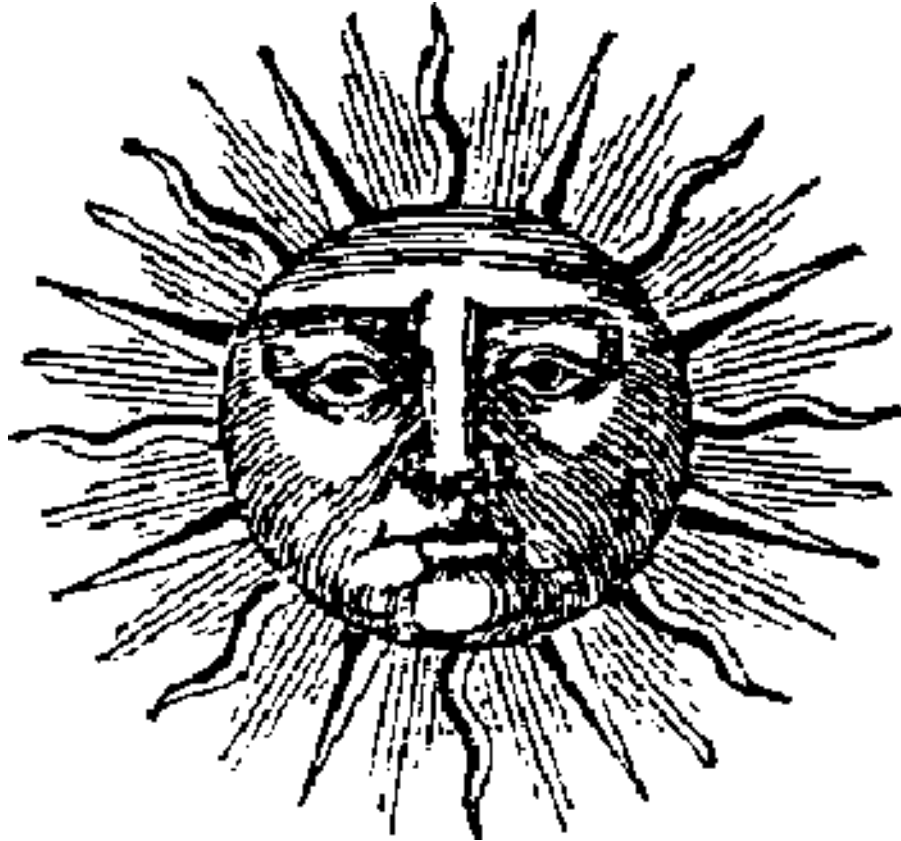


RELI 401

Methods and Issues in the Study of Religion



Religious Studies Programme

Te Tari Matai Whakapono

SCHOOL OF ART HISTORY, CLASSICS & RELIGIOUS STUDIES

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

2008

**RELI 401: THEORY AND METHOD
IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION**

Course co-ordinators: Dr Error! Reference source not found. HU 215, Tel: 463 6726

Dr. Anna Gade HU 217, Tel: 463-9739

Meeting time and location TBA

Religious Studies is in the Hunter building. The Programme Administrator, Alik Kalliabetsos, is in Hunter 318 (463 5299). **Notices regarding the course or any information on changes will be posted on the department notice board outside her office.**

Office Hours: The main office is open Monday - Thursday, 9.30am - 12:00 noon and 2:00 - 4:00pm.

Course outline

- 1 This course is designed to introduce Honours students to certain influential theories and debates that inform and characterize scholarly work in Religious Studies; a theme will be modernity and constructive/critical studies in religion. Our focus will be on analytical thinking and writing. Students will examine the arguments, in context, of influential theorists and researchers, both classical and contemporary. Assignments are designed to support students to comment creatively and comparatively, in writing and assessment, on these positions and debates.
- 2 **The course has five objectives:**
 - (1) to introduce students to foundational methodological and theoretical approaches to the study of religion and to think critically and comparatively about them.
 - (2) to introduce students to debates and contests surrounding these theories and methods and to be able to communicate their significance across contexts.
 - (3) to equip students with methodological and analytical skills necessary to undertake scholarly work in the study of religion and across wider fields of inter-disciplinary study.
 - (4) to cultivate excellent writing skills.
 - (5) to master key skills in intellectual collaboration, academic conversation, and presenting research.

3 **Required Readings:** A course Reader will be made available to students for purchase; other readings may be provided to students.

4 **The course is internally assessed by means of the following assignments:**

Three short analytical essays worth 25%, each to be approximately 2,500 words and to be submitted by:

- (i) 5 pm on Friday, April 4 2008 (Week 6, Trimester 1)
- (ii) 5 pm on Friday, May 30 2008 (Week 12, Trimester 1)
- (iii) 5 pm on Friday, August 15 2008 (Week 6, Trimester 2)

One final test worth 25%, given on [Friday, October 3], the last day of class, Trimester 2.

The **three essays** will address the themes discussed in each section of the course. These are analytical essays that work through the ideas and issues raised in the course. While additional research, beyond the readings assigned for class, is expected, these should not be research-heavy essays, but rather careful and considered analyses of important ideas and issues raised in the course of readings and seminars. For example, an essay might compare two theorists on a particular issue; examine one theorist's stance on an issue in some depth, with discussion of the implications of that stance; or apply a theory to specific material. These essays must go beyond presenting an author's views, though this will often be part of an essay.

The **final test** will cover the readings and discussions of the entire course, and will likely be comprised of a number of essay questions.

5 **Mandatory course requirements:** Attendance at 80% of seminars, the submission of 3 essays, and sitting the final test.

6 **Required Text** readings are in the Course Reader to be purchased from Student Notes. Any supplementary readings shall be provided by the Religious Studies Programme

7 **Work-load (Recommendation of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences):** For 400-level 30 points one trimester courses, 15 hours per week are recommended. An average student should spend 12 hours per week for preparation, reading and writing in addition to attendance at lectures and tutorials.

400 – level	2 trimester	15 hours	30 points
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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 (2007 Calendar, p. 96) 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 Evaluation: This course will be evaluated by **UTDC**.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

TRIMESTER 1

WEEK 1 (Week of Feb. 25). No class

WEEK 2 (Week of Mar. 3). Marx (Gade)

- Marx

WEEK 3 (Week of Mar. 10). Weber (Weiss and Gade)

- Weber

WEEK 4 (Week of Mar. 17). No class this week

WEEK 5 (Week of Mar. 24). Myth, Philology and Orientalism (Weiss)

- F. Max Muller
- Edward Said

WEEK 6 (Week of Mar. 31). Durkheim (Weiss and Gade)

- Durkheim

FIRST ESSAY IS DUE 5 pm on Friday, April 4 (Modernity and the Study of Religion)

WEEK 7 (Week of Apr. 7). Freud (Weiss)

- Freud

MID-TRIMESTER BREAK (14th April - 27th April 2008)

WEEK 8 (Week of April 28). Jung (Gade)

- Jung

WEEK 9 (Week of May 5). "Religious Experience" (Gade)

- James
- Otto

WEEK 10 (Week of May 12). Phenomenology and Religion (Gade)

- Eliade
- Tomoko Masuzawa

WEEK 11 (Week of May 19). Religion and Science (Bulbulia)

- Richard Dawkins

WEEK 12 (Week of May 26). No class

SECOND ESSAY IS DUE at 5 pm on Friday, May 30
(Knowledge and Experience in Religious Studies)

TRIMESTER 2

WEEK 1 (Week of Jul. 7). Ideology (Weiss)

- Marx and Engels
- Terry Eagleton

WEEK 2 (Week of Jul. 14). Critique (Weiss)

- Paul Rabinow
- Foucault

WEEK 3 (Week of Jul. 21). Genealogy (Weiss)

- Wilfred Cantwell Smith
- Talal Asad

WEEK 4 (Week of Jul. 28). Theology and Religious Studies (Marshall)

- Alister McGrath
- Ellen Charry
- Charles Marsh

WEEK 5 (Week of Aug. 4). Gender, Feminism and Religious Studies (Weiss and Gade)

- Judith Butler
- Rita Gross
- Carol P. Christ

WEEK 6 (Week of Aug. 11). No Class

THIRD ESSAY IS DUE at 5 pm on Friday, August 15

(Critical and Constructive Approaches in the Academic Study of Religion)

MID-TRIMESTER BREAK (18th August - 31st August 2008)

WEEK 7 (Week of Sept. 1). Anthropology and Religion: “Magic, Science, Religion”
(Gade)

- Stanley Tambiah
- E. E. Evans-Pritchard

WEEK 8 (Week of Sept. 8). Ritual Meaning (Weiss and Gade)

- Geertz
- Turner

WEEK 9 (Week of Sept. 15). Nationalism and Secularism (Weiss and Gade)

- Benedict Anderson
- Talal Asad

WEEK 10 (Week of Sept. 22). Globalised (World) Religion (Weiss and Gade)

- Arjun Appadurai

WEEK 11 (Week of Sept. 29). In-Class Test [Friday, October 3, regular class meeting time and place]

WEEK 12 (Week of Oct. 6). No Class

Essays and Assignments

1 **Essays and assignments** must be placed in the locked assignment box located near the administrator's office and students must date and sign the essay register to indicate submission. **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.**

2 **Due dates:**

5 pm on Friday, April 4 2008 (Week 6, Trimester 1)

5 pm on Friday, May 30 2008 (Week 12, Trimester 1)

5 pm on Friday, August 15 2008 (Week 6, Trimester 2)

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 due to medical reasons must be given to the programme 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. Plagiarism is **prohibited** at Victoria.

The University defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not.

'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea, even if it is presented in your own style. It includes material from books, journals or any other printed source, the work of other students or staff, information from the Internet, software programmes and other electronic material, designs and ideas. It also includes the organization or structuring of any such material.

Plagiarism is not worth the risk.

Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct (www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct) and may be penalized severely.

Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

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

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

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