



SYLLABUS: CPRL 300 METHODS OF STUDYING RELIGION - FALL 2013

- INSTRUCTOR: DR. BRAD STARR
- California State University, Fullerton / FALL 2013
- Section 01 : T 4:00-6:45 HUM 128
- OFFICE HOURS: T 3-4pm; TH 2-4pm. Or by appointment. I am also available via email.
- Instructor Office: UH 310; CPRL Department Office: UH 313 (657) 278-2442
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Photo: Hands, Entrance to Wat Rong Khun, Chiang Rai, Thailand. Instructor Photo

COURSE DESCRIPTION: CATALOG - The academic study of religion to include the definition, functions, and varieties of religion; the methods used to study it; and the key figures who have shaped the development of this discipline. Prereq: CPRL 110 or 105..

GENERAL INFORMATION: This course is required for majors and minors in CPRL. CPRL 300 also serves as the required upper division writing course for majors in CPRL. The course is designed primarily to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for intellectual growth in the academic study of religion. The figures, developments, concepts, cases, and areas that we will study, as well as the capacities for analytical writing and oral expression that we will exercise, are those typically assumed to be part of the background of informed and trained scholars in the field of Religious Studies. Here's a summary of the knowledge and capacities I hope you will acquire and improve as a result of this class.

In terms of knowledge, I hope you gain the following:

- > General knowledge of and familiarity with the theories and theorists I've selected
- > Insight into ways various disciplines and approaches have been and can be used as a "tool kit" to deepen our understanding of religion.
- > Understanding of some of the specific concepts and categories used in the study of religion.
- > Informed recognition of the differences between academic and other ways of approaching religion.
- > Deeper understanding of the complexity and variety of religious forms of human activity.

In terms of skills and capacities, I hope you develop the following:

- > Enhanced ability to read and comprehend scholarly materials in disciplines relevant to Religious Studies.
- > Improved writing, vocabulary, and communication skills in your own scholarly expression
- > Research skills related to the library, scholarly journals, and electronic sources
- > A well-rounded sense and appreciation for interdisciplinarity in the study and understanding of human life in general, religion in particular.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Bradley Herling, *A Beginner's Guide to the Study of Religion*

Daniel Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion*, 2nd edition

Richard Hecht & Vincent Biondo, *Religion and Culture: Contemporary Practices and Perspectives (RC)*

Course Readings on Titanium (TT)

Texts are available at the Little Professor Bookstore.



COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. COMPUTER

Students must have access to a computer in order both to complete assignments and to gain access to required texts and other class materials. The instructor will also use Titanium to email announcements, notices, and study guides to class members at various times during the semester.

2. READING RESPONSE SHEETS



(A) The readings for this course generally range from 60 - 80 pages per week. Except for the Panel sessions (last four weeks of the semester), each weekly reading assignment as a *whole* requires a response sheet, provided as a Word document template on Titanium. Sheets are to be completed using a computer, printed out, and brought to the class session for which the assignment is due. *Only computer typed, and printed response sheets will be accepted. Emailed sheets will not be accepted. Late sheets will not be accepted except in cases of verified excused absence.*

(B) Use the appropriate Response Sheet for the assigned readings:

1. The Response Sheet for Herling is unique to that reading assigned for 9/3.
2. Use "Theory Reading Sheet" for all assignments until 11/12 except where "Thesis Reading Sheet" is required.
3. "Thesis Reading Sheet" is required when the instructor announces its use.
4. Use a separate "RC Reading Sheet" for each chapter assigned from RC from 11/12 on.

(C) **EVALUATION:** Each reading response sheet will be assigned either a grade of Credit (C) / No Credit (N), or a score on a scale of 0-10. Evaluation will be based upon evidence of (1) effective completion of the response sheet (especially thesis formulation), (2) clarity of expression, (3) correct grammar and sentence construction, and (4) comprehensive understanding and reasoned interaction with the text. Meager evidence will result in a meager score.

(D) **EVALUATION SCALE:** [0 = UNSATISFACTORY/7 = SATISFACTORY/8 = ABOVE SATISFACTORY/9 = EXCELLENT/10 = OUTSTANDING] Missing evaluated sheets will be assigned a grade of "0". Scores on *evaluated* response sheets will be averaged for 20% of your semester grade. In order to receive Credit, ALL

questions must be answered at a satisfactory level. For each (N), 5 points will be deducted from the final response sheet average
(E) Starting on 9/11, four students will be designated for each session to take the lead in sharing the content of their response sheets with the class in order to focus and stimulate class discussion. This assignment is neither a group project nor a formal class presentation. Students will sign-up for sessions during class on 9/3. Participation in this activity will be averaged with the Student Panel (see 4 below) for 10% of your grade.



3. TWO EXAMS

Exams will be based on essay questions. Exams are not cumulative, but the second may ask for comparative references to earlier material. A study guide will be posted on Titanium at least 5 days before each exam.

4. STUDENT PANELS

Each student must sign-up for and participate as members of ONE specific panel discussion. Panels will be scheduled during the last weeks of the semester. Although panels will be conducted as a group, these are not group projects. Each student will each be asked to present key ideas from the reading assignment, raise questions for discussion, and answer and discuss questions from other panelists, class members, and the instructor. Panels will focus on selected assigned readings from *Religion and Culture*. Note that all readings for each week are assigned for all students, whether serving on a panel or not. Panel participation will be evaluated on a 0-10 scale and averaged with the reading response leader role evaluation (see 2.e.) for 10% of the semester grade.

5. RESEARCH PAPER

One research paper, 5-7 pages, is due for this class. The topic of the paper is to be either: (A) a comparison of two theorists from this class on a theme you select; or (B) an analysis of the relevance of one or more theorists to a topic from the text *Religion and Culture*.

a. The paper must include three basic components:



1. An introductory paragraph that *explicitly and clearly* states the underlined thesis of your paper
2. The body of the essay, presenting the arguments and expositions related to your thesis.
3. A concluding paragraph summarizing the thesis and conclusions of your paper.

b. REVISION of PAPER Using instructor comments and suggestions, you may return your revised paper to the instructor for re-evaluation. Revised papers are due at the beginning of the final exam period. *When re-submitting, you must turn in three items: (1) the revised paper; (2) the original graded paper; (3) a page that briefly, but specifically, indicates what changes you have made, whether in grammar, style, form, or content.* Please note that re-submissions that do not include these three items will not be re-evaluated.

c. OVERALL GRADING OF ESSAYS: The original paper grade will be averaged with your revised paper grade to determine your final paper score. There is no penalty for not resubmitting.

d. NOTE: The use of any essay written to meet requirements for any other class is prohibited.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE RESEARCH PAPER.

a. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS: Each paper must be composed on a computer; 12 pt Times New Roman fonts, 1.5 or 2.0 spaced; stapled in the upper left hand corner. Do not use plastic or other kinds of binders.

b. At least four secondary scholarly sources must be cited in the paper, including at least one scholarly journal article and at least one scholarly book other than a text from our course. A text from our course may also be cited for one of your four sources. More than four sources may be cited, but all sources *must be scholarly in nature*. At least one primary text from the relevant theorist(s) must also be cited.

c. Citations in the essay must consistently and precisely follow an accepted system for citation and bibliography (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc). The system being used must be noted under the student name at the top of the first page. Papers that fail to meet this expectation will be returned with an automatic 15 point deduction and corrected resubmission will be required. If uncorrected, the essay will be given a 0.

d. CRITERIA FOR GRADING: Your paper will be graded on the basis of (1) clarity, (2) accuracy, (3) critical and comprehensive understanding of the topic, (4) observance of principles of good writing (see below), (5) proper and coherent use and citation of sources, and (6) overall coherence and organization.

e. GRAMMAR: Regarding (4) above--in addition to overall considerations of style, structure, and content, a distinction will be observed between "errors" and "serious errors." (1) *Errors* include such problems as misspellings, comma placement mistakes, subject-verb disagreement, singular-plural confusions, errors with contractions, and apostrophe placement mistakes. 1 point will be deducted for each error. (2) *Serious errors* are defined as comma splices, sentence fragments, and run-on sentences. 2 points will be deducted from the paper grade for each SE.

e. Evidence of plagiarism will result in an automatic "0" for the essay and a promptly submitted formal report of the incident, with evidence, to the Dean of Student's Office of Judicial Affairs.

f. PLEASE NOTE: This assignment requires students to function as scholars in the field of Religious Studies. The point is to indicate to me that you understand and can work reflectively, critically, and perceptively with the concepts you have learned and the texts you have studied. Sermonic papers or papers written primarily to express personal religious or political views and beliefs are not appropriate and will be returned ungraded and assigned a score of "0". (A) You may discuss your paper with me prior to the due date. (B) Papers are due in hard copy at the beginning of the class on their due date. Late or emailed papers will not be accepted.

For help identifying and avoiding comma splices, run-on sentences, sentence fragments, and other writing mistakes, click here:[\[http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/index2.htm\]](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/index2.htm)

6. PARTICIPATION

Keep in mind that there are many ways to participate in class: responding to or asking questions, making contributions to class discussion, bringing media references to class topics to the attention of the instructor or the class, etc. Each student should find a way to become engaged in the topics of the class, but there is no substitute for having read the assigned material and coming prepared for class. *Please note that borderline semester grades will only be raised on the basis of exceptional overall class participation.*



7. ATTENDANCE

Attendance is required and students are expected to arrive in class on time. There will be no penalty for two *unexcused* absences. For the next three *unexcused* absences, two points each will be deducted from your *semester* average. Students with more than five unexcused absences, including the initial two (equivalent to about 33% of the semester), will receive an automatic F or U for the semester. For an absence to be excused, verification of a medical, personal, or employment emergency or necessity is required. Absent students seeking excused status must contact me either prior to or within 48 hours of the class missed. PLEASE NOTE: (1) The roll will be taken via sign-in sheets at most sessions sometime between 4-6:45 PM. (2) Students are responsible for making sure their attendance is recorded on the sign-in sheet. (3) Early departures from and persistent tardiness to class must be explained and cleared with the instructor. Unexplained departures and persistent unexplained lateness may be counted as absences.

8. GRADING



- **AVERAGE OF TWO EXAMS = 40% of semester grade**
- **AVERAGE OF RESPONSE SHEETS = 25% of semester grade**
- **RESEARCH PAPER = 25% of semester grade**
- **AVERAGE OF LEADER/PANEL SESSIONS = 10% of semester grade**
- **SCALE:** 90-100=A / 80-89=B / 70-79=C / 60-69=D / 0-59=F.
- **Semester Grade** = Exams (40%) + Response Sheets (25%) + Research Paper (25%) + Panel Sessions (10%) = Basic Grade – Absence Penalty = Semester Grade
- **NOTE:** + /-- grade designations will **not** be used for this course.
- **NOTE:** There may be extra credit opportunities in this class.

9. REQUIREMENTS OF CLASS DECORUM

- > The right of each student to learn, question, and communicate must be respected by all students.
- > Private conversations or other distracting activities during class time are prohibited.
- > Use of laptops in this class is *prohibited* except where authorized by the DSS. Check with me if you have questions.
- > Phones and beepers *must* be muted and stowed during class. Use of such devices for any purpose, including text messaging, is *prohibited* during class.
- > Students are not permitted to move in and out of the room when class is in session (except in emergencies).
- > Work for any other class or purpose is prohibited during class time.

10. MAKE-UPEXAMS.

Make-up exams are *strictly limited* to cases of verifiable emergency or when prearranged. In the former case, documentation will be required. Also, I *almost never* give semester Incompletes.

11. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

CSUF policy on academic dishonesty will be strictly followed. If a student is caught cheating or plagiarizing in any manner, the result will be a "0" on that exam or assignment, and an incident report and supporting materials will be *promptly* forwarded to the Judicial Affairs Officer in the Office of the Dean of Students. University policy requires that such reports are placed in the student's university file. Further action is determined by the Judicial Affairs Officer.

12. SPECIAL NEEDS

The University requires students with disabilities to register with the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS) located in UH-101 and at (657) 278 – 3112, in order to receive prescribed accommodations appropriate to their disability. Students requesting accommodations should inform the instructor during the first week of classes about any disability or special needs that may require specific arrangements/accommodations related to attending class sessions, completing course assignments, writing papers or quizzes/tests/examinations.

Emergency Information: See http://www.fullerton.edu/emergencypreparedness/ep_students.html



COURSE SCHEDULE



Photos: Wat Arun, Bangkok. Instructor Photos

NOTE: Schedule of all panels and discussion leadership will be determined soon after the semester begins. We will adhere to the course schedule below in general, but adjustments in readings, including deletions and additions, as well as ordering of topics, may be needed as the semester progresses. Notifications of any significant changes will be announced in class and by email.

DATE	TOPICS AND READINGS

8/27	Introduction to Syllabus and Course. The Separation of Theology from the Study of Religion: Some Basics
9/3	SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HERLING, 1-45, 105-121 • RC, "General Introduction"
9/10	THEORETICAL BEGINNINGS. TYLOR AND FRAZER. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PALS 18-51 • FRAZER, <i>The Golden Bough</i> 49-59 [TT] • RC, Chidester, 47-64
9/17	ECONOMIC MATERIALISM: MARX . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PALS 118-148 • Feuerbach, <i>The Essence of Christianity</i> [TT] • Marx, "Opiate of the People" [TT] • Engels, Excerpt from <i>Anti-Durhing</i>, 128-131 [TT] • Marx, Excerpt from <i>Communist Manifesto</i> [TT]
9/24	PSYCHOANALYSIS OF RELIGION: FREUD. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PALS 53-81 • Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, Ch. 1-2 [TT] • Freud, "Obsessive Acts and Religious Practice" [TT]
10/1	SOCIAL ACTION and MULTI-CAUSALITY: WEBER. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PALS 149-188 • Weber, Excerpts from <i>The Protestant Ethic</i> Parts One and Two [TT] • Weber, from "Science as a Vocation" [TT]
10/8	RELIGION and THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF RELIGION: DURKHEIM and DOUGLAS. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PALS 53-81 • DOUGLAS, from <i>Purity and Danger</i> [TT]
10/15	EXAM 1; MANDATORY LIBRARY SESSION
10/22	A. PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACHES: OTTO, ELIADE. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PALS 193-226 • OTTO, The Idea of the Holy [TT] B. CULTURAL ANALYSIS: GEERTZ. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PALS 260-289
10/29	PLAUSIBILITY THEORY: BERGER, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from <i>The Sacred Canopy</i> [TT] • from <i>In Praise of Doubt</i> [TT]
11/5	CHOICE AND SACRED VALUES? TOPICS AND READINGS TO BE DETERMINED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible Readings from STARK, TETLOCK, ATRAN, TAVES, TURNER (TBA)
11/12	CASE STUDY: CIVIL RELIGION. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BELLAH "American Civil Religion" • Excerpt from Froese & Bader, <i>America's Four Gods</i>. [TT] • RC 29-46 • ZUCKERMAN, Excerpt from <i>Society Without God</i> [TT] PAPERS DUE
11/19	RC STUDENT PANELS: RELIGION AND ETHICS
11/26	FALL BREAK: 11/25-29
12/3	RC STUDENT PANELS: RELIGION AND POLITICS
12/10	RC STUDENT PANELS: RELIGION AND AESTHETICS
12/17	FINAL EXAM: 5:00-6:50 pm RESUBMITTED PAPERS DUE