



Hankuk University of Foreign Studies

2018 Summer Session

RELG 101 Introduction to Religion

Course Outline

Course Code: RELG 101

Instructor: Dr. Faraz Sheikh

Home Institution: College of William & Mary

Office Hours: TBA and by Appointment

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Credit: 4

Class Hours: 12:00-14:00, Mon. to Fri.

This course will have 72 total class hours, including 40 lecture hours, 12 instructor office hours, 12-hours of TA-led discussion sessions (four sessions of 3 hour each), 8 hours of review sessions (four review sessions, 2 hours each).

Course Objectives

Every description invoking “religion” contains a set of assumptions with complex intellectual genealogies. When we draw distinctions between “the sacred” and “the profane,” “the magical,” “the occultist,” or “the superstitious,” we are making critical judgments on plausible levels of reality and ascribe specific value to our own cultural notions and perceptions. Why do we easily think of the Bible as “a religious text,” but we consider The Iliad only an epic story? What allows some people to perceive saint veneration as legitimate, but communication with dead ancestors as occultist or even demonic? Why are churches, mosques, or synagogues protected as “religious shrines,” but other sites such as trees, water springs, or boulders are often disclaimed as “primitive,” and “pagan” cultural remnants? What makes a specific event or its narrative “miraculous” as opposed to “magical,” “fabulous,” or “fabricated”? Which “religious rights” should we legally protect, and how do we determine their legitimacy? In this class we will explore major theoretical texts that have shaped our inherited concepts of “religion” and have framed our analytical engagement with the academic field itself. We will begin by positioning the classical texts in the broader context of Western philosophical thinking and will travel all the way to the intellectual polarization of the 1960s between structuralism (Lévy-Strauss) and the Frankfurt School (Adorno).



Assigned Text:

Daniel L. Pals. *Introducing Religion: Readings from the Classic Theorists*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

Course Grading:

- 1) Attendance and active participation (20%). You are expected to read all assigned readings and prepare before class.
- 2) TWO Short Response Papers: (20%): The response papers should not be a summary of the text merely demonstrating that you have “done” the reading assignment, but a short analysis in which you engage a specific issue, relate it to other readings, formulate criticism (or praise) and offer questions for discussions. If an argument is unclear to you, make sure to say so! We can address confusing issues in class later on that day.
- 3) Research Presentation: (20%): It should be modeled after a formal academic conference presentation. Each group will pick a theory of religion and each member of the group will present on one aspect of that particular theory/theorist. Each group will present before the class in the form of a panel, followed by a Q&A session and small, break-out groups, with the rest of the class.
- 4) Mid-Term Exam: (20%) It will consist of 1) a series of key terms and 2) a critical analysis of the theoretical objectives and assumptions of given theories. What are their explanatory powers? Can you find any empirical examples in support of the theory? What about counter-examples?
- 5) Final Exam: (20%) It will consist of short-answer questions drawn from the readings and lectures.

Detailed Weekly Schedule:

Week 1	What Is Religion? Philosophical Ideas and Scholarly Methods
Class 1	Introduction
Class 2	Religion and the Classical Norms: Natural Religion, David Hume. Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, in Dialogues and Natural History of Religion. pp. 124-136.
Class 3	Essential Religion, 1) Friedrich Schleiermacher. “Second Speech: The Nature of Religion.” in On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers, pp. 96-140.
Class 4	Religion and the Enlightenment Norms, “The Science of Religion”, 1) Max Müller. “First Lecture.” Introduction to the Science of Religion, pp. 1-51.
Class 5	TA discussion session 1 (3 hours) Office hours (3 hours) Review session 1 (2 hours)
Week 2	Holiness, Magic and Functionalism



- Class 1 Assigned Reading: Rudolf Otto. “Religion and the Sense of the ‘Numinous.’ ” In Daniel Pals’ Introducing Religion: Readings from the Classic Theorists. pp. 205-235.
Short Response Paper ONE DUE in class.
- Class 2 Religion as a Primitive Thought 1) E.B. Tylor. “Animism and the Origin of Religion.” In Daniel Pals’ Introducing Religion: Readings from the Classic Theorists. pp. 1-35.
- Class 3 Religion and Magic 1) James Frazer. “Magic and the Rise of Religion.” In Daniel Pals’ Introducing Religion: Readings from the Classic Theorists. pp. 37-70.
- Class 4 Religion and Functionalism 1) E. E. Evans-Pritchard. “Primitive Religion and Modern Theories.” In Daniel Pals’ Introducing Religion: Readings from the Classic Theorists. pp. 309-340.
- Class 5 TA discussion session 2 (3 hours)
Office hours (3 hours)
Review session 2 (2 hours)
- Week 3 Religion, Society and the Individual**
- Class 1 Liminality, Victor Turner. “Liminality and Communitas.” Ritual Process. Cornell University Press. pp. 94--130.
- Class 2 Religion and the Bourgeois Society, Karl Marx. “The Manifesto of the Communist Party.” In Daniel Pals’ Introducing Religion: Readings from the Classic Theorists. pp. 143-169.
- Class 3 Religion, Psychology, and Sociology 1) Max Weber. “Religion and Culture Interwoven.” In Daniel Pals’ Introducing Religion: Readings from the Classic Theorists. pp. 237-270.
- Class 4 TA discussion session 3 (3 hours)
Office hours (3 hours)
Review session 3 (2 hours)
- Class 5 Mid-Term Exam
- Week 4 Religion and Structure**
- Class 1 Religion and Psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud. “Religion as Neurosis.” In Daniel Pals’ Introducing Religion. pp. 71-97.
- Class 2 Religion as Society’ s Collective Representation, Emile Durkheim. “The Social as Sacred.” In Daniel Pals’ Introducing Religion. pp. 99-142.
- Class 3 Structural Anthropology, 1) Claude Lévy-Strauss. “The Effectiveness of Symbols.” Structural Anthropology, pp. 181-201; 2) William E. Deal and Timothy K. Beal.



Theory for Religious Studies. “Ferdinand de Saussure” and “Roland Barthes.”
(optional)

Class 4 Religion and Alterity, 1) Roland Barthes. “In the Ring” (pp. 3-14) and “Wine and Milk” (pp.79-82). In Mythologies.
Short Response Paper TWO DUE in class.

Class 5 TA discussion session 4 (3 hours)
Office hours (3 hours)
Review session 4 (2 hours)

Week 5 Religion, Otherness and the Study of Religion

Class 1 Constructing the Other, 1) Edward Said. Orientalism. pp. 1-28; 2) William E. Deal and Timothy K. Beal. Theory for Religious Studies. “Edward Said” (optional)

Class 2 The Sacred and the Cultural Turn, 1) Mircea Eliade. “Religion as Response to the Sacred.” In Daniel Pals’ Introducing Religion: Readings from the Classic Theorists. pp. 271-308; 2) Ganannath Obeyesekere. “Introduction.” Medusa’s Hair: An Essay on Personal Symbols and Religious Experience, pp. 1-11. University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Class 3 Religion as a Cultural Perspective, 1) Clifford Geertz. “Religion as World-View and Ethic.” In Daniel Pals’ Introducing Religion: Readings from the Classic Theorists. pp. 341-372.

Class 4 Religion and the Postmodern, 1) Talal Asad. “The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category.” Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam, pp. 27-54.

Take home Final Exam