California State University, Chico
RELS 281 Library Research Methods in Comparative Religion and Humanities
Department of Comparative Religion and Humanities
Fall 2014

Instructors: George Thompson and Jed Wyrick
Office location: MLIB 305a and Trinity 239
Telephone: 898-6379 (Wyrick) and 898-6603 (Thompson)
Email: jwyrick@csuchico.edu or ghthompson@csuchico.edu for all conversation or questions; Blackboard to send documents if necessary
Office hours: by appointment (Thompson); Wyrick: M 9-12; W 3-5; Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-1:30 or 5:00 by confirmed email appointment only (jwyrick@csuchico.edu)
Class days/time: M 12-1:50 through October 17
Classroom: LANG 107 and MLIB 226
Prerequisites: None

Course Usage of Blackboard Learn
Copies of the course syllabus and major assignments may be found on Blackboard Learn. You are responsible for regularly checking the online resources, which is accessed through the portal at http://portal.csuchico.edu.

Course Description and Goals

The Library Research Methods in Religious Studies course is an introduction to the tools used in doing research, writing papers, and preparing presentations in religious studies and humanities. Topics we discuss will include sources of information using the library's electronic tools to gather information, assessing internet resources, citation formats, copyright laws, and ethical standards in research and writing.
In this class we will learn to use standard research tools, including library catalogs, online databases, and reference materials, in order to discover resources applicable to developing a research topic, a thesis, and an annotated bibliography.

This year, the topic is open ended, but may relate to this Fall’s Seminar in Religious Studies on mysticism or this Spring’s Seminar in Humanities on memory. You will pursue research on this problem throughout the semester, finding sources that relate to the topic you will be considering and the religious, literary, artistic, or cultural traditions that will be relevant to this topic. You will also seek out sources on theoretical approaches to the study of the interrelations between cultural and religious phenomena, religion, the arts, and specific cultural or religious traditions or movements.

The final project for the course, completed in increments throughout the semester, will consist of everything required to write a scholarly paper on your problem, without actually writing the paper itself. You will gather titles and evaluate sources that you would use for such a paper in an annotated bibliography. These will consist of a set number of examples from each of the media explored in class using the search engines discussed in class. You will list them in a bibliography using the Chicago/Turabian style. Each of the items will be annotated, stating in a sentence how that particular source is useful to your project, describing the benefits or drawbacks of the source, and/or stating something unique and valid about that source and what it provides. On the basis of your ongoing research and working hypotheses based on your growing awareness of the field and analogies with other studies, you will draft and refine a thesis statement that provides a concrete answer to a specific, relevant, and interesting question about your topic. Finally, you will compose a one-paragraph abstract that summarizes both the findings of your research and the way that you would explore the topic in your project.

The purpose of this class and its final project is to prepare you for future research projects in courses in Religious Studies and Humanities and RELS 482 Seminar in Religious Studies and HUMN 400 Seminar in Humanities in particular. In addition, the course and final project prepare you to submit scholarly work to be published in peer-reviewed journals. In order to succeed in these courses and to publish your research, it is absolutely essential to use accepted citation formats. Chicago/Turabian style and citation format provides the basis for most publications in the field of Religious Studies and the Humanities. By helping you explore a subject methodically and thoroughly, locate sound primary and secondary sources, critically assess electronic and print sources, formulate a working hypothesis, and create a specific, plausible, and original argument, this class also prepares you for many of the tasks you might be required to perform in future employment outside academia.
Student Learning Objectives

“Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning.”

--The Association of Colleges and Libraries, “Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education”
http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency.cfm#useof

Course Content Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

SLO1: Determine the extent of information needed
SLO2: Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
SLO3: Evaluate information and its sources critically
SLO4: Incorporate selected information into one’s knowledge base
SLO5: Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
SLO6: Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally

SLOs for the B.A. in Religious Studies:

SLO1. Students can define and identify the history, beliefs, and practices of major world religious traditions and basic concepts in the study of religion.
SLO2. Students can explain how religion shapes and has been shaped by other cultural systems in history using major theories in the study of religion.
SLO 3. Students can use methods employed by the discipline of religious studies to analyze primary and secondary texts.
SLO4. Students can engage in civil dialogue regarding religious and secular viewpoints and values.
SLO5a. Students can make clear, well organized, and substantive written presentations.
SLO5b. Students can make clear, well organized, and substantive oral presentations.
SLO 6. Students can produce a research project that demonstrates facility with traditional and electronic religious studies resources, and the usage of appropriate scholarly style and citation formats.

SLOs for the B.A. in Humanities:
SLO1. Students can demonstrate factual knowledge of the emergence and development of a set of ideas, an artistic form or medium, or a religious, philosophical, or artistic tradition.

SLO2. Students will be able to apply methodological approaches of at least two academic disciplines in the humanities.

SLO3. Students will demonstrate the ability to perform close analysis of or assess a given cultural artifact with reference to standards appropriate to the medium, cultural origin and time period of the work.

SLO4a. Students can make clear, well organized, and substantive written presentations.

SLO4b. Students can make clear, well organized, and substantive oral presentations.

SLO5. Students will be able to read and comprehend beginning or intermediate level prose in the foreign language.

Required Texts/Readings (note where available)

Required Textbook

Available at the Wildcat Store:


Library Liaison

George Thompson, gthompson@csuchico.edu, 898-6603, MLIB 305

Classroom Protocol

Please spend class time wisely, in an attempt to complete the required quota of sources for your annotated bibliography.
Dropping and Adding

You are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. found http://www.csuchico.edu/catalog/. You should be aware of the new deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

Assignments and Grading Policy

Attendance: 200 points (minus 25 for each missed class)
Class Participation (= intelligent questions, comments in class): 100 points
Annotated Bibliography: 400 points
Thesis Statement and Abstract: 100 points
Final Exam on Research Methodology: 200 points

Total: 1000 points

Policies:

Late papers may be penalized up to 1/3 of a grade per day, unless prior permission has been granted. You are required to keep a back-up copy of each essay you submit, either in a computer disk or in hard-copy, to be printed out and resubmitted upon my request. An assignment not resubmitted on request will be considered as not having been completed. Alternately, submit both a hardcopy of your paper and electronic version on Blackboard at the due date.

You will lower your attendance grade by 25 points every time you miss class. Legitimate excuses (e.g. a doctor's note or a note from another professor about a class related activity) will be accepted, provided that they are accompanied by a 1/2 page written discussion of the topics assigned for that day. It is your responsibility to inform us at the end of class if you missed roll call.

University Policies and Campus Resources

Academic integrity

Students are expected to be familiar with the University’s Academic Integrity Policy. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at California State University, Chico, and the University’s Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The policy on academic integrity and other resources related to student conduct can be found at: http://www.csuchico.edu/sjd/sja.shtml
The policy of the Department of Comparative Religion and Humanities (see http://www.csuchico.edu/corh/crel/programs/academic-integrity.shtml) is that anyone found to have cheated or plagiarized an assignment will automatically fail the course and be referred to student judicial affairs for further disciplinary action.

**Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with your instructor as soon as possible or see your instructor during office hours. Please also contact the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) as this is the designated department responsible for approving and coordinating reasonable accommodations and services for students with disabilities. ARC will help you understand your rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act and provide you further assistance with requesting and arranging accommodations.

Accessibility Resource Center
www.csuchico.edu/arc
530-898-5959
Student Services Center 170

**Student Computing**

Computer labs for student use are located on the 1st floor of the Meriam Library 116, Meriam Library 450, and Tehama 131. See http://www.csuchico.edu/itss/labs/index.shtml for more details. Additional labs may be available to students in your department/college.

**Student Services**

Student services are designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. Students can find support for services such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. Student services information can be found at: http://www.csuchico.edu/current-students/.

**Student Learning Center**

The mission of the Student Learning Center (SLC) is to provide services that will assist CSU, Chico students to become independent learners. The SLC prepares and supports students in their college course work by offering a variety of programs and resources to meet student needs. The SLC facilitates the academic transition and retention of students from high schools and community colleges by providing study strategy information, content subject tutoring, and supplemental instruction. The SLC is online at http://www.csuchico.edu/slc/. For some very informative videos (on topics such as: organizing and outlining your essay, writing made easy, mastering study skills, time management, efficient reading strategies, preventing test anxiety, avoiding procrastination, public speaking), see http://rce.csuchico.edu/online/workshops/student-learning.
The Writing Center

You may make an appointment with a writing tutor at the Student Learning Center (SSC 340, Hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am-6:00 pm, Friday 9:00 am-3:00 pm) or by calling 898-6839. The Writing Center information can be found online at http://www.csuchico.edu/slc/wtutorinfo.shtml. The Writing Center now offers online services for all students; submit your paper at least 3 days in advance.
# RELS 281 Course Schedule

*(Note: subject to change with fair notice.)*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug. 25</td>
<td>Introductions, topics, problems, research expectations, campus plagiarism policy, department policy, ethics discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LANG 107</td>
<td>Learning goals: formulating a topic, introduction to citation style</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Learning objectives: define problem context, map concepts, develop a focus, and create knowledge map</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Activities: pre-test, copyright/fair use assessment &amp; discussion; information resources assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Information Literacy Competency Standard addressed: 1 &amp; 6</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assigned reading for 9/10:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1) Turabian chapters 1 &amp; 2 - What Research Is and Moving from Topic to a Question</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Assignment for next class, 9/9: First draft of research topic.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept. 1</td>
<td>Labor Day; no class meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</td>
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| 3    | Sept. 8 | Internet search and evaluation  
Learning goals: library web page, internet search engines, evaluating internet sources,  
Learning objectives: discussion of the concepts of claims, evidence and sources; understand the difference between topic and thesis; search versus research.  
Activities: text discussion, web searching, context exploration, needs assessment  
Online bibliographic tools: Zotero and Mendele  
Information Literacy Competency Standard addressed: 1 & 2  
Discuss reading:  
1) Turabian chapters 1 & 2 - What Research Is and Moving from Topic to a Question  
   [http://hirr.hartsem.edu/ency/ResearchM.htm](http://hirr.hartsem.edu/ency/ResearchM.htm)  
3) For Humanities majors: read “Research Methodologies for the Creative Arts & Humanities” (read each of the items on the dropdown menu entitled “Methods: A Quick Guide”  
**Due Today:** First draft of research topic  
**Assigned reading for 9/16:**  
Turabian chapter 5, Planning Your Argument |
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td>Exploring online resources</td>
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<td>Learning goals: research methods, needs inventory, topic revision, discuss topics</td>
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<td>Learning objectives: list of knowns and unknowns, introduce Chicago/Turabian Style</td>
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<td>Activities: text discussion, online/print reference sources, reference bibliography.</td>
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<td>Information Literacy Competency Standard: 1 &amp; 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discuss reading: Turabian chapter 5, Planning Your Argument</td>
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<td><strong>Assigned reading for 9/23:</strong></td>
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<td>Turabian chapter 3-Finding Useful Sources</td>
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<td>Turabian chapters 15 &amp; 16-Citation practices and Notes-Bibliography Style</td>
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<td><strong>Due Today: 2nd draft of research topic and draft thesis statement</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td>Library resources, library web page</td>
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<td>Learning goals: library catalogs, Library of Congress Subject Headings, WorldCat, Interlibrary Services (ILS)</td>
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<td>Learning objectives: background survey, focus topic, source evaluation</td>
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<td>Activities: Library catalog search results, bibliography formatting, results from opac, LoC, worldcat. In class bibliography assignment.</td>
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<td>Information Literacy Competency Standard addressed: 2 &amp; 3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss reading: Turabian chapter 3-Finding Useful Sources</td>
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<td>Turabian chapters 15 &amp; 16-Citation practices and Notes-Bibliography Style</td>
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<td><strong>Due Today: Revised thesis statement; Individual presentations and discussion of topics</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Assigned reading for 9/30</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Turabian chapter 4-Engaging Sources</td>
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<td>Week</td>
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| 6    | Sept. 29 | Searching for articles  
Learning goals: library databases, journal articles, citation styles  
Learning objectives: locate research articles, evaluate sources,  
Activities: database exploration, group database exercise. **In class journal article bibliography exercise.**  
Information Literacy Competency Standard addressed: 2  
Discuss reading: Turabian chapter 4-Engaging Sources  
**Due today:** Revised thesis statement and outline. |
| 7    | Oct. 6  | Research methods, content discussion, critiques  
Learning goals: bibliography format, progress report, thesis consultation, evaluation and feedback  
Learning objectives: re-evaluate topic, revise hypothesis  
Activities: Thesis consultation, in class resource searching, catalog tools, Endnote. Website evaluation exercise  
Information Literacy Competency Standard addressed: 3 & 5 |
| 8    | Oct. 13 | Learning goals: library databases, current event sources, newspapers, journal articles  
Learning objectives: writing an abstract, bibliography format  
Activities: thesis discussion, research consultation, bibliography style and discussion. In class research. Presentation discussion.  
Information Literacy Competency Standard addressed:  2 & 5  
**Due 10/21:** Final draft of thesis, abstract, and bibliography |
| 9    | Oct. 20 | Presentations and evaluations  
Learning goals: presentation skills and critique  
Learning objectives: final bibliography  
Activities: **Presentations & Final.**  
Information Literacy Competency Standard addressed:  4 & 5  
**Due Today:** Thesis Statement, abstract and bibliography due  
**Presentations on Topic and Bibliography** |
<p>| 10   | Oct. 27 | |
| 11   | Nov. 3  | |
| 12   | Nov. 10 | |
| 13   | Nov. 17 | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nov. 24-28</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Week, no classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Dec. 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Dec. 15</td>
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