



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

ART HISTORY, CLASSICS AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Te Kura Toirangi

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

RELI 106 PRAYER, MEDITATION, TRANCE AND ECSTASY: A STUDY OF THE TECHNIQUES OF SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

20 POINTS

TRIMESTER 2 2014

Important dates

Trimester dates: 14 July to 16 November 2014

Teaching dates: 14 July to 17 October 2014

Mid-trimester break: 25 August to 7 September 2014

Study week: 20–24 October 2014

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

Lecture: *HU 323*

Time: *Thursday 13:10 – 15:00*

Tutorials: *Rooms and times tba*

Tutorials start the second week of the trimester and occur every week except for the weeks beginning August 18, and October 13th. Tutors will be available in weeks without tutorials for one to one consultations, by appointment. Students should sign up for tutorials through S-Cubed

Names and contact details

Course Co-ordinator: Assoc. Professor Joseph Bulbulia
joseph.bulbulia@vuw.ac.nz
463 5043
Hunter, HU 322

Office Hours: Monday 4pm – 5pm or by appointment

Tutors: Tutors names shall be posted on Blackboard by the start of Week 2, Please find your tutor's contact details under "Course Contacts" on Blackboard.

Administrator: Aliko Kalliabetsos
aliki.kalliabetsos@vuw.ac.nz
463 5299
Hunter HU 318

Communication of additional information

- Additional information or information on changes will be conveyed to students on Blackboard
- Because information about the course will change from time to time, students are expected to check Blackboard for updates regularly (at least once per week).

Prescription

This course explores religion through the things that people do. It considers how spiritual practices - rituals, bodily postures, altered states of consciousness, music - shape individual and collective experience. The course is also an introduction to some of the prominent methods and debates that define the discipline of religious studies

Course content

The Lecture Schedule

Week 1. July 17

Methods appropriate to understanding religious experience: perspectives and debates.

1. Durkheim, E. (1995). *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Free Press, New York: 'Introduction' and 'Definition of Religious Phenomena and of Religion'. (NOTE: These readings are TOUGH. Just do your best. Don't worry if you don't get everything. We'll come back to the reading repeatedly throughout the term.) pp.1–44. [Download](#)

Week 2. July 24

Healing Dance/Empathetic Social Science

1. Katz, R. (1984). *Boiling Energy: community healing among the Kalahari Kung*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. See: 'Kung Hunter-Gatherers' & 'The Kung Approach to Healing'. pp.13–57. [Download](#)

2. Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures; Selected Essays*, chapter Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture, pages 3–30. Basic Books, New York . [Download](#)

Week 3. July 31

Christian Song /Political History

1. Kirk-Duggan, C. (2007). *Spirituals and the Quest for Freedom. Modern Christianity to 1900*. A. Porterfield. Minneapolis, Fortress Press. pp.317–342. [Download](#)
2. Sacks, O. (2008). *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*. Picador, London. 'A Bolt From The Blue. Musicophilia'. pp. 3–20. [Download](#)

Week 4. August 7

Psychedelics/Psychology

1. Pahnke, W. N. and Richards, W. A. (1966). Implications of LSD and experimental mysticism. *Journal of Religion and Health*. pp.175–208. [Download](#)
2. Phillips, H. and G. Lawton (2004). "The Intoxication Instinct." *New Scientist*(13 November): 32-41. pp.32–41 [Download](#)

Week 5. August 14

Sacrifice/Scapegoat Theory

1. Girard, R. (1997). *Violent origins: Ritual killing and cultural formation*. In Hamerton-Kelly, R., Burkert, W., Girard, R., and Smith, J., editors, *Violent Origins*, pages 73–105. Stanford University Press. pp.73–105 [Download](#)
2. Carrasco, D. (2000). *City of Sacrifice: The Aztec Empire and the Role of Violence in Civilization*. Beacon Press, Boston MA. pp.58–91. [Download](#)

Week 6. August 21

March 28: Postures/Embodied Mind

1. Goodman, F. (1990). *Where the Spirits Ride the Wind: Trance Journeys and Other Ecstatic Experiences*. Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press. pp.9-26; pp.42-50; pp.215–223. [Download](#)
2. Blanke, O. and Metzinger, T. (2009). "Full-body illusions and minimal phenomenal selfhood." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 13(1): 7-13. [Download](#)

Mid trimester break August 25 – September 7 2014

Week 7. September 11

Yoga/ Phenomenology

1. Stoler-Miller, B. (1996). *Yoga: Discipline of Freedom*. Berkeley, CA, University of California Press: xi-35.pp.ix–35. [Download](#)
2. Eliade, M. (1969). *The quest : history and meaning in religion*. Chicago, Chicago University Press. pp.xii–xxii. [Download](#)

Week 8. September 18

Tantra/ Orientalism

1. Fields, G. P. (2001). *Religious Therapeutics: Body and Health in Yoga, Ayurveda, and Tantra*. Albany NY, State University of New York Press. [Download](#)
2. Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism and Religion*. New York, Vintage: 1-28. [Download](#)

Week 9. September 25

Meditation/History

1. Gomez, L. (1995). Two tantric meditations: Visualizing the deity. In Lopez, D., editor, *Buddhism in Practice*, pages 318–327. Princeton University Press, Princeton. [Download](#)
2. Bhikkhu, Ñ. (1995). *Anupada-sutta MN 111*. trans. Middle-Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhīma Nikāya, Wisdom Publications: 899-902. [Download](#)
3. Bhikkhu, Ñ. (1995). *Satipatthāna-sutta MN 10*. t. M.-L. D. o. t. B. A. N. T. o. t. M. Nikāya. Boston, Wisdom Publications: 145-155. [Download](#)

Week 10. October 2

Prayer/The Neuroscience of Religion

1. Bulbulia J, and Schjoedt, U. (2012). The neural basis of religious belief. In F. Krueger and J. Grafman, editors, *The Neural Basis of Human Belief Systems*. Psychology Press: 169-190. [Download](#)
2. **extra** (Haidt, J., J. Patrick Seder, et al. (2008). "Hive Psychology, Happiness, and Public Policy." *The Journal of Legal Studies* 37(June): S153-S156. [Download](#)

Week 11. October 9

Technology/Philosophy

- 1 Bostrom, N. (2013). Existential risk prevention as global priority. *Global Policy*, 4(1):15–31. [Download](#)
- 2 Agar, N. (2007). Where to transhumanism?: The Literature Reaches a Critical Mass. *Hastings Center Report*, 37(3):12–17. [Download](#)
- 3 Extra: <http://humanityplus.org/philosophy/transhumanist-faq/>
- 4 Extra:

Week 12. October 16

Final test

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course will be able to:

1. Acquire a basic understand of major religious studies research methodologies.
2. Acquire familiarity with ritual traditions in eastern and western religious traditions.
3. Write a clear and persuasive critical commentary.

Teaching format

Lectures and tutorials.
 Readings.
 Five response essays of about 500 words each.
 Final test

Mandatory course requirements

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

1. Attend a minimum of 7 out of 9 tutorials
2. Submit at least 4 assignments

Workload

For 20 points one trimester courses, 16 hours per week are recommended. An average student should spend 13 hours per week for preparation, reading and writing in addition to attendance at lectures and tutorials. The total workload for the course, including class time, should be about 200 hours.

Assessment

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	Critical Response Essay (about 500 words) Recommended average time spent on this task: 25 hours	15%	1,2,3	August 1, 2014
2	Critical Response Essay (about 500 words) Recommended average time spent on this task: 25 hours	15%	1,2,3	August 15, 2014
3	Critical Response Essay (about 500 words) Recommended average time spent on this task: 25 hours	15%	1,2,3	September 12, 2014
4	Critical Response Essay (about 500 words) Recommended average time spent on this task: 25hours	15%	1,2,3	September 26, 2014
5	Critical Response Essay (about 500 words) Recommended average time spent on this task: 25 hours	15%	1,2,3	October 10, 2014
6	Final Test, in-class (100 minutes duration) 20 hours course work throughout term + 22 hours study in the week of the test.	25%	1,2	October 16, 2014

Marking Criteria

Critical response essays:

- 33.3% for clarity.
- 33.3% for critical engagement.
- 33.4% for creativity.

Test:

- 33.3% for clarity.
- 33.3% for critical/creative engagement.
- 33.4% for accuracy.

Submission and return of work

Response essays must be submitted electronically via Blackboard. Essays are due at midnight on the due date. Marks for each item of assessment will be noted on Blackboard, normally within two weeks from submission date.

Extensions and Penalties

- Essays longer than 1,500 words will not be marked unless excused by the tutor.
- Any late submission will *not* receive written feedback (verbal feedback is always possible, and every student has the right to make an appointment with the tutor to receive verbal feedback).
- Unexcused late submissions will receive a .25 point deduction for each day that the assignment is late.
- Students will have a 48-hour grace period before receiving point deductions. This period includes weekends and holidays (e.g. if an essay is due midnight Friday, points will be deducted beginning midnight Sunday).
- For work to be excused as late, a student will need to provide evidence of a valid excuse (such as a medical certificate) to the student's tutor.
- If the tutor does not approve of a student's excuse, a student may write to the course coordinator for meeting between the student and tutor.

Materials and equipment and/or additional expenses

- Students are permitted computers, tablets, and phones in class for the purposes of taking notes. Students must disable wireless. During lecture, cell phones must be switched off.

Set texts

PDFs to readings are available as links from this document. There is no course reader.

Class representative

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, to the Course Coordinator, and to the class. The class representative will provide a communication channel to the Course Coordinator on behalf of students. The contact details for the Class Representative will be placed on Blackboard under:

COURSE RESOURCES → PEOPLE → CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

Class Rep name and contact details:

Student feedback

This course is 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
- 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