RELIGION 391: ADVANCED RELIGION SEMINAR

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SPRING, 2010
HL 105, TT 2-3:20

Religion 391 is required of all Religion majors and minors. The course’s primary objective is to examine the diversity of theories and approaches to the study of religion.

Course Requirements: Attendance/Participation. Critical discussion is essential to this course. I expect attendance at every class meeting. Absences will be excused only with advanced notice and written, official documentation of illness or emergency. Unexcused absences will lower your final grade. Students are expected to contribute to all seminar discussions. It is important that you read the assignments carefully before class and that you come prepared to discuss the readings.

Weekly Reflection Papers/Participation Grade (30%). Students are expected to turn in weekly reflection papers on the reading assignment for that week on Tuesdays. These responses will constitute a significant portion of your participation grade since you will be expected to share them with the class or working group. Late response papers will not be accepted. Pop quizzes may be given if the discussion indicates that the reading assignment has not been read with sufficient care. These pop quizzes will be factored into your final participation grade. Your response papers should state in a couple of sentences or a short paragraph the primary issue/argument of the reading. The body of the paper should discuss critically the treatment of the issue/argument and your agreement/disagreement with how the author(s) handle it. The response papers should be 1-2 pages long, double-spaced, with regular margins and font. It is your responsibility to give a hard copy of your response papers to the instructor before you leave the classroom. Late papers will not be accepted.

Mid-term Exam (25%). There will be mid-term exam on Thursday, March 2 on the readings through February 25.

Final Project (45%). The final project should study, interpret and apply one or more of the critiques/explanations of religion studied in the course. It may take the form of a video project, architectural design, performance art, graphic arts project, or standard academic research paper. Choose a topic and form of presentation that is interesting and useful to you. Regardless of the topic and form, an 20 page paper attachment is required in which you (1) state what you intend to accomplish with your project and how you interpret and apply your chosen theory through your analysis; and (2) demonstrate your knowledge of the other theories treated in the course by briefly discussing how these other approaches would change your analysis and why your chosen approach was the best of the alternatives to use.

SYLLABUS

1/19 Introduction

PART I RELIGIOUS THEORIES OF RELIGION

REVELATION

1/21 Thrower, Religion: The Classical Theories, chs 1 and 2 (1-44)


RELIGION AS EXPERIENCE

2/2 Thrower, Religion: The classical Theories, ch. 3 (pp. 49-72)
William James, Varieties of Religious Experience, Lectures 1-8 & Conclusion.

2/4 No class.

PART II: NATURALISTIC THEORIES OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS RESPONSES

RELIGION AS HUMAN CONSTRUCT


2/11 Johnson and Wallwork, Critical Issues in Modern Religion, chs 2.

RELIGION AS SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

2/16 Johnson and Wallwork, Critical Issues in Modern Religion, chs 8, 9 (pp. 213-265).
2/18 Johnson and Wallwork, *Critical Issues in Modern Religion*, either Chapter 10 (pp.271-302) or Chapter 11 (pp.309-341). Those who opt for Chapter 10 will present that chapter to the rest of the class. Those who opt for Chapter 11 will present that chapter to the class.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION: DURKHEIM AND WEBER

2/23 Thrower, *Religion: The classical Theories*, Ch. 8, sections on “Emile Durkheim” and Max Weber (pp.183-198)
Durkheim, Emile. *The Elementary Forms*, Book 1, Ch.1

2/25 Durkheim, Emile. *The Elementary Forms*, Conclusion, I and II.

3/2 MIDTERM

3/04 No class. Work on your final paper topics.

RELIGION AS PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSTRUCT

3/9 Thrower, *Religion: The classical Theories*, ch. 7 (pp. 126-157)

3/11 Johnson and Wallwork, *Critical Issues in Modern Religion*, either ch. 6, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “Religionless Christianity: Maturity, Transcendence, and Freedom” (146-175) or ch. 7, “Erik H. Erikson: Psychosocial Resources for Faith” (pp. 178-207). Those who opt for Chapter 6 will present that chapter to the rest of the class. Those who opt for Chapter 7 will present that chapter to the class.

3/16-18 SPRING VACATION

RELIGION IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE


RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND PLURALISM

3/30 Wuthnow, America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity, ch.3 (pp. 75-78), 4 and 5.

4/1 Wuthnow, America, ch.6 and 10.
STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

4/6-4/15 Work on your research papers
4/20 Student Presentations
4/22 Student Presentations
4/27 MAYFEST
4/29 Student Presentations