Exploration of the history and methodology of Religious Studies, including the analysis of several significant theories of the origin and function of religion. Methods and theories drawn from the disciplines of psychology, sociology, history, anthropology, philosophy, and feminist theory.

Learning Objectives

Students who successfully complete HRS 108 will be able to
- Identify major thinkers in the field of Religious Studies and describe their primary contributions
- Explain the historical development of the field of Religious Studies
- Discuss the intentions and effects of various theoretical approaches to the study of religion
- Compare theoretical approaches both within and across disciplines

Required Texts

Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*
Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*
Course Reader

Requirements and Grading

All reading assignments are to be completed prior to the meetings for which they are listed (see “Schedule and Assignments” below). Course grades will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contribution to class discussions</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam (in-class)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral presentation and paper</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam (in-class)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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A passing grade requires completion of both exams, the oral presentation, and the paper. A late paper will be accepted for up to one week only, with daily reduction of grade.

Use in class of laptop computers must be approved by the instructor; use (or ringing) of cell phones is not permitted. Compliance with rules prohibiting cheating and plagiarism along with principles of courteous conduct are required (i.e., no ‘chatting’ during class, no leaving class without prior permission, no walking in front of the instructor if ever one needs to arrive late) (for the University’s policy on plagiarism, see: [http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353](http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353)). If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to SSWD, Lassen Hall 1008; 278-6955. Please discuss your accommodation needs with the instructor after class or during office hours early in the semester.
Schedule and Assignments (reading assignments are underlined and are to be completed by date listed)

**Introductions**

A contemporary example: Ninian Smart’s “worldview analysis”
Thur 1/28  Smart, *Worldviews*, Introduction and chs. 1-4 (1-86)
Tues 2/2   Smart, *Worldviews*, chs. 5-9 and Postscript (87-162)

**Origins and early theories of Religious Studies**
Thur 2/4   Friedrich Max Müller. *Pals, Eight Theories of Religion*, Introduction (3-17)
Tues 2/9   E. B. Tylor and James Frazer. *Pals*, ch. 1 (18-52)

**Rudolf Otto: the “holy” as the irreducible essence of religion**
Tues 2/16  Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, chs. 5-6 and 9 (25-40 and 60-71)

**Karl Marx: religion as oppression and alienation**
Thur 2/18  *Pals*, ch. 4 (118-148)

**Psychological perspectives on religion**
Tues 2/23  Sigmund Freud. *Pals*, ch. 2 (53-84)
Thur 2/25  Carl Jung. *De Laszlo, Editor’s Introduction to The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung* (in Course Reader)
Tues 3/2   Jung, “Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious” (in Course Reader)

(Thur 3/4   “March for Education” – furlough day; no class)

**Sociological perspectives on religion**
Tues 3/9   Émile Durkheim. *Pals*, ch. 3 (85-117)
Tues 3/16  Max Weber (cont.)

**Midterm exam:** Thursday 3/18 (in class)

**Sociological perspectives on religion (cont.)**
Tues 3/23  Peter Berger. *Berger, The Sacred Canopy*, chs. 1 and 2 (3-51)
Thur 3/25  *Berger, The Sacred Canopy*, chs. 3 and 4 (53-101)

**Mircea Eliade and the phenomenology of religion**
Tues 4/6   *Pals*, ch. 6 (193-228)
Thur 4/8   Eliade, Introduction to and ch. 1 of *The Sacred and the Profane* (in Course Reader)

**Recent anthropological perspectives**
Tues 4/13  E. E. Evans-Pritchard. *Pals*, ch. 7 (229-259)

**Philosophy of religion**
Thur 4/20  Smith, “Philosophy: Philosophy and Religion,” and Proudfoot, “Philosophy: Philosophy of Religion” (both in Course Reader)
**Feminist theory and Religious Studies**


**Focused studies of notable recent theories and works**

(Each of eight theories/works will be studied in detail by a small group of students, who will be responsible for presenting their findings to the class. Each student will independently write a paper as part of this study. Specific assignments and schedule will be determined by our 2/18 session.)

Tues 4/27  “Recent Theoretical Interests.”  Pals, first part of Conclusion (292-304).  First focused study

Thur 4/29  Second and third focused studies

Tues 5/4  Fourth and fifth focused studies

Thur 5/6  Sixth and seventh focused studies

Tues 5/11  Eighth focused study.  Overview and reflection on our eight studies.

Thur 5/13  Summary and conclusions.  Pals, second part of Conclusion (304-323).  **Paper due**

**Final exam:** Tuesday 5/18, 12:45-2:45