REL 385W: Theory and Method in Religious Studies
(A Writing-Centered Course
Required of All Majors and Minors
in Religious Studies)

Spring 2004
TTH 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Eaton 110

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
REL 385 examines theories on the origin and development of religion, methodological issues related to the study of religion, and the technical vocabulary of religious studies. As a writing-centered course, the intent of the course is to help students encounter successfully the academic literature in religious studies concerned with such issues as the origin of religion, methods for the study of religion, and the role and meaning of symbol and ritual in human communities.

Required Texts

One text is to be purchased and brought to class:

Daniel L. Pals, Seven Theories of Religion (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996
Essays will be distributed on CD-rom and must be returned before a final grade will be given in the course
Time permitting, we will read entries (distributed in class) from Mark C. Taylor, ed., Critical Terms for Religious Studies (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998)

You should already possess the following from World Views days:

Diana Hacker, A Pocket Style Manual, most recent edition preferred (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s)

Recommended grammar websites:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar
http://208.183.128.8/la/links.htm
http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/
http://webster.commnet.edu/grammar/diagrams/diagrams.stm
http://ccc.commnet.edu/grammar

The first is great on definitions (e.g., parts of speech) and examples. The second is a list of grammar themes with links. The third is a grammar web page from the University of Ottawa with a lot of neat stuff. The fourth has power point presentations (e.g., on diagramming sentences) and self-tests with immediate feedback. The fifth is a site with lots of grammar info and links.
Articles on CD-Rom

Most items from the Method and Theory bibliography are on the distributed CD-rom. The bibliography comes primarily from the University of Toronto at http://eir.library.utoronto.ca/MandT/index.cfm. Items on the bibliography are organized under the following themes. However, you will note that there is a lot of cross-over in paper topics:

- Critical Theory
- Cognitivism
- Deconstructionism
- Defining Religion
- Functionalism
- Methodology
- Reductionism
- Structuralism
- Theories About Religion
- Critical Feminist Theory
- Hermeneutics

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance at all class sessions - this includes student responsibility for information given at all class sessions - If arrangements have not been made in advance, NOT ATTENDING CLASS OR NON-PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSIONS WILL AFFECT YOUR GRADE
2. Reading assignments according to course schedule (or as modified by the professor)
3. Article CD-Rom is to be returned before a grade can be received in the course
4. Four papers (using at least three articles, see below) with revisions (60%, i.e., 4 @ 15%)
5. Four critiques of colleague papers (20%, i.e., 4 @ 5%) - Grade = done or not done (but delay in returning the peer critique can affect the grade of your paper)
6. Class presentation - one paper (5%)
7. Final Exam (15%): Friday, May 7, from 6:30 - 9:30 pm

PLEASE NOTE: THESE PERCENTAGES APPLY UNDER THE ASSUMPTION THAT YOU HAVE ATTENDED CLASS, PARTICIPATED IN DISCUSSIONS, AND SUBMITTED MATERIALS ON TIME.

Reading Journal

You are advised to keep notes and record your reflections on reading material used for the course. Such a journal is in the form of a reading synopsis. A reading synopsis is a short summary of a text - it can be an outline, an index of key terms and issues, a paraphrasing, etc. The purpose of such a synopsis is not only to give one a sense of the points made by an author but also to learn to recognize the structure of the author’s argument. Recognizing the structure of an argument can help one grasp why it is that an author is discussing what s/he is discussing at a particular point in the text as well as helping one to grasp the full weight of the conclusions drawn. Furthermore, such a summary makes "re-entry" into the text far more efficient at a later date.

Reading Suggestions:

1. Read 30 minutes intensively and then go for a short walk (e.g., pace your hall) - put what you have just read into your own mental words. Then go back to your desk and make a short summary of what you just read and your reflections (see items 2 and 3 below). A further suggestion: Keep a note pad by your bed. When you fall asleep or as you awake, think about your course readings/work and jot down your thoughts.
2. In addition to, or rather than, underline (or highlight) the text, make your own index of the document.

3. Make an outline of the text - either detailed or thematic (with page numbers of items/themes). What is important here is that you write out notes on the text. I have found that note taking by hand is more effective for learning and remembering than typing. I guarantee that writing out your notes, rather than merely underlining the text, will help you process and remember the material more effectively.

**Paper Assignments**

Each student is to write four short (5 - 8 pages) papers on theories and/or methods for the study of religion of her/his choice. Each paper is to summarize three articles on a topic. It is not necessary that you connect the papers into a common thesis. If you use book reviews rather than articles, you are to use at least four book reviews (best is to consult with the professor to avoid confusion over fair work load). HARD COPIES OF THE PAPERS (or book reviews) YOU HAVE READ IN PREPARATION FOR YOUR PAPERS ARE TO BE TURNED IN WITH THE INITIAL AND FINAL PAPER DRAFTS.

Paper submissions: 1) An electronic copy of paper final drafts is to be submitted electronically via the “Turnitin” website (http://www.turnitin.com) by the deadline for the paper. 2) In addition, the initial submission of the paper should be in the form of TWO HARD COPIES: a) one hard copy ALONG WITH HARD COPIES OF THE PAPERS YOU READ IN PREPARATION is to be placed in the professor’s MAIL BOX and b) another hard copy is to be placed in the drawer marked “McGaughey” in the Eaton Hall secretary’s office. 3) You are to submit the second paper version in both an electronic format to “Turnitin” (above) and one hard copy to the professor’s MAIL BOX. Electronic submissions, the two copies of the draft, and the final version and HARD COPIES OF THE PAPERS YOU READ are to be submitted according to the schedule below.

“Turnitin”

Our course has a course page at “Turnitin”. You will have to create your own student profile to access the course page. Accessing Turnitin: http://www.turnitin.com; click “Training Materials”; at bottom of page click “Student Quickstart”; you will automatically be led through the registration process beginning with “All Turnitin users must have a user profile. To create a new user profile, click here.”

Course ID Number and Password:
Turnitin ID Number:  1113618
Password: Paper2submit

THE FINAL DRAFT OF YOUR PAPER is to be submitted to “Turnitin”.

Peer Reading

Each student is to pick up a draft from a peer from the drawer marked “McGaughey” in the Eaton Hall secretary’s office to read and critique over the weekend. The critiqued paper is to be placed in the professor’s MAIL BOX in the Eaton Hall secretary’s office by class time on Tuesday. Critiqued drafts of papers from peers and from the professor will be returned to their authors at Tuesday’s class, which will allow time to make revisions for the final version of the paper and to prepare oral presentations for class. (See below “Class Oral Presentation”) Final papers will be due on the following Tuesday.

In order to maintain anonymity in the peer reading process, place your name as reader on a post-it and stick it to the draft paper you read.

FAILURE TO RETURN PEER READING DRAFTS ON TIME WILL RESULT IN THE GRADE PENALTY DESCRIBED BELOW.
Writing Grading

Papers will be graded by the following criteria:

1. Content (40%)

   Indicates your sovereignty (i.e., that you understand and have adequately summarized) over the material you are writing about.

2. Reflection (20%)

   Indicates you have thought about the material and understand its implications.

3. Grammar/Writing (40%)

   Each paper will have a grammar/writing focus. The Grammar/Writing portion of your grade will be based upon your proper application of the grammar/writing themes. These themes will be cumulative. In other words, subsequent papers will require you to properly apply the grammar/writing theme(s) of the previous paper(s). Although the professor will read and mark your first paper submission for each assignment for content, reflection, and grammar/writing and will indicate places where you have made mistakes, you are responsible for the corrections for the second submission. In other words, the grammar/writing exercise is not merely to “correct” what the professor indicated was wrong. The exercise is to learn and properly apply the grammar/writing focus in your own writing.

   Grammar Foci for Papers:

   Paper 1: Pronoun Agreement, Subject-Verb Agreement, Antecedent Agreement, Coordinating Conjunction and Comma Rules
   Paper 2: Adverbial Clauses and Comma Rules
   Paper 3: Restrictive and Non-restrictive Subordinate Clauses
   Paper 4: On the one hand, ... On the other hand; Not only/just as ... but also/so also; neither ... nor

Class Oral Presentation

Each student will make one formal oral presentation in class. This is to be an oral summary of one of your four papers, and the oral presentation will be made on Thursday in class prior to the submission of the final draft of the paper the following Tuesday. Sign-up sheets will be available for volunteers. However, if necessary times will be assigned. The grading here is Credit/No-Credit.

The oral presentation has two goals: 1) The first, is to help you become comfortable with the process of presenting academic material to an audience. This is a task that is crucial to participation in a senior seminar. 2) The second, is to help you with your writing. A successful oral presentation will indicate sovereignty over the material and a structure that is understandable to the audience. The process of preparing and presenting an oral presentation, then, is a valuable strategy to obtain clarity in writing.

Writing Guidelines

With the possible exception of reading journals, texts must be TYPED DOUBLE-SPACED AND PAGES NUMBERED (except for longer quoted material, see below).

On plagiarism: Plagiarism is the use of another’s text or thoughts without giving credit to that person. Knowing where an author discussed a certain issue in her/his text indicates one’s indebtedness to the author for (the) idea(s) and is the mark of a scholar. Hence, quoted and even paraphrased material must be footnoted in some fashion (e.g., footnotes; end notes; when only one text is being used page numbers in parenthesis are okay).
Quoting of more than five words in a sequence from a source must be set off by quotes and footnoted. More than three lines of quoted material should be indented, SINGLE-SPACED, and footnoted.

Documentation of materials in your writing:

Be sure that you document wherever you have used a source. Document whenever you have referred to the material in the text (e.g., when you claim that an author maintains or believes something, provide a page citation to substantiate your claim; when you paraphrase a position of an author, provide a page citation to the original from which you paraphrased). In other words, you are to be able to show where in the text your conclusions and claims are being drawn.

Style Sheet:

It is recommended that you become familiar if you are not already with a standard form (e.g., MLA, Turabian, APA, etc.) for footnoting or end noting (i.e., if a book, give author, title, location of publisher, publisher’s name, and date of publication; if an article, give author, title, title of periodical, volume no., issue no., date) that gives the page number(s) for material used to document the location of material paraphrased or quoted. It is acceptable for this course (though it is well advised that you learn a standard publishing style as early in your studies as you can) for you to provide a bibliography with the extended citation at the end of your paper allowing you to use simply the author’s name, date of publication (if using more than one item from the same author), and page number in the text for purposes of documentation.

COMPUTER PRODUCTIONS: UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES will an excuse of computer failure be accepted for the late submission of the paper - KEEP A BACKUP (if not two backups) and MAKE A HARD COPY before you turn off your computer! The following excuses are not acceptable: “the disk was not properly formatted, so I didn’t know it wasn’t storing my text”; “the printer wouldn’t work properly”; “I couldn’t get access to a terminal (or printer) to print out my text because the computer room was too busy”; “the computer ate my paper”; “my hard disk crashed”.

Assignment Deadlines - Grade Penalties:

Should a student fail to meet an assignment deadline for any reason other than serious illness (and a physician’s certification may be required to establish the seriousness of the illness), there will be a penalty on the grade. This is to ensure that the playing field is even for all.

Initial drafts have no grace period. If you submit a review of two articles by the due date, there is a penalty of 1/4 a grade (an A becomes an A-). If you submit a review of one article by the due date, there is a penalty of a 1/2 a grade (an A becomes a B+). If you fail to submit any initial draft by the due date, there is a penalty of one grade (an A becomes a B).

There is a two-day grace period for the submission of the final (!) but NOT INITIAL drafts of papers (a weekend counts as two days). After two days, you will be penalized a portion of a letter grade (e.g., the third day an “A” becomes automatically an “A-”; the fourth day an “A-” becomes a “B+”; etc.) down to a “C”.

In any event, it is always better to turn in a paper late with the chance of earning a “C” than not to turn in any paper and get an automatic “F”.

Incompletes:

An incomplete is possible in the course ONLY in the case of serious illness documented by a physician. In any event, arrangements must be made for an incomplete PRIOR to the last day of class (April 30th) when the final assignment is due.
COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: January 20 and 22

Introduction - Reading Assignment should be done by Thursday
(This is the only exception - all reading for the week is to be completed by Tuesday)

Reading Assignment: Pals, Introduction

Week 2: January 27 and 29 (Reading Assignments should be done by Tuesday)

Topic: Theory - Animism and Magic

Reading Assignment: Pals, Chapter 1 (“Animism and Magic: E.B. Taylor and J.G. Frazier”)
Grammar/Writing: Tuesday, January 27 - Pronoun Agreement, Subject-Verb Agreement, Antecedent Agreement, Coordinating Conjunction and Comma Rules

First submission of Paper 1 Due: Friday, January 30 - Noon

Pick-up Peer Paper from the Course Drawer to Read and Respond to Over the Weekend

Week 3: February 3 and 5 (Reading Assignments should be done by Tuesday)

Comments on first submissions of Paper 1 Due: Tuesday, February 3, by class time

Topic: Theory - Religion and Personality

Reading Assignment: Pals, Chapter 2 (“Religion and Personality: Sigmund Freud”)

Oral Presentations: Thursday, February 5

Week 4: February 10 and 12 (Reading Assignments should be done by Tuesday)

Second submission of Paper 1 Due: Tuesday, February 10 - Class Time

Topic: Theory - Society as Sacred

Reading Assignment: Pals, Chapter 3 (“Society as Sacred: Émile Durkheim”)

Week 5: February 17 and 19 (Reading Assignments should be done by Tuesday)

Topic: Theory - Religion as Alienation

Reading Assignment: Pals, Chapter 4 (“Religion as Alienation: Karl Marx”)

Grammar/Writing - Tuesday, February 17: Adverbial Clauses and Comma Rules

First submission of Paper 2 Due: Friday, February 20 - Noon

Pick-up Peer Paper from the Course Drawer to Read and Respond to Over the Weekend

Week 6: February 24 and 26 (Reading Assignments should be done by Tuesday)

Comments on first submissions of Paper 2 Due: Tuesday, February 24, by class time
Topic: Theory - The Reality of the Sacred

Reading Assignment: Pals, Chapter 5 ("The Reality of the Sacred: Mircea Eliade")

Oral Presentations: Thursday, February 26

Week 7: March 2 and 4 (Reading Assignments should be done by Tuesday)

Second submission of Paper 2 Due: Tuesday, March 2 - Class Time

Topic: Theory - Society’s Construct of the Heart

Reading Assignment: Pals, Chapter 6 ("Society’s ‘Construct of the Heart’: E.E. Evans-Pritchard")

Week 8: March 9 and 11 (Reading Assignments should be done by Tuesday)

Topic: Theory - Religion as Cultural System

Reading Assignment: Pals, Chapter 7 ("Religion as Cultural System: Clifford Geertz")

Week 9: March 16 and 18 (Reading Assignments should be done by Tuesday)

Topic: Theory Overview

Reading Assignment: Pals, Conclusion

Grammar/Writing - Tuesday, March 16: Restrictive and Non-restrictive Subordinate Clauses

First submission of Paper 3 Due: Thursday, March 18 - Noon - NOTE CHANGE OF WEEKDAY!
Pick-up Peer Paper from the Course Drawer to Read and Respond to Over the break

SPRING BREAK: March 22-26

Week 10: March 30 and April 1 (Reading Assignments should be done by Tuesday)

Comments on first submissions of Paper 3 Due: Tuesday, March 30, by class time

Topic: Method

Reading Assignment: To be assigned

Oral Presentations: Thursday, April 1

Week 11: April 6 and 8 (Reading Assignments should be done by Tuesday)

Second submission Paper 3 Due: Tuesday, April 6 - Class Time

Topic: Method

Reading Assignment: To be assigned
Week 12: April 13 and 15 (Reading Assignments should be done by Tuesday)

Topic: Method

Reading Assignment: To be assigned

Week 13: April 20 and 22 (Reading Assignments should be done by Tuesday)

Grammar/Writing - Tuesday, April 20: On the one hand, ... On the other hand; Not only/just as ... but also/so also; neither ... nor

First submission of Paper 4 Due: Friday, April 23 - Noon

Topic: Method

Reading Assignment: To be assigned

Pick-up Peer Paper from the Course Drawer to Read and Respond to Over the Weekend

Week 14: April 27 and April 29 (Reading Assignments should be done by Tuesday)

Comments on first submissions of Paper 4 Due: Tuesday, April 27, by class time

Topic: Method

Reading Assignment: To be assigned

Oral Presentations: Thursday, April 29

Week 15: May 4

Second submission of Paper 4 Due: Tuesday, May 4 - Class time

FINAL EXAM: Friday, May 7, from 6:30 -9:30 pm