, Deconstruction, and the Linguistic Turn

Title and Abstract Due Monday, Apr 1 at 9:00 AM on Turnitin

Read for Mon: 1) Olson, pp. 548-557: Ch. 11, "Poststructural/Postmodern Approaches to Religion;"

2) P. Bourdieu, Selections from *The Logic of Practice*: "Structures, Habitus, Practices" (pp. 52-65), "Belief and the Body" (pp. 66-79), "Symbolic Capital" (pp. 112-121).

Read for Wed: 1) Olson, pp. 573-584: Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History;" Harpham, "Counterpoint."

2) Foucault, "Truth and Power" from *Power/Knowledge* (24 pp.) (Bb).

Read for Fri: Olson, pp. 585-595: Derrida, "Letter to a Japanese Friend" and "From *Religion*;" Rosen, "Counterpoint: From *Hermeneutics as Politics*."

The Politics of Representation

Week 14 (Apr 8-12): 'Representing' Religious People and Reflecting on Fieldwork

Read for Mon: Edward Said, Introduction to *Orientalism* (28 pp.) (Bb).

Read for Wed: 1) John E. Cort, "Introduction" and excerpt from Ch. 1 from *Jains in the World* (13 pp.);

2) Robert A. Orsi, Preface and Ch. 3 "Imagining Women" from *Thank You, St. Jude* (Bb) (33 pp.).

Read for Fri: Robert A. Orsi, Introduction and Ch. 5 "Reflections on Fieldwork in Chicago" of *Between Heaven and Earth* (48pp.).

Week 15 (Apr 15-19): Summation of Course and Student Research Symposium

Final Research Paper due Tuesday, April 23 at 5:00 PM on Turnitin