



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 2016

Key dates

Trimester dates: 29 February to 29 June 2016

Easter break: 24–30 March 2016

Mid-trimester break: 25 April to 1 May 2016

Final submission date: 3 June 2016

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds.

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test in the last three weeks of teaching, or an examination, it may instead be possible to apply for an aegrotat (refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats).

Class times and locations

Seminars: Wednesday 10:00 – 12:50 KP 14 102

Names and contact details

Coordinator: Professor Paul Morris paul.morris@vuw.ac.nz KP14/204; 463 5037

Administrator: Aliko Kalliabetsos aliki.kalliabetsos@vuw.ac.nz KP14/203; 463 5299

The Religious Studies office is open Monday – Friday, 9:30 – 12:00 noon and 2:30 – 3:30. You can arrange to meet with Professor Morris by appointment.

Communication of additional information

Additional information on any changes or notices regarding the course will be conveyed to students, through Blackboard. Students who do not use their assigned student.vuw.ac.nz email addresses should ensure that ITS has an up-to-date email address, and that they check this address regularly.

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 a 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 (CLOs)

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 in different 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 written and oral skills evidenced by clear, well-structured, critical and creative writing and presentations.

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.

Workload

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

Assessment

RELI 401 is internally assessed by means of essays, tutorial assignments/reading responses and in class test weighted as follows:

Assessment and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due dates
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	Proposal 1 - April 22, 2016 Proposal 2 – May 22, 2016
2	One oral presentation (15-20 minutes long) Recommended average time spent on this task: 30 hours	10%	1,2	May 18 2016
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	Essay 1 – 6 May, 2016. Essay 2 – 3 June, 2016

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.

Due Dates

Deadlines for handing in work for assessment

Oral presentations Wednesday May 18, 2016

Essay 1: proposal due Friday, April 22, 2016, and **final essay** by Friday, May 6, 2016.

Essay 2: proposal due Friday, May 22, 2016, and **final essay** by Friday June 3, 2016.

Submission and return of work

Essays are to be submitted electronically and hard copies must be submitted to the essay box outside the Religious Studies office, KP14/203. Both methods of submission are mandatory. Marked essays shall be returned within 2 weeks of submission and may be collected from the Religious Studies office, KP14/203.

Extensions and penalties

Extensions

An extension (with no penalty) will be considered on the grounds of exceptional personal circumstances or workload pressure such as having three or four major pieces of work due in a short period. (Please see the Student Workload Policy).

Penalties

2% per 24 hours will be deducted for late essays. Essays submitted late due to medical reasons must be given to the programme administrator accompanied by a doctor's certificate.

Set texts

All readings are available on BlackBoard

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.

Student feedback

All student feedback from course evaluations is considered,
This course will be evaluated by CAD.

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
- 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
- Special passes: refer to the *Assessment Handbook*, at www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf
- 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
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Terms and conditions: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- 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