

RELI 221

**RELIGION AND DISENCHANTMENT:
POLITICS, POWER AND THE SACRED**

SCHOOL OF ART HISTORY, CLASSICS & RELIGIOUS STUDIES

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Trimester 1, 2008

RELI 221

RELIGION AND DISENCHANTMENT: POLITICS, POWER AND THE SACRED

Course co-ordinator: *Geoff Troughton*
HU 319, Ph: 463 5590

Tutor: *Wil Hoverd*

Where and when: *Lectures: HU 220*
Tuesday 1:10 –3:00pm

Tutorials: *times and place tba*

Religious Studies is in the Hunter Building. The programme administrator, Aliko Kalliabetsos, is in room HU 318. Her telephone number is 463 5299, and email address is aliki.kalliabetsos@vuw.ac.nz

Notices regarding the course or any information on changes will be posted on the notice board outside her office and on Blackboard.

Office Hours: The main office is open Monday – Thursday, 9.30am – 12:00 and 2:30 – 3.30 pm. You can arrange to meet with Geoff Troughton by appointment.

Course outline

- 1 Modern, Western societies are often called ‘post-Christian’. Especially since the industrial revolution, Christianity’s significance has undergone an accelerating decline. Fewer people go to church; religious institutions are accorded less public authority; the state operates with increasing independence from the churches which once gave it legitimacy. Once, Western societies were regularly spoken of as ‘Christian’; but today, at many levels, *post-Christian* is more accurate. The usual term for this process is secularisation.

At the same time, though, we can only understand the particular form that secularisation takes in Western societies by recognising that it emerges from Christian roots. Such societies are *post-Christian* (rather than, for example, post-Buddhist or post-Muslim) because many of their cultural assumptions are grounded in Christian tradition.

RELI 221 explores secularism, the defining religious pattern of modern, Western societies. Rather than seeing it as merely the absence of religion, we analyse secularism as a religious phenomenon by examining its relationship to the philosophical, theological, political and social changes of the period during which Christianity’s influence has declined. If God is no longer the ultimate source of power, where does power now reside?

Unit One examines God’s departure from Western consciousness during the Twentieth Century. We look at the history of atheism as an intellectual movement, examine arguments that religion is detrimental to individuals and society, and investigate the relationship between the rise of science and decline of religion.

In Unit Two, we ask what God’s departure means—for individuals, for politics and for society. Does religion help people act more virtuously, and does its fading mean we are now free to be as selfish and uncaring as we like? Or does religion stifle people’s freedom, and its fading free us to

take our place as fully responsible citizens? We will examine classic statements of both positions.

Unit Three delves further into political dimensions of secularism, tracing the disentanglement of state from church through debates about religious freedom and the nature of political authority. Students' attention will be drawn, in particular, to the ways in which views about God intersect with ideas about the relationship between citizens and the state.

In Unit Four, we ask what took the place of religious faith in the dominant western cultural patterns of the twentieth century, and engage with some twentieth century salvation stories.

2 The course aims:

- i. to familiarise students with philosophical, political and sociological perspectives on secularisation;
- ii. to encourage students to critically engage with the issues and debates found in the scholarly literature on secularism;
- iii. to provide students with the necessary skills and resources to undertake independent argument and analysis in the areas covered by the course;
- iv. to develop student skills in research and writing of academic presentations on the concept of secularism.

3 The **lecture programme** follows. Lectures may be varied from time to time. As much notice as possible will be given when changes occur and, if necessary, a revised programme will be issued at lectures.

4 **Tutorials are held weekly.** Tutorial topics complement the lecture programme. Tutorials provide an opportunity to discuss aspects of the course in a small group and develop your ability to contribute to discussions. There will be 7 tutorial sessions, through the trimester. You are expected to attend tutorials

5 **The course is internally assessed** by means of written assignments, weighted as follows:

an **essay** of a maximum of 2000 words, to be submitted by **11TH April 2008**, worth **20%** of the final grade (course aims ii, iii, iv);

an **essay** of a maximum of 2500 words, to be submitted by **16th May 2008** worth **30%** of the final grade (course aims ii, iii, iv);

7 short tutorial assignments of no more than one page, each consisting of a thoughtful response to a given tutorial question. The seven tutorial assignments are together worth a total of **10%** of the final grade (course aims i, ii) and are to be submitted to the essay box during the week in which the topic was discussed, latest by Friday 5:00pm;

one **class test** to be held in the regular class room at the usual lecture time on **Tuesday 27th May** worth **40%** of the final grade

Mandatory Course Requirements: Submitting 2 essays, 6 tutorial assignments and sitting the class test

- 6 **Required text:** There is no set textbook. The *RELI 221 Course Reader* should be obtained from the Student Notes Office.
- 7 **Workload (recommendation of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences):** For 200-level 22 points one trimester courses, the working party on workloads and assessments recommends 15 hours per week. An average student should spend 12 hours per week for preparation, reading and writing in addition to attendance at lectures and tutorials.

200 – level 1 trimester 22 points 15 hours

8 **General University statutes and policies**

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar available in hardcopy or under "about Victoria" on the VUW homepage at:

http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html

Information on the following topics is available electronically at:

http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/downloads/course_outlines_general_information.pdf

- Academic Grievances
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

9 **Academic grievances**

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned; class representatives may be able to help you in this. If you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the relevant Associate Dean; VUWSA Education Coordinators are available to assist in this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievance Policy which is published on the VUW website at:

www.victoria.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances

10 **Student and staff conduct**

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps are to be taken if there is a complaint. For information about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor or refer to the statute on the VUW policy website at:

www.victoria.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct

The Policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

www.victoria.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct

11 **Students with Impairments** (see Appendix 3 of the Assessment Handbook)

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities the same opportunity as other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, please contact the course coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively, you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services (DSS) to discuss your individual needs and the available options and support on a confidential basis. DSS are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building:

telephone: 463-6070

email: disability@vuw.ac.nz

The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person is in the relevant prospectus or can be obtained from the School Office or DSS.

12 Student Support

Staff at Victoria want students to have positive learning experiences at the University. Each faculty has a designated staff member who can either help you directly if your academic progress is causing you concern, or quickly put you in contact with someone who can. In the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences the support contacts are **Dr Allison Kirkman, Murphy Building, room 407** and **Dr Stuart Brock, Murphy Building, room 312**. Assistance for specific groups is also available from the Kaiwawao Māori, Manaaki Pihipihinga or Victoria International.

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme

This programme offers:

- Academic mentoring for all Māori & Pacific students at all levels of undergraduate study for the faculties of Commerce & Administration and Humanities & Social Sciences. Contact Manaaki-Pihipihinga-Programme@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 6015 to register for Humanities & Social Science mentoring and 463 8977 to register for mentoring for Commerce and Administration courses
- Postgraduate support network for the above faculties, which links students into all of the post grad activities and workshops on campus and networking opportunities
- Pacific Support Coordinator who can assist Pacific students with transitional issues, disseminate useful information and provide any assistance needed to help students achieve. Contact; Pacific-Support-Coord@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 5842.

Manaaki Pihipihinga is located at: 14 Kelburn Parade, back court yard, Room 109 D (for Humanities mentoring & some first year Commerce mentoring) or Room 210 level 2 west wing railway station Pipitea (commerce mentoring space). Māori Studies mentoring is done at the marae.

Student Services

In addition, the Student Services Group (email: student-services@vuw.ac.nz) is available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at:

www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/

VUWSA employs Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office (tel. 463-6983 or 463-6984, email at education@vuwsa.org.nz) is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building.

- 13 Taping of Lectures:** All students in the School of Art History, Classics and Religious Studies are welcome to use audio-tapes to record lectures. If you want to do this, please see your lecturer, tutor or the relevant programme administrator and complete a disclaimer form which advises of copy right and other relevant issues.
- 14 Use of Turnitin:** Student work provided for assessment in this course *may be* checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <<http://www.turnitin.com>>. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which identifies material that may have been copied from other sources including the Internet, books, journals, periodicals or the work of other students. Turnitin is used to assist academic staff in detecting misreferencing, misquotation, and the inclusion of unattributed material, which may be forms of cheating or plagiarism. *At the discretion of the School, handwritten work may be copy typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin.* You are strongly advised to check with your tutor or the course coordinator if you are uncertain about how to use and cite material from other sources. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.
- 15 Class representatives:** Class representatives are elected in the first week or two of the term. They are supported by the VUW Students' Association, and have a variety of roles, including assistance with grievances and student feedback to staff and VUWSA. Contact details for your class rep will be listed on the Religious Studies notice board.
- 16 Aegrotat regulations** apply to internally assessed courses. Students who are ill, or who have difficult personal circumstances may be having problems completing assessment. The aegrotat provisions apply to all courses and apply to assessment which falls within the last three weeks of teaching or the final examination period, including preparation time for final tests and examinations. Aegrotat provisions are detailed in section 4.5 of the Assessment Statute (2008 Calendar, p. 101) and also on p. 23 of the 2006 Assessment Handbook. Students can refer to the University's website for further information: <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/timetables/aegrotat.aspx>. Application forms and information pamphlets should be obtained from the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office (MY 411) or the Manager, Student & Academic Services (MY 410).
- 17 Student Learning Support Services:** A range of workshops, drop-ins and other assistance is provided by SLSS, covering such things as study techniques, essay writing, exam preparation and note taking skills. They are at 14 Kelburn Parade, tel: 463 5999
- 18 Supplementary Materials:** A website of materials related to RELI 221 is being maintained in Blackboard. You can find it by visiting <http://blackboard@vuw.ac.nz>. Your user name is the one issued to you by Student Computing Services. Your password is your Student ID Number. If in doubt, please contact the Student Computing Services Help Desk, 463-6666 (extension 6666 from VUW phones) or by email scs-help@vuw.ac.nz
- 19 Evaluation:** This course will be evaluated by UTDC.

LECTURE PROGRAMME

UNIT ONE: RELIGION'S 20TH CENTURY CRITICS

- 26 February** A brief history of atheism
- 4 March** The moral critique of religion
- 11 March** The critique of religion from science

UNIT TWO: DOES A GOOD SOCIETY NEED RELIGION?

- 18 March** Religion and virtue
- 25 March** No lecture (Easter break)
- 1 April** Religion and freedom. Religion and civil society

UNIT THREE: SECULARISATION AND THE DEATH OF GOD

- 8 April** Theology and the death of God

Mid Trimester break (14 April – 27 April 2008)

- 29 April** Disenchantment and the decline of religion in the west
- 6 May** Secularism east and west: gods and governments

UNIT FOUR: FAITH IN MODERNITY

- 13 May** Market myths
- 20 May** Salvation in our place
- 27 May** **Class test in regular lecture room and time**

TUTORIAL PROGRAMME

Tutorials are an integral part of RELI 221. The required readings are essential background for the lectures and tutorials and should be completed **before each lecture**. The readings will be further discussed in the tutorials. The readings are all found in the *RELI 221 Course Reader*, which can be purchased at the Student Notes Office. Information about tutorial room numbers shall be on the notice board outside HU 318.

Week Beginning

25 February	No tutorial (tutorial groups will be organised during this week)
3 March	Does belief in God do more harm or good?
10 March	Does science disprove faith?
17 March	Do you need to be religious to be good?
24 March	No tutorial this week
31 March	Civil religion and civil society
7 April	No tutorial this week
	<i>Mid-trimester break, 14 April – 27 April 2008</i>
28 April	Disenchantment and decline of religion in the West
5 May	Secularism east and west
12 May	Market myths
19 May	No tutorial this week
26 May	No tutorial this week Class test in regular lecture room and time

Essays and Assignments

1 Essays are to be submitted to the box outside HU 318, and the register must be signed and dated. No responsibility will be taken for assignments for which there is no record. Keep a copy of all work until it is returned.

2

Due dates: The first essay is to be submitted by **11th April 2008**

The second essay is to be submitted by **16th May 2008**

Tutorial assignments to be submitted progressively through the trimester.

3 Penalties for late essays / assignments:

1 percent per 24 hours will be deducted for late essays. Essays submitted more than two weeks late will not be accepted for assessment unless prior written arrangement has been made with the lecturer. Essays submitted late for medical reasons must be given to the Administrator accompanied by a doctor's certificate.

4 Academic integrity and plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html

5 Essay topics

Essay 1, due 11th April 2008 Choose one of the following topics:

- (a) Is religion the opiate of the New Zealand people? Illustrate your answer with examples.
- (b) 'Modern science means we no longer need religion.' Discuss.
- (c) 'Educate [people] without religion and you make them but clever devils' (Attributed to Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, 1769-1852). Discuss
- (d) In 2004, the government of Ireland banned religious advertising in the media. One of the submissions to the parliamentary inquiry which considered the legislation read:

I would like to express my conviction that in these days when we are seeking to build an open and tolerant society in Ireland, it is time we allowed the churches the same freedom of expression as all other citizens of this nation. It is a truly amazing double standard that astrologers and psychics should be allowed to advertise their answers to the "Questions of Life", while Christians are banned from doing the same. As a dual citizen, New Zealander /Irish, I consider it something of an irony that New Zealand - with a far more secularized population - enjoys far greater freedom of expression in religious affairs. New Zealand not only allows Religious Advertising, but has several Radio Stations with a religious worldview. I genuinely believe the Irish public are mature enough to discern the merit or otherwise of religious advertising/ programmes etc, without the Government having to act with such ham-fisted, paternalistic protectionist attitude.

What arguments can you see for and against the Irish ban? What factors might explain the 'irony' identified by the author of the submission?

Essay 2, due 16th May 2008. Choose one of the following topics:

- (a) In 2004, the French government controversially banned school students from wearing identifiable religious clothing or ornaments to school (eg headscarves, crosses). Defending the move, President Jacques Chirac said that France felt 'in a certain way under attack as result of the display of ostentatious religious signs, which is totally contrary to its secular tradition'. What interpretation of secularism is implied in such an argument? How close, or otherwise, is such an interpretation to New Zealand's traditions of religion-state relations?
- (b) Why did 'Death of God' theologians object to the idea of God 'out there'? What are the strengths and weaknesses of their solution, and how relevant is it to modern society?

- (c) At the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the secularisation thesis confidently predicted the imminent end religion. By the end of the Twentieth Century, such predictions were being radically revised. Why did the secularisation thesis seem so convincing for so long, and why did it prove incorrect?
- (d) Critically analyse one non-religious 'salvation story' of twentieth century western society. To what extent does the story reflect religious themes and patterns?

Essays in which sources are not properly acknowledged will be returned unmarked.

How to cite books, articles and internet resources for essays in Religious Studies

It is mandatory to use a correct citation style in academic writing. The departmental standard in Religious Studies at VUW is the version of Chicago Style most usually found in the humanities, as defined in *The Chicago Manual of Style 15th ed. rev.* (University of Chicago Press, 2003). The full guide (a hefty volume) is available in the VUW library (ask at the Reference desk), at Call No. Z253 C532 15ed. However, the following information will be sufficient for most of your basic needs.

NOTE that the citation style differs for a footnote and the bibliography at the end of your essay. For each type of source, we have listed each example in both forms.

NOTE ALSO that this format is (confusingly) often NOT followed exactly in your Course Outline! This problem will be rectified in future years; for the present, please do not use the Course Outline citations as your model. Alike – by now this should not be an issue Right?

Some of the details used in these examples have been modified, and some sources therefore do not really exist in the form given below.

Book – single author

Footnote:

T. N. Madan, *Non-Renunciation: Themes and Interpretations of Hindu Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 38.

Bibliography:

Madan, T. N. *Non-Renunciation: Themes and Interpretations of Hindu Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Book – two or three authors

Footnote:

Richard H. Robinson and Willard L. Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion: An Historical Introduction* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1997), 113.

Bibliography:

Robinson, Richard H., and Willard L. Johnson. *The Buddhist Religion: An Historical Introduction*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1997.

Journal article – single author

Footnote:

Abe Masao, trans., "Shobogenzo Genjokoan," *The Eastern Buddhist* 5:2 (October 1972): 132.

Bibliography:

Abe, Masao, trans. "Shobogenzo Genjokoan." *The Eastern Buddhist* 5:2 (October 1972): 129-140.

Journal article – two or three authors

Footnote:

Helen Hardacre and Abe Yoshiya, "Some Observations on the Sociology of Religion in Japan: trends and methods," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 5:1 (1978): 18.

Bibliography:

Hardacre, Helen, and Abe Yoshiya. "Some Observations on the Sociology of Religion in Japan: trends and methods." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 5:1 (1978): 5-27.

Web site

Footnote:

Bhikkhu Thanissaro, trans., "Bhikkhu Patimokkha: The Bhikkhus' Code of Discipline," <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/vin/sv/bhikkhu-pati.html> (accessed July 26 2006).

Bibliography:

Bhikkhu, Thanissaro, trans. "Bhikkhu Patimokkha: The Bhikkhus' Code of Discipline." <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/vin/sv/bhikkhu-pati.html> (accessed July 26 2006).

How to cite in the body of your essay

When you refer to one of your sources in the course of your argument, you should always give your source in a footnote, which is indicated by a superscript number attached to the appropriate part of the sentence. Note that some other stylistic conventions use what is called "in-text citation", where references are given in parentheses at the end of the sentence; you will see this method of citation often as you read. **HOWEVER, IN-TEXT CITATION IS NOT PART OF THE CHICAGO STYLE INTRODUCED HERE**, and you should consistently use footnotes indicated by superscript numbers ONLY.

Footnote style has been given above. Note that footnote numbers should always come *after* any punctuation mark at the end of the word they attach to; thus, it is correct to write a footnote like this,¹ but wrong to write it like this². One of the advantages of superscript numbered footnoting is that it allows you to make tangential comments, as in this example.³

When you refer to the same source several times in a row,⁴ you can use *Ibid* and the page number.⁵ If it is the same page number, then *Ibid.* is sufficient.

If you cite source A, then cite one or more other sources,⁶ and then return to source A,⁷ it is best to repeat only the author's name,⁸ a shortened title, and the page number cited,⁹ rather than to repeat the full citation.

In other words, only use abbreviated citations where you are citing the same source more than one time. Avoid old abbreviations like *loc. cit.*, *op. cit.*, and so on, which can require the reader to keep track of sources over a number of references and pages, and are thus confusing.

¹ Random footnote.

² Random footnote.

³ Constance Prevarication, *The Book of Tangential Comments* (Dargaville: Primrose Path Publications, 2004), 27. It is interesting to note that in this recent work, Prevarication reverses her previous hard-line stance on the literary sidetrack, and not only countenances it in principle, but herself indulges in it extensively in practice.

⁴ *Ibid.* [this means it is page 27 exactly like the preceding footnote]

⁵ *Ibid.*, 36. [This means it is the same source with a different page number]

⁶ T. N. Madan, *Non-Renunciation: Themes and Interpretations of Hindu Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 38.

⁷ Richard H. Robinson and Willard L. Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion: An Historical Introduction* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1997), 113.

⁸ T. N. Madan, *Non-Renunciation*, 38-40

⁹ Richard H. Robinson and Willard L. Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion*, p. 113.