

RELI 226 / RELI 310

PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION



RELIGIOUS STUDIES

SCHOOL OF ART HISTORY, CLASSICS & RELIGIOUS STUDIES

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Trimester 3, 2008

RELI 226 / RELI 310

PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

Course co-ordinator: Joseph Bulbulia

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Religious Studies is in the Hunter Building. The programme administrator, Alikali Kalliabetsos, is in room HU 318 (ext 5299). **Notices regarding the course or any information on changes will be posted on the notice board outside her office.**

Course Essentials

Meetings:

- Wednesdays, 17:30-20:30. From 3 December to 4 February. No class on the 24th and 31st of December.
- There are no tutorials, though the lectures will include small group discussion.

Assessment for RELI 226

- Top 4 of 6 "easy quizzes": 15%
- 4 "close reading analysis" essays of 700 - 1000 words each on six possible themes, due the Friday after lecture (i.e. two days after lecture) by 4PM. 50%
- A final test on 4 February 17:30-19:30: 35%

Assessment for RELI 310

- Top 4 of 6 "easy quizzes": 15%
- 1 x outline of the final essay. **Outline** 800 -1000 words due 9 January, 4pm: 15%
- 1 x final essay of about 5000 words due 9 February 4pm: 35%
- A final test on 4 February 17:30 - 19:30 : 35%

Readings:

All course readings will be accessible by Blackboard

Person information: how to find us:

Joseph Bulbulia (lecturer): joseph.bulbulia@vuw.ac.nz Office HU 322, Office hours: 2-3pm Friday @ by appointment.

Eda (tutor) Email: ejzarne@hotmail.com Office hours: tba

Catlin (tutor) Email: caitlin.ramsey@vuw.ac.nz Office hours: 3pm-4pm Wednesdays

Tim (tutor) Email: hapticsynaptics@gmail.com Office hours: 4-5pm Wednesdays.

Mike (tutor) Email: teknocore11@mac.com Office hours: tba

Aliki Kalliabetsos (Department Manager) Email: aliki.kalliabetsos@vuw.ac.nz

Annie Mercer (School Manager) Email: Annie.Mercer@vuw.ac.nz

Course outline

1. The course and its objectives:

This paper raises six simple questions about the psychology of religion and considers research relevant to their answers:

1. Why do we believe in the unseen?
2. Why do gods have superpowers?
3. What does the brain have to do with religion?
4. Why do we care about religion?
5. Why don't religions change much?
6. Why doesn't religion harm us & how does it help?

These questions guide examination of distinctive methodologies at the leading edge of the psychological study of religion. We will consider results and debates about their interpretation.

The course is designed to prepare students for advanced study. It does by introducing you to leading work in the psychology of religion. Most of the papers we read will have been published in the last few years. We are going to examine the cutting edge of research.

More importantly, the course aims to develop skills relevant for discovery. We will not end inquiry. The plan is to help you build a toolkit for learning, to motivate its use, and to inspire you to think for yourselves. We hope the toolkit will transfer to other aspects of your life, to make you smarter, more interesting, and better skilled.

Prior coursework in either religious studies or psychology is helpful but not necessary. However I expect students to work hard.

All received wisdoms, especially mine, are up for grabs. Theological agendas of any kind (including atheism) should be checked at the door. We shall study religion, not promote or lament it.

By the end of the course you will:

- Have learned something about the psychology of religion, as it is currently practiced.
- Have sharpened your research skills.
- Better understand how to fit arguments to evidence – a generalist skill.
- Better appreciate science, its promise and limits.
- Have had some fun.

2 The lecture programme follows. Lectures may be varied from what is set forward here. As much notice as possible will be given when changes occur and, if necessary a revised programme will be issued at lectures. The lecture programme does not cover the entire course content. Lectures are important, but they must be viewed as complementary to your own reading in the field and to tutorial discussions. All required readings will be posted to Blackboard. If you have any trouble accessing Blackboard, let the instructor, tutor, or administrator know.

3 Tutorials. Part of the lecture will be devoted to small group discussion. But there will be no tutorials as such.

4 Assessment

RELI 226 is internally assessed by means of:

- four 800 word papers (50%) - these are analytic readings due the **Friday after lecture by 4pm.**
- four quizzes (15%) - top 4 of 6 counting.
- a class test (35%) on the final day of class: **17:30- 20:30 4 FEBRUARY 2009**

RELI 310 is internally assessed by means of:

- **a four quizzes (15%), top 4 of six counting**
- **a paper outline (15%), due 4pm January 9th, 2009**
- **a final paper (35%), due 4pm February 9th, 2009**
- **a class test (35%) on the final day of class: 17:30- 20:30 4 FEBRUARY 2009**

The minimum course requirements are:

For 226:

Passing mark on final test

Passing mark on average of four analytic papers

Passing mark on four quizzes

For 310:

Passing mark on final test

Passing mark for outline by 30th January, 2009.

Passing mark for final paper by 20th February, 2009.

5 The assessment of this course relates to these objectives in the following ways:

Small group discussions enable students to:

1. discuss and question the contents of the readings
2. discuss the implications of the readings

The test:

1. motivates students to think about the course as a whole, and to consider how its various components relate to each other.
2. gives students a chance to display their mastery.

Quizzes:

1. reward students for doing the readings. The quizzes are meant to be relatively easy as long as one has read the readings.

Further:

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Short analytic papers:

1. Teach students how to identify and analyse an argument in a reading. Students are asked to a) identify an author's thesis or principle question; b) describe and evaluate the evidence an author uses to support the thesis or to answer the question; c) form an opinion about the importance of the thesis.
2. Teach students more generally how to think creatively and critically about arguments that researchers hold up for their belief.
3. Enable students to reverse engineer their own writing. In raising the What? Why? and So what? question about the work of others, students will be better prepared to answer those questions in their own writing, and convey those answers. The assessment asks students to break down the mechanism of writing into its component parts, to find strengths and flaws, and to consider how the writing could be made better.

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Final paper outline:

1. motivates students to research and organize your final paper well before its due date, and to receive feedback on your plan.
2. builds general research and organisational skills.
3. helps students to understand their own idea, before expressing it.

Final paper:

1. gives students the chance to explore a narrow research question in depth by a) developing a thesis b) finding evidence to support it and c) describing and circumscribing its importance.
2. building general research skills, as well as creative and critical writing skills.

6 Required Text: All readings will be on Blackboard. Students are expected to be able to secure access blackboard no later than the 5 December 2008.

7 Work-load (Recommendation of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences)

For **200**-level 22 points one trimester courses, 15 hours per week are recommended. 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]

For **300**-level 24 points one trimester courses, 18hours per week are recommended. An average student should spend 15 hours per week for preparation, reading and writing in addition to attendance at lectures and tutorials.

[300 – level 1 trimester 24 points 18 hours]

8 General University statutes and policies 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 hardcopy or under “about Victoria” on the Victoria homepage at:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html

Information on the following topics is available electronically under “Course Outline General Information” at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/newspubs/universitypubs.aspx#general>

- Student and Staff Conduct
- Academic Grievances
- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

9 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

IN THESE COURSES, WE MAY USE THE SOFTWARE "Turnitin" TO CHECK ALL STUDENT WORK FOR PLAGIARISM.

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 identifies material that may have been copied from other sources including the Internet, books, journals, periodicals or the work of other students. Turnitin is used to assist academic staff in detecting misreferencing, misquotation, and the inclusion of unattributed material, which may be forms of cheating or plagiarism. At the discretion of the head of School, handwritten work may be copy typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. You are strongly advised to check with your tutor or the course coordinator if you are uncertain about how to use and cite material from other sources. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.

10 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 copy right and other relevant issues.

11 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.

12 Aegrotat regulations apply to internally assessed courses. Students who cannot submit or complete the course requirements due to illness or some other impairment may apply for an aegrotat pass. Applications may be submitted concerning tests or for other assessment items which are due at most three weeks before the day on which lectures cease for the course, and for which no alternative item of assessment could reasonably be substituted or extension time granted. (refer to aegrotat provisions in section 4.5 of the Assessment statute.

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 14 Kelburn Parade, tel: 463 5999

14 Supplementary Materials: A website of materials related to **RELI 226** and **RELI 310** is being maintained in Blackboard. You can find it by visiting <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

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

Lecture Programme

Lecture Schedule, Required Readings, and Tutorial Questions

Note: Some reading are listed as required for **RELI 310**. These are only recommended as supplementary reading for those enrolled in **RELI 226**.

Again, **all readings are accessible on blackboard**. Contact: scs-help@vuw.ac.nz if you experience trouble.

Week 1: December 3rd: An introduction to the psychology of religion.

Themes:

- *The course -- introductions, expectations, benefits, and limitations.
- *Terminology: "religion" and "psychology" defined.
- *Our questions and methods.

Week 2: December 10th: Why do we believe in the unseen?

Themes:

- * Guest Lecture: Marc Wilson, some data on supernatural beliefs among New Zealanders
- * Prediction and control as essential brain functions
- * Religion as anthropomorphism

Week 3: December 17th: Why do gods have superpowers?

Themes:

- *Motivating the cognitive scientific approach
- *Memory
- *Inventing explanations (ad hoc)

Mid-trimester Break 24th December 2008 – 4th January 2009

Week 4: January 7: What does the brain have to do with religion?

Themes:

- *Religion and the Brain/Body
- *Ritual
- *Religion outside the Brain and Body.

Week 5: January: 14th Why do we care about religion?

Themes:

- * Motivating religion
- * Policing
- * Factoring social benefits

Week 6: January 21st: Why don't religions change much?

Themes:

- *Signalling
- *Memes
- *Rituals

Week 7: January 28th: Why doesn't religion harm us & how does it help?

Themes:

- *Belief and behaviour
- *Religion as control
- *Religion as wisdom

Week 8: February 4th: Test 17:30 – 19:30

Bibliography for Reli 226/310 Summer 2008

Week 1¹

Week 2^{2,3}

Week 3^{4,5,6}

Week 4^{7,8,9,10}

Week 5^{11,12}

Week 6^{13,14,15,16}

Week 7^{17,18,19,20}

Week 8

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

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:

". . . Absalom 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,¹ but wrong to write it like this². One of the advantages of superscript numbered footnoting is that it allows you to make tangential comments, as in this example.³

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.⁴ If you are referring to the same page number in several successive notes,

¹ Random correct placed footnote.

² Random incorrectly placed footnote.

³ 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.

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

then "Ibid." alone is sufficient.¹

If you cite source A, then cite one or more other sources,² and then return to source A,³ it is best to repeat only the author's name,⁴ a shortened title, and the page number cited,⁵ rather than to repeat the full citation. See the footnotes attached to this paragraph (notes 6-9) for examples.

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.

¹ Ibid. [This means page 36, exactly like the preceding footnote.]

² T. N. Madan, *Non-Renunciation: Themes and Interpretations of Hindu Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 38.

³ Richard H. Robinson and Willard L. Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion: An Historical Introduction* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1997), 113.

⁴ Madan, *Non-Renunciation*, 38-40.

⁵ Robinson and Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion*, 115.