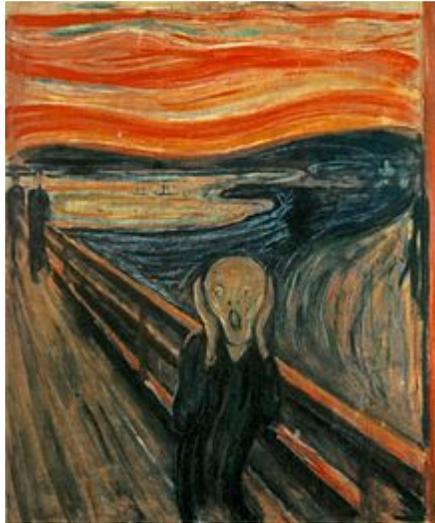


Rel 191: Religion, Meaning, and Knowledge
T/R 5:00-6:20 HL 111 Fall 2017



Instructor: Terry Reeder threeder@syr.edu; 315-350-9926

Office Hours: Thursdays 3:30-4:30 or gladly by appointment in Department of Religion HL 514

Course Description

This course is an exploration of the age-old quest for meaning, knowledge, and faith in the face of suffering and loss through art, philosophy, music and literature.

Learning Objectives

The Department of Religion has articulated four goals that shape its teaching and its expectation of what students in its course and programs may expect to gain from this study:

1. To think both critically and imaginatively about the role of religion in human expression, thought, and social institutions both historically and in the present day.
2. To establish an understanding of the degree of religious diversity in the world both historically and today, along with an appreciation for the crucial role that religion has played in the course of human history.
3. To recognize the difficulties inherent in undertaking a coherent, disciplined study of religion, and to be aware of the diversity of perspectives within the study.
4. To demonstrate strong abilities to think and reason critically and to produce that thought in both verbal and written forms.

Required Texts

Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* (Penguin Books, 2006)

Thich Nhat Hanh, *Living Buddha, Living Christ* (New York: Riverhead Book, 1995)

Louise Erdrich, *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse: A Novel* (Harper, 2016)

Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving* 50th anniversary edition (Harper, 2016)

Evaluation

Grades will be based on:

(20%) Class participation, unannounced in-class writing, group work. Text messaging, in addition to being rude, dilutes your attention from class participation and will lower this grade.

(20%) 10 Blackboard posts

(15%) Midterm

(10%) Art, Music, or Literature Presentation

(10%) Leading Class Discussion & Handout

(25%) Final Paper

Grades *	Grade points / credit*	Percentag e Range
A	4.0	94-100
A-	3.66	90-93
B+	3.33	87-89
B	3.0	83-86
B-	2.66	80-82
C+	2.33	77-79
C	2.0	73-76
C-	1.66	70-72
D¹	1.0	60-69
F	0	59 & below

Academic Integrity

Syracuse University's academic integrity policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university-wide academic integrity expectations. The university policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same written work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. The presumptive penalty for a first instance of academic dishonesty by an undergraduate student is course failure, accompanied by a transcript notation indicating that the failure resulted from a violation of academic integrity policy. The presumptive penalty for a first instance of academic dishonesty by a graduate student is suspension or expulsion. SU students are required to read an online summary of the university's academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during

pre-term check-in on My Slice. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu/>.

Of special concern is plagiarism. Plagiarism is stealing, both from the person who created the work and from the plagiarizer's education. Anytime a person uses another's words as their own OR cuts and pastes, EVEN in a PowerPoint, they are plagiarizing. If you need help with citations I am glad to help you, as is the Writing Center.

Academic Support

If you have academic accommodations I encourage you to use them to the fullest to support your learning. Syracuse University and I value diversity, and will work with you to provide access to services that accommodate your learning. For more information see the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu> or <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located in Room 309 of 804 University Avenue, or call (315) 443-4498, TDD: (315) 443-1371.

All students can and will benefit from the services of the Writing Center. For more information see <http://wc.syr.edu/>.

Religious Observation

SU religious observances notification and policy, found at <http://hendricks.syr.edu/spiritual-life/index.html>, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes and by the submission deadline for flexibly formatted classes. For fall and spring semesters, an online notification process is available for students in **My Slice / StudentServices / Enrollment / MyReligiousObservances / Add a Notification**.

Due Dates & Late Work

Assignments are due when they are due. If you have extenuating circumstances, talk to me in advance and we will attempt to work something out. Do not, however, ask for an extension at the last minute and expect it to be granted. Late work that is accepted will have a point reduction.

Etiquette

- **Communicate**
- Texting and surfing the web are not only disrespectful; they inevitably dilute you and your classmates' attention from the class. Expect at a minimum to lose participation points for these activities.
- Listening to others carefully is expected, required, and key to learning.
- I am excited to be doing this work with you! I will hold myself to the same standards that I ask of you. If I can do anything to improve your learning experience, please let me know.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to Dr. Marcia Robinson, course director and Assistant Professor of Religion at Syracuse University, for allowing me the opportunity to do this exciting work.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 1

T Aug. 29 Introduction and overview
 R Aug. 31 What is religion?
 Reading: "Definitions of Religion" on Bb
 Sun Sept 3 Post 1 "What is religion?" due by midnight.

Week 2

T Sept. 5 What is meaning?
 R Sept. 7 What is knowledge? Intro to Existentialism
 Reading: *Fear & Trembling*, "Preface"-end of "Speech in Praise of Abraham" (pp.3- 24)
 Sun Sept. 10 Post 2 on beginning of *Fear and Trembling* due by midnight.

Week 3

T Sept. 12 & R 14 Kierkegaard: The beginning, the master
 Reading: *Fear & Trembling*, pp.27-61 (Problemata, "Preamble from the Heart")
 Sun Sept. 17 Post 3 on first part of *Fear and Trembling* due by midnight.

Week 4

T Sept. 19 & R 21 The beginning, the master
 Reading: *Fear & Trembling*, Problema I (pp. 62-79) & Problema II (pp. 80-97)
 Sun Sept. 24: Post 4 on Problema I or Problema II due by midnight.

Week 5

T Sept. 26 & R 28 The beginning, the master
 Reading: *Fear & Trembling*, Problema III-Epilogue (pp.98-148)
 Sun Oct 1 Post 5 on Problema III- Epilogue due by midnight.

Week 6

T Oct. 3 Conclude Kierkegaard
 R Oct. 5 Begin Thich Nhat Hanh: fruit salad, Buddhism, being
 Reading: *Living Buddha, Living Christ* Introduction - 3 (1-33)
 Sun Oct. 8 Post 6 on beginning of *Living Buddha, Living Christ* due by midnight.

Week 7

T Oct. 10 & R 12 **Thich Nhat Hanh**
 Reading: *Living Buddha, Living Christ* 4-6 (34-86)
 Sun Oct. 15

Week 8

T Oct 17
R Oct 19
Reading: **Thich Nhat Hanh**
Midterm Exam
Living Buddha, Living Christ 7-9 (pp.87-157)

Week 9

T Oct 24 & R 26
Reading: Thich Nhat Hanh: Being, Christian Buddhist Fruit Salad?
Finish *Living Buddha, Living Christ* 10 (pp.158-198)
Sun Post 7 on *Living Buddha, Living Christ* due by midnight.

Week 10

T Oct 31 & R Nov 2
Reading: Art, Music, Film and Existentialism
Louise Erdrich, *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*
Existence & Indigeneity, existence, sexuality & gender
Part 1: The Transformation of Agnes (pp.3-56)
Sun Nov. 5 Post 8 on Part 1 of *Miracles at Little No Horse* due by midnight.

Week 11

T Nov 7 & R Nov 9
Reading: Erdrich
Part 2: The Deadly Conversions (pp. 57-160)
Sun Nov. 12 Post 9 on Part 2 of *Miracles at Little No Horse* due by midnight.

Week 12

T Nov 14 & R 16
Reading: Erdrich
Part 3: Memory & Suspicion (pp. 161-253) *Miracles at Little No Horse*
Sun Nov. 19 Post 10 concluding on *Miracles at Little No Horse*

Thanksgiving Break Nov. 19-26**Week 13**

T Nov 28 & R 30
Erdrich
Part 4: The Passions (pp. 257-361)

Week 14

T Dec 5 & R 8
Reading: **Fromm** Existence, Religion & Live
Being and Loving

TR Dec 11-14 READING WEEK/FINAL Due date TBA