

## Religion 202: Intro to the Study of Religion (Fall 2018)

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Office Hours: Tues: 3:20-4:00, Wed. 4-5:00; Thurs. 3:20-4:00 and by appointment



*"I may be a member but I wouldn't identify myself as 'religious.'"*

**Description:** We live in a world filled with religion, and it is our job as friends, relatives, coworkers, professionals, American citizens, and members of a global community to be able to engage this powerful aspect of human life. This task of understanding matters regardless of our own personal relationships to a specific religious tradition. Equipping you for the beginning of this journey is the goal of this course. This class introduces students to the comparative study of religion, an academic discipline within the modern university. In this discipline we seek to UNDERSTAND how religion functions in the lives of individuals and communities and to ANALYSE the complex interrelationships between religion and other aspects of culture. During this semester we will examine the basic tools and vocabulary employed in the academic study of religion.

By the end of this course you will have been given the tools to accomplish the following:

- Be able to explain and apply our “Three Step Rules of Engagement” (identifying and bracketing biases, empathetic engagement, analysis and informed response) when encountering diverse forms of religion in the world.
- Be able to identify key elements and features that constitute the category of religion (e.g., myth, ritual, symbol, etc.) and apply these elements and features in the description and empathetic investigation of diverse religions.
- Demonstrate an ability to read carefully, think critically and communicate clearly (in oral and written forms) about religious phenomenon, theories of religion, and the problem of how to define religion.
- Practice civil discourse, meaning to engage in oral and written communication about religion in ways that are accurate, respectful, permit disagreement, and lead to greater understanding.
- Obtain reliable information on different topics related to the study of religion.

## Grading:

4 short formal essays + 3-Step Worksheets @ 12.5% each = 50%

Midterm (in-class) = 15%

Final Exam (part in-class, part take home) = 20%

Oral report, attendance and class participation = 15%

### **Note about written assignments:**

If you are not able to turn in an essay, test, or project on time due to *particularly extenuating* circumstances, some flexibility may be possible. If this is the case, you must have asked and **received** permission from me no later than the day the assignment is due. Otherwise, a grade penalty will be assigned at my discretion. If there is any confusion about whether or not you have successfully submitted the assignment I will ask that you send me the automatic email confirmation D2L sends you when you successfully upload a document.

## Explanation of Graded Assignments

Each essay will focus on application of concepts and methods learned to the understanding and interpretation of the narrative we are reading. Essay guidelines and a grading rubric will be provided for each assignment. Good essays will demonstrate the following:

- Correct understanding of concepts and methods
- appropriate application of examples to illustrate concepts and methods
- evidence of critical thinking and clear argumentation
- clarity and organization of the essay, grammar, spelling, etc.
- typed, double-spaced and approximately 500-750 words.

### Midterm (15%) and Final (20%):

The midterm and final will test key terms and concepts presented in class and in assigned materials, and ability to apply terms and concepts to specific contexts. A study guide for each will be provided. The midterm is in-class, closed book. The final is half take-home and half in-class closed book.

### **Oral Report (5%)/ attendance (5%) / class participation (5%):**

#### Oral report:

- Each student must give a *3-5 minute oral presentation* on a specific religious phenomenon, keyed to topics such as myth, ritual, gods, religious leaders, symbols.
- Students must obtain reliable information about their topic, using at least three sources *including one source that is drawn from library based resources*. "Library based" means resources physically found in the library or accessible through the library home page, such as the *Encyclopedia of Religion*.
- Students will present their material in a way that connects with class content, and will make use of appropriate visual aids.
- Students will avoid distracting body language, speak clearly, and make eye contact with audience.
- By the beginning of class on the day of the presentation, you must submit a *one page outline of the presentation, clarifying the main idea of your presentation and including the citations* (in appropriate format) of the

sources you used. This document should be typed and grammatically clean. Upload one copy to the D2L "Oral Presentations" dropbox and paste the text into the discussion forum thread entitled "Outlines of Student Oral Presentations" so others can access your sources if needed.

### Class participation:

- You should come to class having completed the assignments for the day and ready to actively and thoughtfully participate in class discussions or small group discussions.
- Participation includes bringing the assigned reading to class for reference.
- Students will encourage each other to practice civil discourse during our class discussions.

### Attendance

Regular attendance is expected.

- 2 or fewer unexcused absences (Excellent) = 90-100%
- 3-6 unexcused absences (Good) = 80-90%
- 6-10 unexcused absences (Poor) = 66-79%
- More than 10 unexcused absences = failing grade for attendance.

Absences will be excused only when the excuse is provided (via email or in person) in advance of the class that will be missed. You should also be sure to upload a note/relevant information (including a copy of emails to me) into the "Absence-Related Info" folder on D2L. Acceptable reasons for an excused absence are illness, family emergency, or school sponsored trip or athletic competition. If you miss class (excused or unexcused) you should complete the assignments, request and review notes from a colleague, and then come to discuss with me any questions you have about the material. and study any class notes posted on D2L.

***Note: If you miss more than 5 classes I strongly suggest that we meet in person to discuss how things are going. I have found that repeated absence usually means you are struggling with something.***

## Required Texts:

### **Text Rental**

Morreall, John, and Tamara Sonn. *The Religion Toolkit: A Complete Guide to Religious Studies*. 1st ed. Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

### **Text Purchase:**

Dennis Covington. *Salvation on Sand Mountain: Snake Handling and Redemption in Southern Appalachia*, 2009.

Gita Mehta. *A River Sutra*. Vintage, 1994.

Courtney Bender. *Heaven's Kitchen: Living Religion at God's Love We Deliver*. 1st ed. University Of Chicago Press, 2003.

## Percentage to Letter Grade Conversion

A: 94-100, A-: 90-93, B+: 87-89, B: 83-86, B-: 80-82, C+:77-79, C: 73-76. C-: 70-72, D+: 67-69, D: 65-66, F: 64 or lower

## Learning Accommodations

UWSP is committed to providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations to students with disabilities and temporary impairments. If you have a disability or acquire a condition during the semester where you need assistance, please contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of Albertson Hall (library) as soon as possible. DATC can be reached at 715-346-3365 or DATC@uwsp.edu. <https://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/default.aspx>

## Written Assignments

If you are not able to turn in on time due to particularly extenuating circumstances, some flexibility may be possible. If this is the case, you must have asked and received permission from me no later than the day before the assignment is due. Without permission, a grade penalty will be assigned at my discretion or I may not allow you to submit.

## Required Readings

If I do not provide photocopies of an assigned reading not in one of our books or the reader, you must print out the reading (you will find PDF versions on our D2L site) and bring to class.

## Electronics

Tablets or laptops for the purposes of note-taking are fine, with permission. If your smart phone use is causing our collective energy to decrease I will let you know. If it continues to be an issue it will impact your grade.

## Assignments

Assignments will change. Be sure to check the online Schedule of Assignments before each assignment.

## Mutual Respect

<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CommunityRights.pdf>

## Academic Misconduct

<http://library.uwsp.edu/guides/vrd/plagiarism.htm>  
<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CommunityRights.pdf#page=11>

## Emergency Response Guidance:

- In the event of a medical emergency call 9-1-1 or use the closest Red Emergency Phone. Offer assistance if trained and willing to do so. Guide emergency responders to victim.
- In the event of a tornado warning, proceed to the lowest level interior room without window exposure.
- In the event of a fire alarm, evacuate the building in a calm manner.
- Active Shooter/Code React – Run/Escape, Hide, Fight. If trapped hide, lock doors, turn off lights, spread out and remain quiet. Call 9-1-1 when it is safe to do so. Follow instructions of emergency responders. See UW-Stevens Point Emergency Procedures at [www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures](http://www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures) for details on all emergency response at UW-Stevens Point.”

## Schedule of Assignments

*Note: readings are to be done in preparation for the class date on which they are assigned.*

### Week 1

- Tuesday, September 4, 2018
  - Beginnings
  
- Thursday, September 6, 2018
  - Covington, Prologue and Chs. 1-2 (Prologue, 1-44)
  - Prof. Keefe's "Three Step Rules of Engagement" (handout; PDF on D2L).
  - Fill out About Me document, upload to About Me dropbox on D2L as a .docx
  - *The Religion Toolkit* ("Toolkit") Ch. 2: 17-22 (Theodicy); 22-26 (Death)
  - Note: Salvation on Sand Mountain Orienting Questions can be found on D2L. You do not HAVE to answer these questions, or even look at them. Use them if they are useful. There is also a brief explanation of how you should approach readings from *The Religion Toolkit*.

### Week 2

- Tuesday, September 11, 2018
  - Covington: Chs. 3-6 (45-132)
  
- Thursday, September 13, 2018
  - Covington, chs. 6-10 (133-240)

### Week 3

- Tuesday, September 18, 2018
  - Covington: Afterword (241-249)
  - Toolkit: 26-30 (Order); 30-42 (Social Order and Ritual)
  - Ninian Smart's "Introduction to the 7 Dimensions of Religion" (PDF on D2L: print out and bring to class)
  
- Thursday, September 20, 2018
  - Essay #1 Due.
  - In-Class Discussion of SOSM and Toolkit with possibility of extra credit



## Week 4

- Tuesday, September 25, 2018 (Religion and Migration evening)
  - *A River Sutra* (ARS) 1-13
  - Toolkit: 207-211: Indian Religions Intro
  - Paden: "Religious Worlds" (PDF on D2L; print out and bring to class)
  
- Thursday, September 27, 2018
  - ARS: 14-41 (The Jain Monk)
  - Pluralism Project Background Reading about Jainism
    - <http://pluralism.org/religions/jainism/introduction-to-jainism/a-hospital-for-birds/>
    - <http://pluralism.org/religions/jainism/introduction-to-jainism/mahavira/>
    - <http://pluralism.org/religions/jainism/introduction-to-jainism/ahimsa-reverence-for-life/>

## Week 5

- Tuesday, October 2, 2018
  - Paden "Ritual and Time" (PDF on D2L; print out and bring to class)
  - Oral Presentations: Annual Rituals or Festivals
  
- Thursday, October 4, 2018
  - Paden: "Myth" (PDF on D2L; print out and bring to class)
  - Oral Reports: Myths of Creation

## Week 6

- Tuesday, October 9, 2018
  - View: Inside Mecca (available through Films on Demand, accessed through the UWSP library database)
    - <https://login.ezproxy.uwsp.edu/login?url=https://fod.infobase.com/OnDemandEmbed.aspx?token=40768&wID=240117&plt=FO&loid=0&w=640&h=480&fWidth=660&fHeight=530>
  - Oral Reports: Rituals of any type
  
- Thursday, October 11, 2018
  - Essay #2 due.

## Week 7

- Tuesday, October 16, 2018
  - ARS 92-128: Begin The Executive's Story
  - Read Pals on Eliade (PDF on D2L: print out and bring to class)
  - Oral Reports: Myths about the End of the World
  
- Thursday, October 18, 2018
  - ARS: 129-148: Finish "The Executive's Story"
  - Oral Reports: Symbols

## Week 8

- Tuesday, October 23, 2018: Carnival of Approaches
  - ARS 42-91: The Teacher's Story
  - Read (these readings will be divided up across the class):
    - Anthropology of Religion: (89-94)
    - Psychology of Religion (96-99)
    - Theories and Methods: (99-101)
    - Philosophy -> Analytic -> Philosophy of Religion
  
- Thursday, October 25, 2018
  - **Midterm: In-Class**

## Week 9

- Tuesday, October 30, 2018
  - Musician's Story (ARS 191-226)
  - Introduction in class of new Step 3 questions in Three Step Rules of Engagement
  - OPTIONAL: ARS 149-190: The Courtesan's Story - > Read for fun.
  - Oral Reports: Symbols
  
- Thursday, November 1, 2018
  - Minstrel's Story (ARS 227-282)
  - Oral Reports: Sacred Centers/ Sacred Places

## Week 10

- Tuesday, November 6, 2018
  - Critical Thinking 1
    - TBD
- Thursday, November 8, 2018
  - Critical Thinking 2
    - Buddhism as Religion
    - TBD

## Week 11

- Tuesday, November 13, 2018
  - Essay #3 and Critical Thinking Assessment due.
  - In-class Critical Thinking Exercise.
- Thursday, November 15, 2018: Exploring the Sociology of Religion
  - Toolkit: Sociology of Religion (94-96)
  - PALS on Durkheim (PDF on D2L: print out and bring to class)
  - Heaven's Kitchen (HK): Preface (vii-xiii), Ch 1 (p. 1-8)
  - Oral Reports: Life Cycle Rituals

## Week 12

- Tuesday, November 20, 2018 (Luke at AAR)
  - HK Chapter 1, 8-24
  - ONLINE DISCUSSION INSTEAD OF CLASS
- Thursday, November 22, 2018: THANKSGIVING

## Week 13

- Tuesday, November 27, 2018
  - HK Chapter 2, 25-41
  - HK Chapter 3, 42-61
  - Oral Reports: Life Cycle Rituals
- Thursday, November 29, 2018
  - HK Chapter 4, 62-89
  - HK Chapter 5 (90-115)
  - Oral Reports: Finding the Sacred

## Week 14

- Tuesday, December 4, 2018
  - HK Chapter 6 + Conclusion (117-141)
  - Oral Reports: Finding the Sacred
  
- Thursday, December 6, 2018
  - Essay #4 due.
  - Begin viewing *Kumare* in-class.

## Week 15

- Tuesday, December 11, 2018
  - Finish *Kumare* for class.
  - Prep for in-class discussion/debate about Kumare.
  
- Thursday, December 13, 2018
  - Final Conversations