This course will explore 1) the origins, development, and institutionalization of religious studies as a scholarly and academic field; 2) diverse theories and methods employed within the field of religious studies; and 3) significant contributors to religious studies and their classic works.

This course is designed for comparative religion majors and minors as well as for others who are interested in the cross-cultural and historical study of religion.

Prerequisites: RELS 100 or RELS 110 or permission of the instructor.

Required Texts

William E. Paden, Interpreting the Sacred: Ways of Viewing Religion (available from the Wildcat Store and online booksellers and on reserve in the library).

Course Reader for RELS 480, a collection of photocopied materials (Available from Mr. Kopy, 119 Main St. and on reserve in the library).

Other materials will be available in BbLearn and on reserve in Meriam Library.

Requirements

Students will be expected to complete assigned readings and attend class meetings, participate in class discussions and activities, and regularly log-in to the Chico State Portal to access course information and materials through Blackboard Learn (BbLearn).

Please put away reading materials not related to this class. Please turn off and stow cell phones and all other electronic devices before class begins. Disruptive behavior (texting, tweeting, facebooking, talking, etc.) will negatively impact your participation grade. If you are planning on using a laptop computer, please read To Remember a Lecture Better, Take Notes by Hand If you are still planning on using a laptop, please meet with me during the first week of the semester regarding guidelines for computer use during class.

Grades will be based on the following:

Class attendance, participation, and occasional pop quizzes (worth 10% of the final grade).

Three objective exams (the first two exams will each be worth 10% of the final grade; the final comprehensive exam will be worth 15% of the final grade). Study guides will be distributed via the portal.

A mid-term paper of approximately 750 words or three typewritten pages (worth 25% of the final grade)

A final paper of approximately 1250 words or five typewritten pages (worth 30% of the final grade)

Paper topics and due dates will be announced via the portal and discussed in class.
Students with Certified Disabilities:
If you have a documented disability that may require reasonable accommodations, please contact the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) within the first two weeks of the semester for coordination of your academic accommodations: 530 898-5959;  http://www.csuchico.edu/dss/. Please note that you may be required to show documentation of your disability.

Academic Integrity Policy
All quotations and paraphrases in your written work must be properly referenced. Evidence of plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course and referral to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The University’s policy on academic integrity and other resources related to student conduct can be found at  http://www.csuchico.edu/sjd/integrity.shtml  The Department of Comparative Religion and Humanities has also established a policy on academic integrity, honesty, and plagiarism. For an explanation of the policy and a tutorial visit:  http://www.csuchico.edu/corh/crh/programs/academic-integrity.shtml
By submitting written assignments, you are indicating that you understand and agree to abide by this policy.

CLASS SCHEDULE: TOPICS, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS
(subject to revision)
1st & 2nd weeks
The Background and Origins of “Religious Studies”: Interpretive Frames and Contexts
Readings: Paden, Preface & chp. 1; chp. 2 pp. 15-18
Recommended: Nathan Schneider, “Why the World Needs Religious Studies” (BbLearn); Jonathan Z. Smith, “Religion, Religions, Religious” (BbLearn)

3rd & 4th weeks
Criticisms of Religion and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion
Readings: Paden, chp 2; W. E. Deal & T. K. Beal, “Sigmund Freud”; “Karl Marx”; and “Friedrich Nietzsche,” from Theory for Religious Studies (Course Reader); Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, excerpts from "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right", “The Communism of the Rheinischer Beobachter”, and Anti-Dühring (Course Reader); David McLellan, excerpts from Marxism and Religion (Course Reader); Sigmund Freud, excerpt from New Introductory Lectures in Psycho-Analysis (Course Reader); Daniel L. Pals, “Analysis and Critique of Freud” from Seven Theories of Religion (Course Reader)

FIRST EXAM T 2/17 (date subject to revision)

5th – 7th weeks
Religion, Society, and Culture: Sociological and Anthropological Interpretations of Religion
Readings: Paden, chap. 3; Emile Durkheim, excerpts from The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (Course Reader); Daniel L. Pals, “Analysis and Critique of Durkheim” from Seven Theories of Religion (Course Reader); Max Weber, excerpts from The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (Course Reader); John Patrick Diggins, “Calvinism and Capitalism: The Irony of Unintended Consequences” from Max Weber: Politics and the Spirit of Tragedy (Course Reader)
Recommended: Peter Berger, “The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview” (BbLearn)

8th & 9th weeks
Religion and Personality: Psychological Interpretations of Religion
Readings: Paden, chap. 4; Carl Gustav Jung, excerpt from Psychology and Religion (Course Reader); David M. Wulff, “Critique of Jung’s Interpretation of Religion” from Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Views (Course Reader)

SPRING BREAK FALLS BETWEEN THE 8th & 9th WEEKS
SECOND EXAM Th 3/26 (date subject to revision)
10th & 11th weeks
Sacred and Profane in the History of Religions: Comparative and Phenomenological Interpretations of Religion
Readings: Paden, chp. 5; Mircea Eliade, excerpt from The Sacred and the Profane (Course Reader); Mircea Eliade, "History and Hermeneutics," from Ordeal by Labyrinth, (Course Reader); Charlotte Allen, "Is Nothing Sacred?" (Course Reader); Russell T. McCutcheon, “Methods, Theories, and the Terrors of History: Closing the Eliadean Era with Some Dignity” (Course Reader)

12th & 13th weeks
Religion from the Inside: Religious and Theological Interpretations of Religion
Readings: Paden, chp. 6; Karl Barth, excerpt from Church Dogmatics (Course Reader); Paul Tillich, excerpt from Theology of Culture (Course Reader); Kate McCarthy, “Reckoning with Religious Difference: Models of Interreligious Moral Dialogue” (Course Reader)

14th & 15th weeks
Religion, Gender, and Power: Feminist and Liberationist Interpretations of Religion
Readings: Rosemary Radford Ruether, "The Feminist Critique in Religious Studies" (Course Reader); Mary Daly, "The Problem, the Purpose, and the Method" from Beyond God the Father (Course Reader); Rita Gross, “Where Have We Been? Where Do We Need to Go?: Women’s Studies and Gender in Religion and Feminist Theology” (Course Reader)

FINAL EXAM: Th 5/14 12:00 Noon

PLEASE NOTE DATE AND TIME AND PLEASE DO NOT ASK TO RESCHEDULE THE FINAL EXAM