

## RELIGION, MEANING, AND KNOWLEDGE

Assignments by week:

1. 1 & 3 Sept *The Stranger*
2. 8 & 10 Sept. *Stranger*
3. 15 & 17 Sept *Cloister Walk*  
**Practice paper due Thurs**
4. 22 & 24 Sept *Cloister Walk*
5. 29 Sept & 1 Oct *Dickinson*
6. 6 & 8 Oct. *Dickinson*  
**1<sup>st</sup> Papers Due Thurs**
7. 13 & 15 Oct. *Moby Dick*
8. 20 & 22 October *Moby Dick*
9. 27 and 29 October *Moby Dick*
10. 3 & 5 Nov. *Moby Dick/ Inward Morning*  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Papers Due Thurs**
11. 10 & 12 Nov *Inward Morning*
12. 17 and 19 Nov *Inward Morning*
13. 24 Nov – *Inward Morning/ Narrow Road*
14. 1, 3, & 8 Dec *Narrow Road*

**Last Paper Due Dec. 15, HL 501**

Total grade: two papers plus final paper;  
30%, 30%, 40%

Points deducted for poor attendance  
Points added for raising your hand

Intro. to thinking about religion and its study;  
interpretations and understandings of the nature of  
religion itself.

**Handouts:** Passages from *Moby Dick* and  
*Inward Morning*, and of Poems of Dickinson

### **Reflection (meditation) Papers:**

In your reading and writing, be alert for moments that strike you in some fashion, and make marginal notes of these moments. Why do they ring a bell or jump out at you (for good or ill)? What triggers your imagination -- heart and mind? The first papers will be **three-page [and the last, 4 page]**, double spaced and specially formatted. Before your first paragraph begins, **set out in bold one-three sentences from the text** that contain the images, descriptions, phrases, actions, or situations that grab you. That's the focus. The paper then becomes an elaboration, exploration, and clarification of that focus, a reflective meditation on those ideas or themes.

Draw on your own memories and experiences in this elaboration, exploration, and clarification. You'll find yourself remembering other passages or moments in the text that work in tandem with whatever you put in focus in your opening sentences. Don't forget: *if nothing grabs you, you'll have nothing to say*. You can, of course, use the first person. **Avoid anything that reads like a book report.** The paper shows *you* -- your *response*. I should see how your mind and imagination work as I read. Let your voice come out.

*Art, religion, philosophy, and literature offer resources for celebration of life, and hence offer ways to stave off at least part of the suffering that can afflict us. They bring us meaning and knowledge. The texts we read evoke struggles between meaning and its loss. The age-old quest for Religion, Meaning, and Knowledge is humanity's effort, individually and collectively, to shore up our capacities for confidence and conviction against inevitable encroachments.*

### **Books**

*Cloister Walk*, Norris 9781573225847  
*Moby Dick*, Melville 9780142000083  
*The Stranger*, Camus 9780679720201  
*Essential Dickinson* 9780060887919  
*Narrow Road*, by Basho 9780140441857  
*Inward Morning* by Bugbee - 9780820320717