

RELI 303

Contemporary Spirituality



SCHOOL OF ART HISTORY, CLASSICS & RELIGIOUS STUDIES

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Trimester 1 2008

RELI 303

Contemporary Spirituality

Course co-ordinator:	Dr Art Buehler Hunter 116 Telephone: 463-7409 Email: art.buehler@vuw.ac.nz
Where and when:	Lectures: HU 220 Wednesday 10:00 – 11:50am Tutorials: Times and location to be advised

Religious Studies is located in the Hunter Building. The programme administrator, Alik Kalliabetos, is in room 318 (ext 5299). **Notices regarding the course or any information on changes will be posted on the notice board outside the programme administrator's office.**

Office Hours: The main office is open Monday - Thursday, 9.30 am – 12:00 noon and 2:00 - 3.30 pm. Dr Buehler is usually in his office Wednesdays 7-9 am and 2-3 pm, Thursdays 1-7 pm, and Fridays intermittently between 11 am – 6:00 pm [this is the day of meetings and weekly seminars 3-5 pm]. Mondays and Tuesdays are by appointment only. Appointments are highly recommended for all days.

Course outline

1 The course aims:

- (1) To introduce students to the literature and debates on contemporary spirituality.
- (2) To introduce students to primary sources on contemporary spirituality.
- (3) To provide students with relevant vocabulary, analytical frameworks and concepts to analyse and appreciate contemporary spiritual sources.
- (4) For students to be more aware of the “consensus reality” paradigm and alternative paradigms and world views.

2 Course objectives are:

- (1) To provide a historical basis for understanding the origins and developments of modern spiritual movements.
- (2) To engage with the academic explanations and accounts for contemporary spirituality – being aware of the presuppositions of both insider/outsider perspectives and subjective/objective ways of knowing.

Academic skills objectives

- To foster in students a critical and academic approach to thinking and writing about contemporary spirituality.
- To encourage students to express their considered views verbally and in writing and to develop their analytical and argumentative skills.
- To develop student academic research and presentation skills.

Discipline-focused objectives:

- To contextualise the study of contemporary spirituality within in the broader academic study of religions.

3 Rationale for assessment:

The tutorial assignments are designed to facilitate student reflection on the required readings, and to allow students to develop skills in critical reading and analysis necessary for essay writing and continued study.

The essays will encourage students to pursue their own interests in the subject through formulating their own research question(s) in an exploration of primary and secondary sources. In the essays, students will be exposed first-hand to the issues raised in scholarly analysis and will develop the knowledge and the skills necessary to critically evaluate scholarly studies of materials they have studied for themselves.

- 4 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.
- 5 Tutorials are held seven times during the course** and attendance at these is mandatory. Seminars deal with topics which complement the lecture programme and they provide an opportunity to discuss aspects of the course in a small group and develop the ability to contribute to discussions.
- 6 The course is internally assessed** by means of **two essays and seven tutorial assignments**. The first essay is due on **Friday 28 March 2008**, and is worth **30%** of the total marks for the course. The second (extended research) essay is worth **50%** of the course and is due on **Wednesday 28 May 2008**. The **seven tutorial assignments** are worth **20%** of the total marks.

The mandatory course requirements are as follows: Attendance at tutorials; the submission of the two essays, and the completion of all seven of the tutorial assignments.

- 7 Required text:** There is no set textbook. The *RELI 303 Course Reader* should be obtained from the Student Notes shop at a cost of approximately \$45.
- 8 Work-load (Recommendation of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences):** For 300-level 24 points one trimester courses, 16 hours per week are recommended. An average student should spend 15 hours per week for preparation, reading and writing in addition to attendance at lectures and tutorials.

[300 – level 1 trimester 24 points 16 hours]

- 9 Aegrotat regulations apply** to internally assessed courses. Students who cannot submit or complete the course requirements due to illness or some other impairment should visit the Faculty's Student Administration Office, or go to Student Health or Student Counselling who also have the application form and information about aegrotats. To be eligible for an aegrotat the affected items of assessment must be required to be submitted not earlier than three weeks before the day on which lectures cease for the last trimester of the course. Please see Aegrotat policy at <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/fhss/student-administration/aegrotats.aspx>

10 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

11 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

12 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

13 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.

14 **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.

- 15 **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.

- 16 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. **[NOTE: Handwritten work is not acceptable in this course under any circumstances]**
- 17 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.
- 18 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).
- 19 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
- 20 Supplementary Bibliographic Materials:** Available on 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
- 21 Evaluation:** This course will be evaluated by UTDC.

Lecture Programme

Lecture Programme and required readings: The required readings are essential background for the lectures/tutorials and should be completed **before each lecture**. Additional readings might be added during the semester. All readings are from the course reader or on Blackboard.

A. Contexts and perspectives for studying Spirituality

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 27 February | Introduction: What is Spirituality? |
| 5 March | Tools/Principles for the Study of Spirituality
Film Clips of Ken Wilber's Lectures |
| 12 March | Subjective Experience: Mystical Experience
Guest speaker from Victoria University |
| 19 March | Near-Death Experiences
Guest Speaker: Paul Morris |
| 26 March | Spirituality and Relationships |

B. Contemporary Practices

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 2 April | Gurus and Spiritual Emergency
Film on Gurus in India |
| 9 April | Course in Miracles
Film on the History of Course in Miracles
Guest Speaker (TBA) |

Mid term break 14 April – 27 April 2008

- 30 April** **Spiritual Healing**
Film on John of God
Guest Speaker (TBA)
- 7 May** **Spirituality in New Zealand: Sufism**
Film on Jalaluddin Rumi
Guest Speaker from the Wellington Turners
- 14 May** **“Shamanism”**
Speaker (TBA)
- 21 May** **Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous**
Speaker (TBA)
- 28 May** **Spirituality and Capitalism**

Tutorial Programme

The tutorials will cover the readings and lecture for the present week. There are **7 tutorial assignments** to be handed in at tutorials worth **20%** of the final grade. These are to be short, thoughtful responses to questions set for the required reading of the week and are to be approximately 2-3 pages each. In your response, give examples from the readings. Please review the format guidelines.

Week beginning 25 February – no tutorial

Tutorial questions for week beginning:

Week beginning 3 March

Pick one or two concepts/frameworks from Ken Wilber's writing use them to explain spirituality to your flatmate.

Week beginning 10 March

How did you respond to these excerpts of mystical experience? Were you attracted or repelled – did it remind you of any of your own experiences? This week I would like to read your sophisticated subjective responses to subjective material. Grading will be on the basis of the **realness** and authenticity of your response not on the content per se.

Week beginning 17 - March no tutorial

Week beginning 24 March

On the basis of Deida's writing you will be writing to your partner an intimate letter advising him/her other possibilities to be in relationship. This is not to be a rant but a sharing and one in which you will acknowledge your learning also. If there is another creative way to practically engage the material you can do that also.

Week beginning 31 March

It is "Mission Impossible" – that is you have been directed in a dream to go to India to find a guru and the next day a one-year roundtrip ticket to Madras arrives in your mailbox. Using the reading materials and the "guru sheet" handed out in class, do you think a guru is advisable for your spiritual development [though you will have to bracket this question once you get to India]? Once in India how will you know when you have met your guru/teacher?

Week beginning 7 April

What is the basic message of the *Course of Miracles* selection given in your reader? Is this an important message for you and/or others in the world today? Explain. If you do not resonate with the passage in the reader, you can pick any other passages from the *Course of Miracles* for your response. Please be sure to cite the passage carefully.

Mid term break 14 April – 27 April 2008**Week beginning 28 April**

John of God is coming to NZ in two weeks and you need to decide whether or not to go with your flatmate because she has an extra (free) ticket. It is an all-day event. On the basis of these two articles would you go? Why or why not? If you were designated for surgery would you have the entities do it? Why or why not?

Week beginning 5 March – no tutorial

Week beginning 12 May

Your flatmate wants to know what shamanism is. So do I. Please tell us your take on shamanism based on the readings. Write it in language your flatmate would understand, using suitable examples.

Week beginning 19 May – No tutorial

Week beginning 26 May – No tutorial

Essays

The essays should be a thoughtful treatment of a well-defined topic, based on your own thinking and research. The required readings may be used as sources for the essays but **you must consult other sources**. Guidance regarding the second research essay will be given in class.

Submission of essays and assignments

Essays and assignments must be placed in the locked assignment box located near the programme administrator's office (Hunter 318) and students must date and sign the essay register when submitting an essay. **No responsibility will be taken for assignments for which there is no record.** Students should keep a copy of all their work until it is returned.

Due dates:

- **The first essay is due by 4 pm Friday 28 March 2008.** It is to be a maximum of 3,000 words and should be a critical investigation of the academic explanations of the development of contemporary spirituality. Pick one aspect of contemporary spirituality that interests you, how it developed to where it is today and your analysis of how academics have explained the phenomenon. Please check the topic/approach with your lecturer or tutor.
- **The second essay is due by 2 pm Wednesday 28 May 2008.** The research essay is to be a maximum of 5,000 words and is to be an analysis of some aspect of contemporary spirituality (a movement, group, corpus of literature or particular teacher). The topic must be confirmed with the lecturer or tutor.

Penalties for late essays / assignments:

- 3 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.
- Unauthorised late essays will not receive comments
- Essays submitted late due to medical reasons must be given to the programme administrator accompanied by a doctor's certificate.

On Wikipedia –

Wikipedia's founder, Jimmy Wales, says he wants to get the message out to university students that they shouldn't use it for class projects or serious research. Mr. Wales says that he gets about ten e-mail messages a week from students who complain that Wikipedia has gotten them into academic hot water. **“They say, ‘Please help me. I got an F on my paper because I cited Wikipedia’”** and the information turned out to be wrong, he says. But he said he has no sympathy for their plight, noting that he thinks to himself: “For God sake, you're in the university; don't cite the encyclopedia.”

The sources cited in Wikipedia, however, can be of use – so you can use it as a bibliographic source to lead you to other sources, which you can then critically examine.

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:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

For guidance in essay writing and presentation of bibliographies, please refer to Religious Studies guidelines for essays, attached.

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.

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.