



School of Art History, Classics, Religious Studies

Religious Studies

RELI 106 (CRN 9163)

Prayer, Meditation, Trance Ecstasy: A Study of the Techniques of Spiritual Transformation

TRIMESTER 1 2012

5 March to 4 July 2012

Trimester dates

Teaching dates: 5 March to 8 June 2012
Mid-trimester break: 6–22 April 2012
Last piece of assessment due: 1 June 2012
Study week: 11–15 June 2012
Examination/Assessment Period: 15 June to 4 July 2012

Withdrawal dates

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

Names and contact details:

Coordinator: Dr. Joseph Bulbulia

email: joseph.bulbulia@vuw.ac.nz
tel: 463 5043
Office: Hunter 322.
Office Hrs: Monday 4pm→5pm or by appointment.

Tutors names will be posted on Blackboard by week 2:

COURSE REOURCES → PEOPLE → TUTORS

Class times and locations

Lecture place: HULT 323.
Time: Wednesdays 15:10-17:00/
Start date: Wednesday, 7 March 2012.
Tutorials: start the second week of term and occur every second week (that is, each week a short essay is due). Tutors will be available in weeks without tutorials for one to one consultations, by appointment. Sign up outside HU 318.

Course delivery

The course also consists of:

- Lecturers and tutorials.
- Mandatory readings.
- Five response essays of 1,000 words (min) –1,500 words (max).

Communication of additional information

Additional information or information on changes will be conveyed to students on Blackboard.

Because information about the course will change from time-to-time, students are expected to check Blackboard for updates at least once a week.

Course Prescription

This course explores the ways in which spiritual practices alter consciousness. We study contemporary world cultures and see the influence of rituals, bodily postures, drugs and music. Our focus is on the spiritual understandings that come not through doctrines, but rather through ways of living.

Purpose

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to religion as an important and fascinating human phenomenon. It is also an introduction to some of the prominent methods that define the discipline of religious studies.

Learning objectives

1. Knowledge of discipline: to introduce research methodologies in the academic study of religion.
2. General knowledge: to broaden perspectives about the influences of sacred cultures on how we value, remember, hope, and interact.
3. Critical thinking: to enable a better appreciation of the perspectives of others, and to more effectively persuade others of one's own perspective.
4. Writing and verbal expression: to promote clear writing and speaking.
5. Creative thought: to foster creativity and imagination.

Expected workload

- Lectures and tutorials: three hours per week.
- Readings: about five hours per week.
- Writing assignments: about ten hours per week.

Readings

Essential texts:

All readings can be found as PDFs on Blackboard under:

COURSE RESOURCES → READINGS

Materials and equipment

Students are permitted computers in class, though only to take notes. Students must disable their wifi. Any use of a computer for purposes other than note taking will result in the computer being confiscated for the remainder of the class.

Cell phones must be switched off.

Assessment requirements

Critical Response Essay Due Dates

1. March 23, 2012: worth 20% final mark.
2. April 5, 2012: worth 20% final mark.
3. May 11, 2012: worth 20% final mark.
4. May 25, 2012: worth 20% final mark.
5. June 08, 2012: worth 20% final mark.

Marking Criteria

Critical response essays:

- 33.3% for clarity.
- 33.3% for critical engagement.
- 33.4% for creativity.

Penalties

- Essays shorter than 1,000 words or longer than 1,500 words will not be marked.
- Any late submission will *not* receive written feedback (verbal feedback is always possible).
- Unexcused late submissions will receive a 0.05 point deduction for each day that the assignment is late.
- Students will have a 48-hour grace period before receiving point deductions. This period includes weekends and holidays (e.g. if an essay is due 5pm Friday, points will be deducted beginning 5pm Sunday).
- No unexcused work that is more than ten days overdue will be marked.
- The only valid excuse for a late submission will be a medical certificate.

Mandatory (i.e. minimal) course requirements

To gain a pass in this course each student must:

- Receive no fewer than 50 points for the essay assignments.
- Miss no more than two tutorials.
- Students must submit assignments no later than 18 June 2012 (No assignments will be accepted after 18 June, 2012).

Class Representative

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, to the Course Coordinator, and to the class. The class representative will provide a communication channel to the Course Coordinator on behalf of students. The contact details for the Class Representative will be placed on Blackboard

under:

COURSE RESOURCES → PEOPLE → CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

Use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <http://www.turnitin.com>. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.

The Lecture Schedule

Week 1. March 7

Methods appropriate to understanding religious experience: perspectives and debates.

1. (Durkheim 1965/1915): '[Introduction](#)'. pp.1–20.
2. (Durkheim 1965/1915): 'Definition of Religious Phenomena and of Religion'. pp.23–47. [Download](#)

Week 2. March 14

Healing Dance/Empathetic Social Science

1. (Katz 1984): 'Kung Hunter-Gatherers' & 'The Kung Approach to Healing'. pp.13–57. [Download](#)
2. (Renfrew 2008): pp.2041–2047. [Download](#)

Week 3. March 21

Sacrifice/Scapegoat Theory

1. (Girard 1997) pp.73–105 [Download](#)
2. (Carrasco 2000) pp.58–91. [Download](#)

Week 4. March 28

Psychedelics/Psychology

1. (Pahnke and Richards 1966) pp.175–208. [Download](#)
2. (Phillips and Lawton 2004) pp.32–41 [Download](#)

Week 5. April 4

Meditation/History

1. (Gómez 1995) [Download](#)
2. (Bhikkhu 1995) [Download](#)
3. (Bhikkhu 1995) [Download](#)

Week 6. April 25 ANZAC DAY NO LECTURE

Week 7. May 2

Yoga/Cultural Anthropology

1. (Eliade 1969) pp.xii–xxii. [Download](#)
2. (Stoler-Miller 1996) pp.ix–35. [Download](#)
3. (Geertz 1973) pp.3–30. [Download](#)

Week 8. May 9

Tantra/Comparative Anthropology

1. (Fields 2001) [Download](#)
2. (Said 1979) [Download](#)

Week 9. May 16

Technology/Philosophy

1. <http://humanityplus.org/learn/transhumanist-faq/>
2. <http://www.nickbostrom.com/ethics/dignity.html/>
3. http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/features/2011/debating_extreme_human_enhancement/why_i_dont_want_to_be_a_cyborg.html

Week 10. May 23

Christian Song /Political History

1. (Kirk-Duggan 2007) pp.317–342. [Download](#)
2. (Sacks 2008) 'A Bolt From The Blue. Musicophilia'. pp. 3–20. [Download](#)

Week 11. May 30

Purity/Tradition

1. (Morris 1996) [Download](#)
2. (Haidt, Patrick Seder et al. 2008) [Download](#)

Week 12. June 6

March 28: Postures/Embodied Mind

1. (Goodman 1990): pp.9-26; pp.42-50; pp.215–223. [Download](#)
2. (Blanke and Metzinger 2009) pp.7–13. [Download](#)

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Geertz, C. (1973). The Interpretation of Cultures; Selected Essays. New York, Basic Books.

Girard, R. (1997). Violent Origins: Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation. Violent Origins. R. Hamerton-Kelly, W. Burkert, R. Girard and J. Z. Smith, Stanford University Press: 73-105.

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Pahnke, W. N. and W. A. Richards (1966). "Implications of LSD and experimental mysticism." Journal of Religion and Health: 175-208

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