



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

School of Art History, Classics and Religious Studies

Religious Studies

RELI 401 Methods and Issues in the Study of Religion

30 POINTS

TRIMESTER 1 2015

Trimester dates: 2 March to 1 July 2015
Teaching dates: 2 March to 5 June 2015
Easter/Mid-trimester break: 3–19 April 2015

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds. If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats.

Class times and locations

Seminar: Time: tba
Place KP14/102

Names and contact details

Course coordinator: Rick Weiss, KP14 205; 463 6726 rick.weiss@vuw.ac.nz

Religious Studies is at 14 Kelburn Parade. The programme administrator, Aliko Kalliabetsos, is in room 203 (463 5299, aliko.kalliabetsos@vuw.ac.nz). Notices regarding the course or any information on changes will be posted on the Notice Board near 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 coordinator by appointment.

Communication of additional information

A website of materials related to RELI 401 is being maintained in Blackboard. All readings will be posted on Blackboard: <http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>.

Course Prescription

Scholars of religion investigate religious phenomena, but what form should such investigations take? Religious studies is characterised by long-standing debates about the methodologies and theories appropriate to the discipline. This course offers students a graduate-level introduction to such debates by encouraging critical and comparative evaluations of prominent positions.

Course Content

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.

This course provides and graduate-level introduction to methods and theories in the scholarly study of religions. Students will reflect critically on scholarly readings, and on the ideas raised by them, in the seminar discussions and in the required essays.

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. There is also a segment on methodology. All readings are available on Blackboard.

Course learning objectives

Students who pass this course will be able to:

1. understand foundational methodological and theoretical approaches to the study of religion, and be able to think critically and comparatively about them
2. engage with debates and contests surrounding these theories and methods and be able to communicate their significance across contexts
3. use methodological and analytical skills necessary to undertake scholarly work in the study of religion and across wider fields of inter-disciplinary study
4. demonstrate excellent writing skills evidenced by clear, well-structured, critical and creative writing.

Teaching format

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.

Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

1. attend at least 80% of seminars
2. submit all stipulated pieces of assessment
3. give one oral presentation.

Workload

The total expected workload for this course is 300 hours spread evenly over the whole trimester.

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)
1	Two 500-word essay proposals (worth 10% of the final mark each) Recommended average time spent on this task: 60 hours	20%	1, 2,3, 4
2	One oral presentation (15-20 minutes long) Recommended average time spent on this task: 30 hours	10%	1,2
3	Two 3,500-word essays (worth 35% of the final mark each) Recommended average time spent on this task: 200 hours	70%	1, 2,3, 4

Due Dates

Deadlines for handing in work for assessment:

Oral presentations Tuesday, 31 March, 2015

Essay 1 proposal due Monday, 23 March, 2015

Essay 2 proposal due Monday, 11 May, 2015

Final copies of both essays due Friday June 19, 2015

Rationale for assessment

The essays allow students to apply their analytical skills through critical 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.

Submission of work

Essays must be submitted to blackboard.

Students are responsible for keeping copies of all submitted work.

Feedback

Within 2 weeks of submission of each piece of assessment

Extensions and penalties

Extensions

Extensions will be granted for medical excuses only.

Penalties

Late work will receive verbal feedback only (but not written feedback).

Set text

Readings shall be available via Blackboard or copies may be provided by the Religious Studies Programme at a student's request at cost.

Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

Student feedback

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz