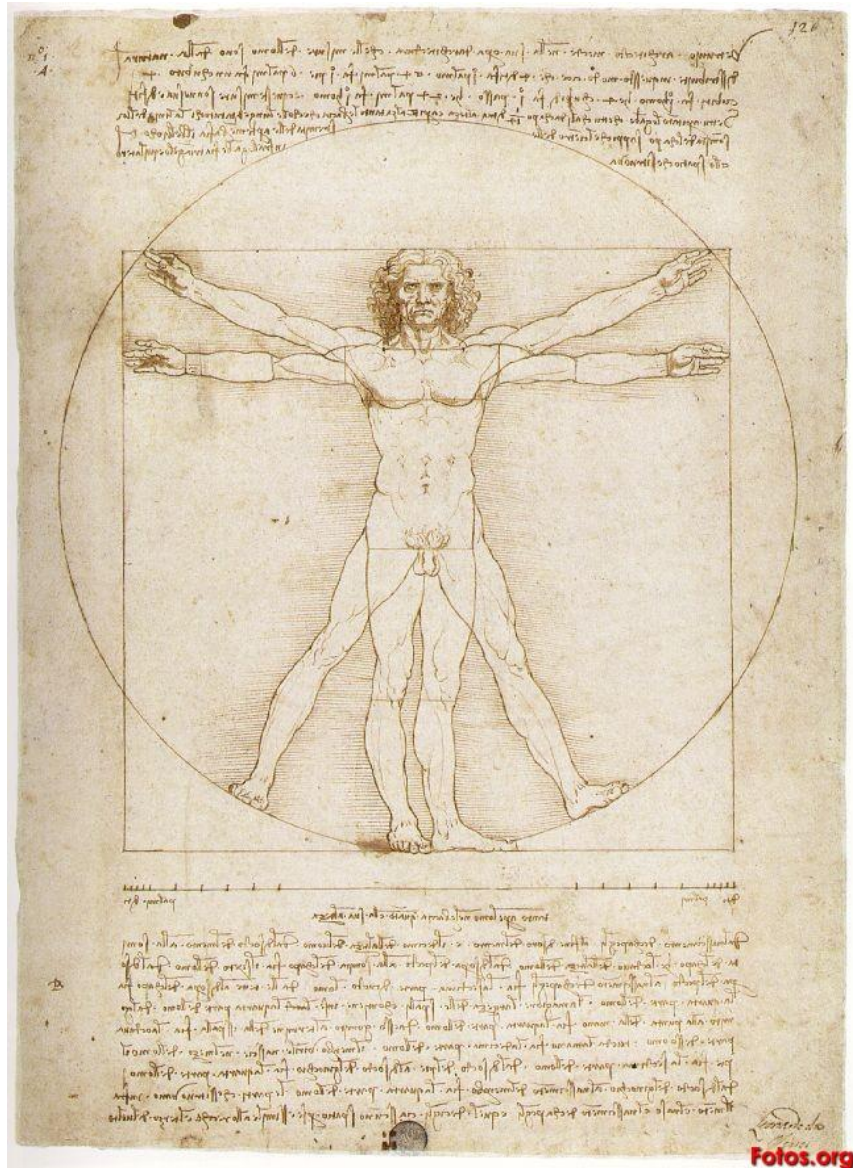


## RELI 401

# Methods and Issues in the Study of Religion



**RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**SCHOOL OF ART HISTORY, CLASSICS & RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON**

**5 March – 26 October, 2012**

# RELI 401

## Methods and Issues in the Study of Religion

<b>Course co-ordinators:</b>	Rick Weiss, HU215; 463 6726 <a href="mailto:rick.weiss@vuw.ac.nz">rick.weiss@vuw.ac.nz</a> ; Joe Bulbulia, HU322; 463 5043 <a href="mailto:joseph.bulbulia@vuw.ac.nz">joseph.bulbulia@vuw.ac.nz</a>
<b>When and where</b>	HU 320 Monday 10-11.50
<b>Course dates:</b>	5 March to 26 October, 2012
<b>Teaching dates:</b>	5 March to 8 June 2012; 16 July to 19 October 2012
<b>Mid-trimester breaks:</b>	6 – 22 April 2012; 27 August – 7 September 2012
<b>Withdrawal dates:</b>	Information on withdrawals and refunds is at <a href="http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx">http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx</a>

**Religious Studies** is in the Hunter Building. The programme administrator, Alikali Kalliabetsos, is in room 318 (ext 5299). Notices regarding the course or any information on changes will be posted on the Department Notice Board adjacent to her office.

**Office Hours:** The main office is open Monday – Friday, 9.30 am – 12:00 noon, and 2:30 - 3.30 pm. You can arrange to meet with the class co-ordinators by appointment.

A website of materials related to RELI 401 is being maintained in Blackboard. You are expected to visit the course site from time to time: <http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>.

### **This course is taught in two parts.**

**The first part is taught by Dr. Rick Weiss from 5 March to 29 June 2012;**

**The second part is taught by Dr Joseph Bulbulia from 16 July – 26 October 2012.**

**Work for the first part must be handed in for final assessment by 29 June 2012;**

**Work for the second part must be handed in for final assessment by 26 October 2012.**

- 1. Course Prescription**  
This course introduces students to the major contemporary theories of religion and the current methodologies employed by scholars in the field.
- 2. Course overview**  
Scholars of religion investigate varieties of religious phenomena, but how should they define the targets of their investigations? What form should such investigations take and what knowledge can they offer? The discipline of religious studies has been characterised by longstanding debates about the methodologies and theories appropriate to the field. This course offers a graduate-level introduction to these debates by encouraging students to critically and comparatively evaluate prominent positions, past and present. The aim is to provide students with a basic understanding of the diversity of methods and theories defended by practitioners of the discipline. Another purpose is

to raise student awareness about the methodologies and theories that frame their own scholarship, so that they may improve their Honours coursework. Finally, the course hopes to cultivate critical and creative writing skills, and to foster the subtle art of persuading audiences who do not already agree.

### 3. **Course learning 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 by promoting clear, well-structured, critical and creative writing.

### 4. **Course content**

The course content consists of readings of important works in the field of religious studies. There will be a balance between classic, seminal writings and contemporary works that continue to redefine our field.

### 5. **This course is delivered through regular seminars.**

The seminar programme may be varied from time to time. As much notice as possible will be given when changes occur and, a revised programme will be issued.

### 6. **Assessment for the course** is by means of four written assignments.

#### **Assessment and deadlines are as follows:**

Four **essays** of about 2,500 words each, on topics related to the theorists, readings, and issues discussed in the preceding section of the course. Each essay is worth 25% of the final mark.

All work must be submitted to Blackboard.

Students are responsible for keeping copies of all submitted work.

Students are responsible for assuring that their work has been successfully uploaded to Blackboard.

**Rationale for assessment:** The essays allow students to apply their analytical skills through crucial engagement with important theoretical works. Essays demonstrate the students' level of proficiency in reading, understanding, and critiquing scholarly writing. They develop the skills of critical reading, creative analysis, constructing an argument, and organizing material necessary for continued study in the area.

### 7. **Due Dates**

The **final deadline** for handing in work for assessment for essays 1 and 2 is **29 June 2012**; the **final deadline** for essays 3 and 4 is **October 26, 2012**. In addition, there will be dues dates for drafts prior to the final deadline. Students must meet these draft deadlines in order to receive feedback on their essay that they can use for revision.

**8. Work-load (Recommendation of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences):**  
The total expected workload for this course is 300 hours spread evenly over the whole year.

**9. Mandatory course requirements**

To gain a pass in this course, each student must:

1. Submit and pass four response essays.
2. Attend and participate in at least six seminars in Trimester 1 and least six seminars in Trimester 2.

**10. Required text** There is no set textbook for both parts of the course. Readings shall be available via Blackboard or copies may be provided by the Religious Studies Programme at a student's request at cost.

**11. 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
- Submitting work already submitted for another Victoria course

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>

**12. 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.

**13. 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/avcademic](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcademic)

**14. 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.

**15. Evaluation:** This course will be evaluated by **UTDC**.

# ***Seminar Programme***

All readings can be found as PDF documents under *Course Resources* on Blackboard, or by a URL link in the seminar outline below. There is no reader for this course.

## **Trimester 1**

### **Section 1: Society and Religion**

**Seminar 1 (March 8):** Introduction; Durkheim's sociology of religion

**Seminar 2 (March 15):** Secularisation

**Seminar 3 (March 22):** Religion: Liberation or Repression?

**Seminar 4 (March 29):** Religion and modern media

**Week 5 (April 5):** Essay writing

**Essay 1 draft due April 13.**

### **Mid-term break**

### **Section 2: Critical and Historical Approaches to Religion**

**Seminar 5 (April 26):** Karl Marx: Religion and Ideology

**Seminar 6 (May 3):** Friedrich Nietzsche

**Seminar 7 (May 10):** Michel Foucault: Religion and Power

**Seminar 8 (May 17):** Religion and the Public Sphere

**Weeks 10-12:** Essay writing!

**Essay 2 draft due June 1.**

**Essays 1 and 2, final versions, due June 29.**

## **Trimester 2**

### **Section 3: Evolutionary Models of Religion**

**Seminar 9 (19 July):** C. Darwin: Evolution and Religion

**Seminar 10 (20 July):** D.S. Wilson: Cultural Evolution and Religion

**Seminar 11(July 26):** D.P. Johnson: Evolutionary Psychology of Religion

**Seminar 12(July 27):** J.Bulbulia: Cultural Evolutionary Psychology of Religion

WEEK OFF: August 2

**Draft Essay 3 due: August 24**

**Section 4: Psychological Models of Religion**

**Seminar 13 (August 9):** W. James: Experiential Psychology

**Seminar 14 (August 10):** U. Schjoedt: Neuroscience

**Seminar 15 (August 16):** S. Freud: Social Functionalist Psychology

**Seminar 16 (August 17):** A. Geertz: Biofunctional Cognitive Science

WEEK OFF: August 24

**Draft Essay 4 due October 1**

**Final Essay 3 & Final Essay 4 Due: October 26.**

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

### What and when to cite

In order to avoid plagiarism (which is serious even when inadvertent), you **MUST** cite your sources in ALL cases. This means you should basically do two things:

(1) In all cases where you use the exact words of a source, however few (including short phrases, rather than whole sentences), you must use **quote marks** around all words that are not yours; and

(2) You should **footnote** your source for all **direct quotes** (see (1)), **facts, ideas, ways of approaching your problem, sources of inspiration**, etc. – in other words, you should **acknowledge your source in absolutely ALL cases** where your source is anything other than your own mind. Err on the side of fastidiousness. Where necessary, you can use the footnote to explain more exactly what you owe to the source in question ("My approach to this question is modelled on that found in . . . "; "The order of treatment in the following is derived from . . ." etc.).

In addition, it is good practice to **phrase your writing** in the body of your essay so that your **debts to your sources are clear**, where possible. Use phrases such as, "According to Smith," "Following Scrimgeour, we might say that . . ." "Worple informs us that . . ." "Lockhart contends that . . ." "Bagshot remarks insightfully that . . ." "Binns has shown that . . ." etc.

### How to cite

It is mandatory to use a correct citation style in academic writing. The Programme standard in Religious Studies at VUW is the version of Chicago Style for the Humanities. The only exceptions to this Programme standard will be the correct and consistent use of an alternative, standard style **when expressly permitted by your course coordinator**.

Chicago Humanities style is 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 at Call No. Z253 C532 15ed (ask at the Reference desk). However, the following information should be sufficient for most of your basic needs.

Note that the **citation style differs for a footnote and for the bibliography** at the end of your essay. For each type of source, we have listed each example in both forms. Each example footnote contains a sample page number so you can be sure how to include the number of the page cited in your footnote.

Note also that as with all academic citation style conventions, every detail of the formatting for Chicago style is fixed. You must thus ensure you **follow the examples below in every detail**: order, punctuation, formatting (especially italics), spacing and so on.

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 more 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.

### **Chapter or article in edited multi-author volume**

#### **Footnote:**

James P. McDermott, "Karma and Rebirth in Early Buddhism," in *Karma and Rebirth in Indian Classical Traditions*, ed. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 171.

#### **Bibliography:**

McDermott, James P. "Karma and Rebirth in Early Buddhism." In *Karma and Rebirth in Indian Classical Traditions*, ed. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, 165-192. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.

### **Translated book**

#### **Footnote**

Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, trans. by W. D. Robson-Scott (New York: H. Liveright, 1928), 28.

#### **Bibliography**

Freud, Sigmund. *The Future of an Illusion*. Translated by W. D. Robson-Scott. New York: H. Liveright, 1928.

### **Journal article – single author**

#### **Footnote:**

Richard King, "Is 'Buddha-Nature' Buddhist? Doctrinal Tensions in the *Śrīmālā Sūtra* – An Early Tathāgatagarbha Text," *Numen* 42 (1995): 12.

#### **Bibliography:**

King, Richard. "Is 'Buddha-Nature' Buddhist? Doctrinal Tensions in the *Śrīmālā Sūtra* – An Early Tathāgatagarbha Text." *Numen* 42 (1995): 1-20.

### **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, no. 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, no. 1 (1978): 5-27.

### **Web site**

#### **Footnote:**

Paul Kingsbury, "Inducing a Chronology of the Pali Canon," <http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~kingsbur/inducing.pdf> (accessed March 28, 2008).

#### **Bibliography:**

Kingsbury, Paul. "Inducing a Chronology of the Pali Canon." <http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~kingsbur/inducing.pdf> (accessed March 28, 2008).

### **Reference work (e.g. encyclopaedia or dictionary)**

#### **Footnote:**

*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "Sufism."

#### **Footnote:**

*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Apophatic."

The abbreviation "s.v." is for the Latin *sub verbo* ("under the word").

Reference works are usually not included in the bibliography.

### **Sacred texts**

Standard citation convention is set for the sacred texts of each major tradition. You must be sure to cite sacred texts in the correct format. Unless your lecturer for a specific course states otherwise (e.g. if conformity to a more complex standard is required for courses specialising in a particular tradition), the following conventions will apply.

#### **The Bible**

In quoting the Bible, you should use in-text citation (i.e. give your source in brackets in the body of your text, rather than using a footnote). NOTE that the Bible and the Qur'an are the only exceptions to the general rule AGAINST in-text citation in this Chicago Humanities style. (You should otherwise ALWAYS use footnotes, not in-text citation.)

The Bible is cited by book, chapter and verse. For example:

. . . as it says in the Bible (1 Kgs 2:7).

Note that books of the Bible are abbreviated according to standard abbreviations. A list of abbreviations should usually be available in the edition of the Bible you are using.

Note also that the punctuation mark comes *after* the close of the parentheses. This is also the case for the full stop in a direct quote:

". . . Absolom thy brother" (1 Kgs 2:7).

When citing multiple passages, list the abbreviated title of each *new* biblical book followed by the chapter number and colon, with all verses in that chapter separated by a comma and space. A semicolon should separate references to subsequent chapters or books. Do not include the conjunction "and" or an ampersand ("&") before the last citation. List passages in canonical and numerical order. For example:

. . . as it says in the Bible (Matt 2:3; 3:4–6; 4:3, 7; Luke 3:6, 8; 12:2, 5).

It is preferable, unless you are discussing differences of translation and interpretation, to use a single version of the Bible throughout a piece of work. In this case, you can indicate that fact by a note with your first citation, and thereafter omit mention of the version:

#### **Footnote:**

Matt. 20:4-9. In this essay, all biblical quotations are from the *New Revised Standard Version* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1989).

Where you have to refer to more than one version of the Bible, you can indicate the different versions in footnotes, or by a set of abbreviations that you establish in a footnote early in the essay.

List the versions of the Bible you use in your bibliography. They should appear alphabetically according to title. For example:

*The New Oxford Annotated Bible: The Holy Bible*. Edited by Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

This item would be listed alphabetically under "New".

### **The Qur'an**

The name of the text is best written, "Qur'an."

In quoting the Qur'an, you should use in-text citation (i.e. give your source in brackets in the body of your text, rather than using a footnote). NOTE that the Qur'an and the Bible are the only exceptions to the general rule AGAINST in-text citation in this Chicago Humanities style. (You should otherwise ALWAYS use footnotes, not in-text citation.)

When quoting the Qur'an, give the abbreviation "Q.", then cite the number of the *sura* (chapter), then the number(s) of the *ayat* (verse). For example:

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth...." (Q. 24:35).

"Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds; The Compassionate, the Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment" (Q. 1:2-4).

State in the first footnote what "translation" edition is being used for the entire document. For example:

#### **Footnote:**

In this essay, all citations from the Qur'an will be taken from *An Interpretation of the Qur'an: English Translations of the Meaning (Bilingual Edition)*, trans. Majid Fakhry (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

If you use more than one source for Qur'anic text in your essay, then you need to provide a separate, footnoted reference to each citation, specifying which version that citation is from.

In your bibliography, list each "translation" edition of the Qur'an you use alphabetically under its title. For example:

#### **Bibliography:**

*An Interpretation of the Qur'an: English Translations of the Meaning (Bilingual Edition)*. Translated by Majid Fakhry. New York: New York University Press, 2000.

This item would be listed alphabetically under "Interpretation".

### **Buddhist and Indian texts**

For undergraduate purposes, simply cite the English translation you are using as if it is an ordinary translated book. However, note that many Indian or Buddhist texts you will cite are compilations of multiple texts into

a single volume. In such cases, you must also include the name of the text in your footnote citation. The name given to the text in English by the translator will suffice; but include the name in the original language also if it is easily accessible. For example:

**Footnote:**

"The Buddha's Last Days" (*Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*), in *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, trans. Maurice Walshe (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 232.

In your bibliography, list only the whole translated works to which you refer in your essay, according to the usual format. In other words, if you cite more than one *sutta* etc. from a single volume, you need not list every individual text, but just the volume. For example:

**Bibliography:**

Walshe, Maurice, trans. *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995.

**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** (with the sole exceptions of passages from the Bible or the Qur'an), 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,<sup>1</sup> but wrong to write it like this<sup>2</sup>. One of the advantages of superscript numbered footnoting is that it allows you to make tangential comments, as in this example.<sup>3</sup>

When you refer to the same source several times in a row, you can use "Ibid." and the page number for all subsequent notes after the first.<sup>4</sup> If you are referring to the same page number in several successive notes, then "Ibid." alone is sufficient.<sup>5</sup>

If you cite source A, then cite one or more other sources,<sup>6</sup> and then return to source A,<sup>7</sup> it is best to repeat only the author's name,<sup>8</sup> a shortened title, and the page number cited,<sup>9</sup> rather than to repeat the full citation. See the footnotes attached to this paragraph (notes 6-9) for examples.

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<sup>1</sup> Random correct placed footnote.

<sup>2</sup> Random incorrectly placed footnote.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 36. [This means the reference is to the same source, but with a different page number.]

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. [This means page 36, exactly like the preceding footnote.]

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

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

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.

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<sup>8</sup> Madan, *Non-Renunciation*, 38-40.

<sup>9</sup> Robinson and Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion*, 115.