

**RELI 221**

**RELIGION AND DISENCHANTMENT:  
POLITICS, POWER AND THE SACRED**

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

**VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON**

**2006**

# RELI 221

## RELIGION AND DISENCHANTMENT: POLITICS, POWER AND THE SACRED

*Course co-ordinator:* Marion Maddox, HU 319, Ph: 463 5590  
*Tutor:* Wil Hoverd  
*Where and when:* Lectures: HM 003  
Wednesday 1:10 -3:00pm  
*Tutorials:* times and place tba

Religious Studies is in the Hunter Building. The programme administrator, Alik Kalliabetsos, is in room HU 318. Her telephone number is 463 5299, and email address is [aliki.kalliabetsos@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:aliki.kalliabetsos@vuw.ac.nz)

Notices regarding the course or any information on changes will be posted on the notice board outside her office and on Blackboard.

**Office Hours:** The main office is open Monday – Friday, 9.30am – 12:00 and 2:30 – 3.30 pm. You can arrange to meet with Dr Maddox by appointment.

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### *Course outline*

- 1 Modern, Western societies are often called ‘post-Christian’. Especially since the industrial revolution, Christianity’s significance has undergone an accelerating decline. Fewer people go to church; religious institutions are accorded less public authority; the state operates with increasing independence from the churches which once gave it legitimacy. Once, Western societies were regularly spoken of as ‘Christian’; but today, at many levels, *post-Christian* is more accurate. The usual term for this process is secularisation.

At the same time, though, we can only understand the particular form that secularisation takes in Western societies by recognising that it emerges from Christian roots. Such societies are *post-Christian* (rather than, for example, post-Buddhist or post-Muslim) because many of their cultural assumptions are grounded in Christian tradition.

**RELI 221** explores secularism, the defining religious pattern of modern, Western societies. Rather than seeing it as merely the absence of religion, we analyse secularism as a religious phenomenon by examining its relationship to the philosophical, theological, political and social changes of the period during which Christianity’s influence has declined. If God is no longer the ultimate source of power, where does power now reside?

Unit One examines God’s departure from Western consciousness during the Twentieth Century. We look at the history of atheism as an intellectual movement, examine arguments that religion is detrimental to individuals and society, and investigate the relationship between the rise of science and decline of religion.

In Unit Two, we ask what God's departure means—for individuals, for politics and for society. Does religion help people act more virtuously, and does its fading mean we are now free to be as selfish and uncaring as we like? Or does religion stifle people's freedom, and its fading free us to take our place as fully responsible citizens? We will examine classic statements of both positions.

Unit Three delves further into political dimensions of secularism, tracing the disentanglement of state from church through debates about religious freedom and the nature of political authority. Students' attention will be drawn, in particular, to the ways in which views about God intersect with ideas about the relationship between citizens and the state.

In Unit Four, we ask what took the place of religious faith in the dominant western cultural patterns of the twentieth century, and engage with some twentieth century salvation stories.

**2 The course aims:**

- i. to familiarise students with philosophical, political and sociological perspectives on secularisation;
- ii. to encourage students to critically engage with the issues and debates found in the scholarly literature on secularism;
- iii. to provide students with the necessary skills and resources to undertake independent argument and analysis in the areas covered by the paper;
- iv. to develop student skills in research and writing of academic presentations on the concept of secularism.

**3** The **lecture programme** follows. Lectures may be varied from time to time. As much notice as possible will be given when changes occur and, if necessary, a revised programme will be issued at lectures.

**4 Tutorials are held weekly.** Tutorial topics complement the lecture programme. Tutorials provide an opportunity to discuss aspects of the course in a small group and develop your ability to contribute to discussions.

**5 The course is internally assessed** by means of written assignments, weighted as follows:

- i. an **essay** of a maximum of 2000 words, to be submitted by **Friday 18 August**, worth 30% of the final grade (course aims ii, iii, iv);
- ii. an **essay** of a maximum of 2500 words, to be submitted by **Friday 6 October**, worth 30% of the final grade (course aims ii, iii, iv);
- iii. eight short **tutorial assignments** of no more than one page, each consisting of a thoughtful response to a given tutorial question. The eight tutorial assignments are together worth a total of 10% of the final grade (course aims i, ii) and are to be

handed in during the tutorial class in the week following the one in which the topic was discussed;

- iv. one **class test** to be held in the regular class room at the usual lecture time on **Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2006** worth 30% of the final grade

No extensions for outstanding work can be granted beyond **31 October 2006** except with a doctor's certificate.

**Mandatory Course Requirements:** Attaining 50% or above for course assessment

- 6 **Required text:** There is no set textbook. The *RELI 221 Course Reader* should be obtained from the Student Notes Office.

- 7 **Workload (recommendation of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences):** For 200-level 22 points one trimester courses, the working party on workloads and assessments recommends 15 hours per week. An average student should spend 12 hours per week for preparation, reading and writing in addition to attendance at lectures and tutorials.

200 - level	1 trimester	22 points	15 hours
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- 8 **General University policies and statutes**

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 hard copy or under 'About Victoria' on the VUW home page at [www.vuw.ac.nz](http://www.vuw.ac.nz).

- 9 **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.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct)

The Policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

[www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct)

- 10 **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.vuw.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances)

**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](mailto: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 contact is **Dr Allison Kirkman, Murphy Building, room 407**. Assistance for specific groups is also available from the Kaiwawao Maori, Manaaki Pihipihinga or Victoria International.

In addition, the Student Services Group (email: [student-services@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:student-services@vuw.ac.nz)) is available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at:

[www.vuw.ac.nz/st\\_services/](http://www.vuw.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](mailto:education@vuwsa.org.nz)) is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building.

**13 Student Learning Support Services:** A range of workshops, drop-ins and other assistance is provided by SLSS, covering such things as study techniques, essay writing, exam preparation and note taking skills. They are at OK 001 near the Hunter Courtyard, tel: 463 5999.

**14 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 copyright and other relevant issues.

- 15 **Aegrotat regulations apply** to internally assessed courses. Students who cannot submit or complete the course requirements due to illness or some other impairment should inform the Programme Administrator immediately and present the appropriate documentation.
- 16 **Supplementary Materials:** A website of materials related to Reli 221 is being maintained in Blackboard. You can find it by visiting [http:// blackboard@vuw.ac.nz](http://blackboard@vuw.ac.nz). 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 6666 (extension 6666 from VUW phones) or by email [scs-help@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:scs-help@vuw.ac.nz).
- 17 **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 available from the Religious Studies Administrator.
- 18 **Evaluation:** This course will be evaluated by UTDC

# ***LECTURE PROGRAMME***

## **UNIT ONE: RELIGION'S 20TH CENTURY CRITICS**

- 12 July**                      A brief history of atheism
- 19 July**                      The moral critique of religion
- 26 July**                      The critique of religion from science

## **UNIT TWO: DOES A GOOD SOCIETY NEED RELIGION?**

- 2 August**                      Religion and virtue
- 9 August**                      Religion and freedom
- 16 August**                      Religion and civil society

**Mid Trimester break (21 August - 3 September 2006)**

## **UNIT THREE: SECULARISATION AND THE DEATH OF GOD**

- 6 September**                      Theology and the death of God
- 13 September**                      Disenchantment and the decline of religion in the west
- 20 September**                      Secularism east and west: gods and governments

## **UNIT FOUR: FAITH IN MODERNITY**

- 27 September**                      Market myths
- 4 October**                      Salvation in our place
- 11 October**                      **Class test in regular lecture room and time**

## **TUTORIAL PROGRAMME**

Tutorials are an integral part of RELI 221. The required readings are essential background for the lectures and tutorials and should be completed **before each lecture**. The readings will be further discussed in the tutorials. The readings are all found in the *RELI 221 Course Reader*, which can be purchased at the Student Notes Office. Information about tutorial room numbers shall be on the notice board outside HU 318.

### **UNIT ONE: RELIGION'S TWENTIETH CENTURY CRITICS**

#### **Week Beginning**

**10 July**

**No tutorials** (tutorial groups will be organised during this week)

**17 July**

**Does belief in God do more harm or good?**

Marx, Karl, On the Jewish question, in David McLellan (ed), *Karl Marx: selected writings*, Oxford University Press, 1977, pp 39-56

McLellan, David, *The thought of Karl Marx: An introduction*, London: Macmillan, 1971, pp 105-110

**24 July**

**Does science disprove faith?**

Darwin, Charles, *The origin of species by means of natural selection* [1859], New York: The Modern Library, 1993, pp 636-649

Ginger, Ray, *Six days or forever? Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes*, Chicago: Quadrangle Paperbacks, 1969, pp 1-21

Livingstone, David, *Darwin's forgotten defenders: the encounter between evangelical theology and evolutionary thought*, Grand rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1987, pp 146-168

### **UNIT TWO: DOES A GOOD SOCIETY NEED RELIGION?**

**31 July**

**Do you need to be religious to be good?**

Berg, Jonathan, How could ethics depend on religion? in Singer, Peter (ed), *A companion to ethics*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1994, pp 525-533

Connolly, William, *Why I am not a secularist*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999, pp 1-11



**7 August**

**Is religion necessary for a good society?**

Locke, John, Letter concerning toleration, in *On civil government and toleration*, London: Cassell, 1895, pp 125-142

Plato, *The republic*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983, pp 140-149

Wilder, Laura Ingalls *Little town on the prairie*, Harmondsworth: Puffin, 1973, pp 57-60

**14 August**

**Civil religion and civil society**

Inglis, Ken The rite stuff, in John Lack (ed), *ANZAC remembered: selected writings of K. S. Inglis*, Melbourne University Press, 1998, pp 216-227

Phillips, Jock, Lest we forget: war memorials of the First World War, [www.nzhistory.net.nz/Gallery/Anzac/memorial](http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/Gallery/Anzac/memorial) New Zealand History Net, ANZAC Day, [www.nzhistory.net.nz/Gallery/Anzac/Anzacday](http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/Gallery/Anzac/Anzacday)

**Mid-trimester break, 21 August - 3 September 2006**

**4 September**

**Is demythologised religion still religion?**

Robinson, John, *Honest to God*, London: SCM, 1963, pp 29-44

Cupitt, Don *After God: the future of religion*, London: Phoenix, 1997, pp 79-90

**11 September**

**Whatever happened to religion?**

Aldridge, Alan *Religion in the contemporary world: a sociological introduction* Cambridge: Polity Press 2000, pp 56-86

Casanova, José, *Public religions in the modern world* University of Chicago Press 1994, pp 11- 39

**18 September**

**Secularism east and west**

Connolly, William *The ethos of pluralisation*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995, pp 188-198.

Pantham, Thomas, Indian secularism and its critics: some reflections, *The review of politics*, vol. 59, no. 3, 1997, pp 523-541.

- 25 September**      **Market myths**  
Carrette, Jeremy and Richard King, *Selling spirituality: the silent takeover of religion* London: Routledge 2005, pp 123-168
- 2 October**        **Salvation in our place**  
Patterson, John, *People of the land: a pacific philosophy*, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 2000, pp 7-24
- 11 October**       **Class test in regular lecture room and time**

## *Essays and Assignments*

1 You must submit two copies of each essay: one hard copy and one electronic copy. Hard copies must be placed in the locked assignment box located near the programme administrator's office (HU 318) and students must date and sign the essay register when submitting an essay. Electronic copies must be submitted via Blackboard, in either Word (.doc) or Rich Text (.rtf) format and named with your student ID number. **Essays submitted in only one form will be returned unmarked.** No responsibility will be taken for assignments for which there is no record. Keep a copy of all work until it is returned.

2 **Due dates:** The first essay is to be submitted by **Friday 18 August**.  
The second essay is to be submitted by **Friday 6 October**.

Tutorial assignments to be submitted progressively through the trimester.

**No assignments or essays can be accepted after 31 October without a doctor's certificate.**

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 for medical reasons must be given to the 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. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

*The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.*

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

*Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.*

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

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

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:  
[www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html)

## *Bibliography*

Marx, Karl, On the Jewish question, in David McLellan (ed), *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, London: Oxford University Press, 1977, pp 39-57

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New Zealand History Net, ANZAC Day,  
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