



## RELI 106 Prayer Meditation Trance Ecstasy: A Study of the Techniques of Spiritual Transformation CRN 9163

### 1 Brief Overview and Important Information

- Lecture place: HU 323.
- Time: Mondays 12:00pm→1:50pm.
- Start date: Monday, 28 February.
- Tutorials: start the second week of term and occur every second week (that is, each week a short essay is due). Sign up outside HU 318.
- Coordinator: Dr. Joseph Bulbulia  
email: [joseph.bulbulia@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:joseph.bulbulia@vuw.ac.nz)  
tel: 463 5043  
office HU 322.  
Office hours Monday 2pm→3pm and by appointment.
- A website of materials related to RELI 106 is being maintained on Blackboard <http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>. You are expected to visit the course site every week.<sup>1</sup>
- All readings can be found as pdf documents under *Course Materials* on Blackboard.
- There is no course reader for this course.
- All work must be submitted through Blackboard under 'Course Resources'.
- Students are responsible for keeping electronic copies of all submitted work.
- Students are responsible for checking that their work has been uploaded to Blackboard. (If in doubt, contact your tutor).
- The names & email of your tutors can be found on Blackboard under 'Communications' → 'Contacts'.
- This paper will be assessed by a five short essays of about 900 words each, and a final research essay of about 2,500 words. More information about these assessments can be found on Blackboard.
- Late response papers and final research essays will receive a .05% deduction from the total course mark for each working day the submission is late. (Example: If your essay is two days late you will lose 1% off your final course mark).

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<sup>1</sup>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, 463-5050 (extension 5050 from VUW phones) or by email [scs-help@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:scs-help@vuw.ac.nz)

- Late response essays and final research essays will not receive written feedback.
- Attendance at lecture is required.
- To pass, students must attend at least three tutorials, unless excused.
- To pass, students must submit at least three short response papers and submit the final research essay.

### **Trimester dates**

Teaching dates: 28 February→3 June 2011

Mid-trimester break: 18 April→1 May 2011

Study week: 6 June→ 10 June 2011

Examination/Assessment period: 10 June→2 July 2011

### **Course delivery**

The course also consists of:

- Lecturers and tutorials.
- Mandatory readings.
- Five response essay of about 900 words.
- A final research essay of about 2,500 words.

### **Content**

This paper explores religion through the things that people do. It considers how spiritual practices –rituals, bodily postures, song, altered states of consciousness, and music– are used to shape individual and collective experience. We also examine debates over methods appropriate to the study of religion.

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to religion as an important and fascinating human phenomenon. It is also an introduction to some of the prominent methods that define the discipline of religious studies.

### **Learning objectives**

1. **Knowledge of discipline:** to introduce research methodologies in the academic study of religion.
2. **General knowledge:** to broaden perspectives about the influences of sacred cultures on how we value, remember, hope, and interact.
3. **Critical thinking:** to enable a better appreciation of the perspectives of others, and to more effectively persuade others of one's own perspective.
4. **Writing and verbal expression:** to promote clear writing and speaking.
5. **Creative thought:** to foster creativity and imagination.

### **Communication of additional information**

Additional information or information on changes will be conveyed to students by Blackboard.

Because information about the course will change from time-to-time, students are expected to check Blackboard for updates at least once a week.

Urgent updates will be sent through Email.

### **Withdraw dates**

Information on withdrawing from courses and refunds may be found at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawlsrefunds.aspx>

### **Workloads**

- Lectures and tutorials: Three hours per week.
- Readings: five hours per week.
- Writing assignments: Ten hours per week.

## **2 Assessment Requirements**

### **Due dates for Assessments**

#### **Short Essay Due Dates**

1. March 11: 10%
2. March 25: 10%
3. April 15: 10%
4. May 6 : 10%
5. May 20: 10%

#### **Final Research Essay Due Date**

- June 17 by 5pm: 50%

#### **Final Date For The Submission of All Work**

- No work may be submitted after 5pm June 27, 2011.

### **Response essays**

Students are assigned five response essays. Each essay should be no more than 1000 words and no fewer than 800 words. Any essay that is less than 600 words or more than 1200 words will not be assessed.

Full instructions and templates are available on Blackboard under 'course resources'.

Each response essay will be worth 10% of the final mark mark.

#### **Marking criteria for response essays**

- 33.3% for clarity.
- 33.3% for critical engagement.
- 33.4% for creativity.

## **Final Essay**

Students are assigned a **Research Essay**. Instructions for this essay appear on **Blackboard**. The research essay counts for 50% of your final mark.

The learning objectives of the research essay:

1. The essay gives you the opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the materials presented in the course.
2. It also gives you the chance to creatively engage with new data, and to link together ideas considered in separate weeks of the course.

## **Marking criteria for the final research essay**

- 33.3% for clarity.
- 33.3% for critical engagement.
- 33.4% for creativity.

## **Length of the final research essay**

Your final research essay should be about 2500 words, including footnotes and bibliography.

## **Due date for the final research essay**

Your final research essay is due by 5pm on 17 June, 2010.

## **Penalties**

- Late work will receive a .05% deduction from the total course mark for each working day the submission is overdue, unless the late work is excused.
- Late final essays will not receive written feedback, unless the late work is excused.
- Any request for an exemption must be made by email to the course coordinator, Joseph.Bulbulia@vuw.ac.nz, with supporting documentation (scanned as .rtf, .doc, or .pdf attachments). A copy of this request must be also be sent to the department administrator, Aliko.Kalliabetsos@vuw.ac.nz.
- It is every student's responsibility to keep an electronic copy of all submitted work.
- Only assessments received to Blackboard will be marked, no exceptions.
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all submissions have been successfully uploaded to submissions. Check with your tutor or the course coordinator if you are uncertain.
- An aegrotat pass will normally be approved only when a candidate has completed at least 30% of the course assessment.

## **Final Date For The Submission of All Work**

- No work may be submitted after 5pm June 27.

### **Minimum requirements for a passing final mark in RELI 106**

The minimum requirements to gain a passing final mark in this course:

1. Submit at least three short response essays.
2. Submit a final research essay.
3. Attend at least three tutorials.

## **3 The Lecture Schedule**

Essential texts are given in this outline under the headings 'Required readings' and 'Recommended readings'. These can be found on **Blackboard**, or where appropriate, by a url link next to the title of the reading in the schedule, below.

### **February 28: Methods appropriate to understanding religious experience: perspectives and debates.**

Lecturer: Joseph Bulbulia

No required reading:

Recommended readings:

- [Phillips and Lawton, 2004] pp.32–41
- [James, 1928] Chapters XVI and XVII  
Find reading here: <http://www.psywww.com/psyrelig/james/toc.htm>

### **March 7: Collective Rituals/Functionalism**

Lecturer: Joseph Bulbulia

Required reading:

- [Durkheim, 1912] 'Introduction'. pp.1–20.
- [Durkheim, 1912] 'Definition of Religious Phenomena and of Religion'. pp.23–47.

Recommended reading:

- [Renfrew, 2008] pp.:2041–2047.
- [Haidt et al., 2008] pp.S153–S156.

### **March 14: Yoga/Cultural Anthropology**

Lecturer: Rick Weiss

Required reading:

- [Stoler-Miller, 1996] pp.ix–35.
- [Geertz, 1973] pp.3–30.
- [Eliade, 1969] pp.xii–xxii.

(26 March, paper due)

### **March 21: Tantra/Comparative Anthropology**

Lecturer: Rick Weiss

Required reading:

- [Fields, 2001] pp.139–166.
- [Said, 1979] pp.1–28.

### **March 28: Meditation//History**

Lecturer: Michael Radich

Required reading:

- [Bhikkhu, 1995b]pp.145-155. [(Note in the Course Outline that the above reading includes an iteration of the canonical description of the charnel-ground contemplation, pp. 148–149.)]
- [Bhikkhu, 1995a] pp.899–902.
- [Gómez, 1995] pp.318–327.

### **April 4: Prayer/Neuroscience**

Lecturer: Joseph Bulbulia

Required reading:

- [Schjoedt et al., 2009]pp.199–207.

Recommended reading:

- [Vaitl et al., 2005] pp.98–127.
- [Taber and Hurley, 2007] pp.iv–4.
- [Pahnke and Richards, 1966] pp.175–208.

### **April 11: Postures/Embodied Mind**

Lecturer hour 1: Art Buehler; hour 2: Joseph Bulbulia

Required reading:

- [Goodman, 1990]pp.9-26; pp.42-50; pp.215–223.

Recommended reading:

- [Blanke and Metzinger, 2009]pp.7–13.
- [Deeley, 2003]pp.161–167.

### **May 2: Christian Song /Political History**

Lecturer: Geoff Troughton

Required reading:

- [Kirk-Duggan, 2007] pp.317–342.

Recommended reading:

- [Wiltermuth and Heath, 2008] pp.1–5.

### **May 9: Healing Dance/Empathetic Social Science**

Lecturer: Joseph Bulbulia

Required reading:

- [Katz, 1984] 'Kung Hunter-Gatherers' & 'The Kung Approach to Healing'. pp.13–57.

Recommended Reading:

- [Sacks, 2008] 'A Bolt From The Blue. Musicophilia'. pp. 3–20.

### **May 16: Sacrifice/Scapegoat Theory**

Lecturer: Joseph Bulbulia

Required reading:

- [Carrasco, 1990] pp.58–91.
- [Girard, 1997] pp.73–105.

### **May 23: Technology/Philosophy**

Lecturer: Joseph Bulbulia

Required reading:

- [Bostrom, b] <http://transhumanism.org/index.php/WTA/faq/>
- [Bostrom, a] <http://www.nickbostrom.com/ethics/dignity.html>

### **June 17: Final Research Essay Due**

## **4 More information**

### **Class representative**

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, to the Course Coordinator, and to the class. The class representative will provide a communication channel to the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

### **Aegrotat regulations**

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 and here: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/timetables/aegrotat.aspx>

### **Academic integrity and plagiarism**

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as 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, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

### **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 compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

### **Where to find more detailed information**

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study). Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress). Most statutes and policies are available at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy), except qualification statutes, which are available via the Calendar webpage at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx) (See: Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcacademic](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic).

### **Acknowledgements**

The image on page 1 is called 'Mary Magdalen in Ecstasy', and was painted by the Italian master Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio in 1606. The image is in the public domain, and can be accessed here: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary\\_Magdalen\\_in\\_Ecstasy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Magdalen_in_Ecstasy)

### **References**

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