

REL 2104-01 | Theory and Methods in Religion

Fall 2023

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is religion? How have scholars studied it, and how will we study it? To what extent is religion a Eurocentric concept, and what other concepts and approaches are relevant to our study? This course investigates these questions in an introduction to the multiple methods of religious studies. The major goal of the class is to learn how we ourselves can research and write within religious studies, an academic field that is inherently interdisciplinary, in preparation for independent research. For this reason, the course is organized around the major methods that religious studies scholars use, including, but not limited to: ethnography, history, genealogy, quantitative sociology, and philosophy. For each method, we will read a theory of the method, an example of the method, and primary source material. With the primary source material, we will practice writing in each method. To conclude the semester, students will develop a concise proposal for a feasible senior research project that critically engages religion in a particular context with careful attention to methodological and theoretical choices. Methodological interdisciplinarity and creativity are welcome! This proposal could be for the Religion Program, but it could also be in any field in the humanities or social sciences. While Religion majors and minors will be required to take the course starting in 2020, the theory and methods we study speak to a range of other disciplines as well, so non-majors are encouraged to take it.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the diverse methods available within the study of religion, including history, philosophy of religion, ethnography, quantitative sociology, and genealogy, by reading examples of and theories about work in the study of religion.
- To discover that how an author uses evidence to answer questions and make arguments shapes method, and vice versa, by free writing about and discussing evidence use in published work, peers' drafts, and our writing. In doing so, we practice writing as an ongoing process.
- To collaboratively learn how we ourselves can research and write within religious studies, an academic field that is inherently interdisciplinary, in preparation for independent research, by practicing reading, writing, and responding to various methods.
- To understand methodological and theoretical choices as full of interdisciplinary and self-reflexive possibility for asking questions about religion by reading and writing work beyond conventional boundaries and asking each other to make our own methods explicit.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Methods Papers (5 total; 6% each): 30%** For each of the first five methods we discuss, you will write a 2-3 page (double-spaced) paper where you practice writing in that method. The papers should have an argument and analyze evidence from the sources provided in a way that attends thoughtfully to the method. See Canvas for individual prompts. The papers are due Sun., 9/24, Sun., 10/8, Sun., 10/22, Sun., 11/5, and Thurs., 11/30 at 11:59pm.
- **Building Blocks (5 total): 15%** Ahead of each paper, you will write a building block to gather evidence, engage the methodology through analysis, test out ideas, and think through next steps. In small groups, you will read and offer comments on your groupmates' building blocks for each paper. The first building block will be credit/no credit and I will offer comments in addition to showing what grade you would have gotten on the rubric. Subsequent building blocks will be graded using the rubric to guide you. For one paper, your peer review group will meet with me to get verbal feedback. I'm also available during office hours. See Canvas for individual prompts. The building blocks are due to Canvas and shared with your peer review group and me to Google Docs on Wed., 9/20, Wed., 10/4, Wed., 10/18, Wed., 11/1, and Mon., 11/27 at 11:59pm.
- **Peer Reviews (6 total): 10%** Throughout the term, you will be in small writing groups where you read each other's work. The peer reviews will be written in response to a set of questions. They will be graded based on completion—credit for the summary comment and credit for the marginal comments. Your peer review group will meet with me twice throughout the semester—for one building block and for the draft. See Canvas for individual prompts. The peer reviews are due Thurs., 9/21, Thurs., 10/5, Thurs., 10/19, Thurs., 11/2, Tues., 11/28, and Tues., 12/5 at 11:59pm. They should be shared by Google Docs with me and your peer review group.
- **Independent Research Proposal (7-8 pages, double-spaced): 20% (5% for draft, 15% for final):** The final project for this class will be to develop an Independent Research Proposal for a possible senior paper. This could be a proposal for your actual senior paper, but it need not be. It can be for a project in any major or minor, as long as it connects to religion and/or methods we have discussed in this class. There will be a draft that small groups will comment on and workshop. See Canvas for more detailed prompt. The draft is due to Canvas on Tues., 12/5 at 11:59pm. The proposal is due to Canvas on Tues., 12/12 at 11:59pm.
- **Free Writes: 10%** About once a week, you will respond to a prompt about the readings in class. Free writes are an opportunity to reflect on the course material and test out ideas. Free writes are graded credit/no credit.

- **Final Reflection (at least 750 words): 5%** The final reflection will ask you to reflect on the goals of the course and what you've learned. See Canvas for full prompt. The final reflection is due to Canvas on Fri., 12/15 at 2pm.
- **Community Building: 10%** Our class is a community that requires the continuing contributions of everyone involved in order to flourish. We each shape our shared learning experience by paying attention and care to the learning process of others and ourselves. In class discussions, this means you can participate well in the course by asking questions, listening, responding, tying together ideas other students have expressed, or bringing us to a particular moment in the text. Respect for everyone in the classroom is essential. Use personal pronouns, and if you do not know, ask. See Canvas for Community Building rubric.

You must complete all of the course requirements. Failure to complete any course requirement may result in failure of the course. Prompts will be available on Canvas.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

For more information about University policies, please refer to the Transylvania University Student Handbook by [clicking here](#) or reaching out to the Academic Associate Dean's Office at academicassocdean@transy.edu or the Student Life Office at studentlife@transy.edu.

Attendance Policy

My expectation is that you attend all classes. If you will be absent, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can work something out. Communication is key. If you will be absent, I recommend getting notes from a classmate. Multiple absences warrant concern and may affect your final grade.

Electronic Devices

Accommodations will be provided on an individual basis for students who present documentation from the Disability Services Office.

Electronic devices may only be used for class purposes, such as accessing readings, in-class working docs, and Canvas.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to maintain the highest standard of academic honesty. Academic dishonesty by a student will not be tolerated. All students are expected to know Transylvania's policy on academic integrity as it is defined online in the college catalog. Ignorance or misunderstanding of the policy will not serve as an excuse for academic dishonesty. If you have questions about the policy you can find it at inside.transy.edu and/or ask me about it.

Citations

For all assignments, cite properly using Chicago Manual of Style or MLA Style.

Grading Scale

93-100% = A
90-92% = A-
87-89% = B+
83-86% = B
80-82% = B-
77-79% = C+

73-76% = C
70-72% = C-
67-69% = D+
63-66% = D
60-62% = D-
0-59% = F

Grading requirements will follow Transylvania's standard as laid out in the university catalog. The guidelines for evaluating performance in a course are:

A for excellent work
B for good work
C for satisfactory

D for minimally passing work
F for unsatisfactory/failing work

More specific expectations for each assignment will be discussed prior to the due date.

REQUIRED READINGS

- All required readings will be made available on Canvas.
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COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: The Study of Religion

Wed., 9/6 *Introducing Method*

- Reading:
 - None.
- Write/Do:
 - None.
- In Class:
 - Introductions.
 - What is Method? Applying methods activity.

Fri., 9/8: *Introducing the Study of Religion*

- Reading:
 - The Syllabus and Canvas.
 - Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*, 1-21.
 - Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, Table of Contents and 1-11.
- Write/Do:
 - Note any questions you have about the syllabus and Canvas.
 - Annotate for/take notes on what you gather about the history of the study of religion, according to Masuzawa. What are some key issues that emerge in studying religion?
 - Annotate for/take notes on what Otto means by "numinous."
- In Class:

- o Review syllabus.
 - o Introduce the history of the study of religion as an academic field.
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WEEK 2: The Study of Religion, cont.

Mon., 9/11: *Points of Friction*

- Reading:
 - o Charles Long, *Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion*, 11-30 (all read); 31-70, divide among the class.
- Write/Do:
 - o Annotate for/take notes on what Long means by hermeneutics and signification. How does Long see the study of religion as different/particular?
- In Class:
 - o Discuss Long.

Wed., 9/13: *Points of Friction*

- Reading:
 - o Beth Berkowitz, "Different Religions? Big and Little 'Religion' in Rabbis and Religious Studies," and Paul Dafydd Jones, "'A Cheerful Unease': Theology and Religious Studies," in Elizabeth Alexander and Beth Berkowitz, *Religious Studies and Rabbis: A Conversation*.
- Write/do:
 - o Annotate for/take notes on the methods of religious studies and rabbis.
- In Class:
 - o Discuss what it means to study Judaism in religious studies and what implications this might have for studying other "religions."

Fri., 9/15: *Institutionalization*

- Reading:
 - o Sarah Imhoff, "The Creation Story, or How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love *Schempp*," 466-497 (half the class). OR
 - o Lucia Hulsether, "The Grammar of Racism: Religious Pluralism and the Birth of the Interdisciplines," 1-41 (half the class).
 - Write/Do:
 - o Annotate for/take notes on how Imhoff or Hulsether describes how religion department came to be. How does this history affect method?
 - In-class:
 - o Introduce Theory & Practice Building Block and Paper.
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WEEK 3: Applying a Theory to a Practice

Mon., 9/18: *Reading Applied Theory*

- Reading:
 - Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, divide Book 2, chapters 1-7 among the class.
 - Kathryn Lofton, *Consuming Religion*, 164-196, pay particular attention to endnote 47.
- Write/do:
 - Annotate for/take notes on what Durkheim means by “totem.” How does a “totem” work?
 - Annotate for/take notes on how Lofton applies Durkheim’s “totem” to the Kardashians. What does applying this theory illuminate? What is at stake in applying this controversial theory to practices that might not fall under the category of a “world religion”?
- In-class:
 - Discuss applying a theory to a practice.

Wed., 9/20: *Sources for Applying Theory*

- Reading:
 - Pick one of the sources from a list posted to Canvas naming practices you might analyze in your paper.
- Write/Do:
 - Annotate for/take notes on something particularly intriguing, puzzling, mysterious, contradictory, or exciting about the source.
- In Class:
 - Plan for building block. Discuss what makes a productive workshop.

>> Theory & Practice Building Block due Wed., 9/20 at 11:59pm to Canvas. See Canvas for prompt.

>> Theory & Practice Peer Review due Thurs., 9/21 at 11:59pm by Google Docs. See Canvas for prompt.

Fri., 9/22: *Workshop*

- Reading:
 - Your peers’ building blocks.
- Write/Do:
 - Finish building block by Wednesday; finish peer review by Thursday.
 - Evaluate your own building block using the rubric and submit notes on going from building block to paper on your free write doc.
- In Class:
 - Workshop for Theory & Practice group.

>> Theory & Practice Paper due Sun., 9/24 at 11:59pm to Canvas. See Canvas for prompt.

WEEK 4: Reading and Theorizing History

Mon., 9/25: Reading History

- Reading:
 - John D. Wright, *Transylvania: Tutor to the West*, 47-64.
 - Transy and Race Timeline Items: 1829 By-Laws, Transy's Integration Debate. Must be on campus or VPN to access.
 - Tracy Clayton, "Roses and Thorns."
- Write/Do:
 - Annotate for/take notes on the following questions. How do each of these sources use evidence to make their arguments? What moves do they make? How do their analysis of evidence shape your understanding of "history" as a methodology? In what ways are these types of histories similar or different?
- In Class:
 - Introduction to History as Method and Transy & Race Project.

Wed., 9/27: Theorizing History

- Reading:
 - Kathryn Gin Lum, "The Historyless Heathen and the Stagnating Pagan: History as a Non-Native Category," *Religion and American Culture*, 52-91.
 - Bruce Lincoln, "Theses on Method," 8-10.
- Write/Do:
 - Annotate for/take notes on the following questions: What argument does Gin Lum make about history as a method? How does Gin Lum recommend "doing" history—what steps would one take? What conversations about history is she entering, and how is this important to studying religion?
 - Annotate for/take notes on the following questions: What argument does Lincoln make about the history of religion as a method? How does Lincoln recommend "doing" history of religion—what steps would one take? What conversations about history is he entering? How might we put Lincoln and Gin Lum in conversation?
- In Class:
 - Putting Lincoln and Gin Lum in conversation. Responses to Lincoln.

Fri., 9/29: Theorizing History, cont.

- Reading:
 - "Harvard and the Legacy of Slavery," Introduction.
- Write/Do:
 - Annotate for/take notes on the following questions: What narrative of history is the Harvard and the Legacy of Slavery project telling? What are the goals of this narrative? Who is speaking and who is the audience?
- In-class:
 - Introduce History Building Block and Paper.

Week 5: Doing History.

Mon., 10/2: *Gathering Sources*

- Reading—explore the below databases:
 - Digital Access Project, Fayette County Clerk.
 - Rambler Student Newspaper
 - Crimson Yearbook
 - University Documents
- Write/Do:
 - Find at least three sources that you are prepared to discuss in relationship to Transy's history as we discussed last week.
- In Class:
 - Special Collections Visit.

Wed., 10/4: *Choosing Sources*

- Reading:
 - Review sources from Monday and the Special Collections visit.
- Write/Do:
 - Annotate/take notes on one of the sources: Who is writing it? Who is the audience? What is the purpose of the source?
- In Class:
 - Discuss sources and prepare for building block.

>> History Paper Building Block due Wed., 10/4 at 11:59pm to Canvas. See Canvas for prompt.

>> History Paper Peer Review due Thurs., 10/5 at 11:59pm by Google Docs. See Canvas for prompt.

Fri., 10/6: *History Workshop*

- Reading:
 - Your peers' building blocks.
- Write/Do:
 - Finish building block by Wednesday; finish peer review by Thursday.
 - Evaluate your own building block using the rubric and submit notes on going from building block to paper on your free write doc.
- In Class:
 - Workshop for History group.

>> History Paper due Sun., 10/8 at 11:59pm to Canvas. See Canvas for prompt.

WEEK 6: Reading and Theorizing Quantitative Sociology

Mon., 10/9: Reading Quantitative Sociology

- Reading:
 - Saugher Nojan, "Racialized Religion and Civic Engagement: Insights into Intra-Muslim Racial Diversity on University Campuses," 36-59.
- Write/Do:
 - Annotate for/take notes on the following questions: How does Nojan use evidence to make her argument? What moves does Nojan make? How does Nojan's analysis of evidence shape your understanding of "quantitative sociology" as a methodology?
- In Class:
 - Introduce Quantitative sociology.

Wed., 10/11: Theorizing Quantitative Sociology

- Reading:
 - Robert Wuthnow, "Measuring Belief" in *Inventing American Religion: Polls, Surveys, and the Tenuous Quest for a Nation's Faith*, 44-67.
- Write/Do:
 - Annotate for/take notes on the following questions: What argument does Wuthnow make about the method of quantitative sociology? How does the history he provides shape how you will approach this method?
- In Class:
 - Discuss theories, benefits and drawbacks of the method.

Fri., 10/13: Theorizing Quantitative Sociology, cont.

- Reading:
 - Rachel Gross, "Who Counts as a Jew?"
- Write/Do:
 - Annotate for/take notes on the following questions: What argument does Gross make about the method of quantitative sociology? What does she caution against?
- In Class:
 - Discuss theories, benefits and drawbacks of the method. Introduce Quantitative Sociology Building Block and Paper.

WEEK 7: Doing Quantitative Sociology**Mon., 10/16:**

- **Fall Break, no class.**

Wed., 10/18: Sources

- Reading:
 - Pew Religious Landscape Data—play around with analyzed data.
 - Writing Survey Questions

- o Association of Religion Data Archives—play around with at least one data set.
 - o Stata v. R v. SPSS for Data Analysis
- Write/Do:
 - o Annotate for/take notes on how you might use these sources in a paper.
- In Class:
 - o Discuss survey data. Discuss building block.

>> Quantitative Sociology Paper Building Block due Wed., 10/18 at 11:59pm to Canvas. See Canvas for prompt.

>> Quantitative Sociology Paper Peer Review due Thurs., 10/19 at 11:59pm by Google Docs. See Canvas for prompt.

Fri., 10/20: *Workshop*

- Reading:
 - o Your peers' building blocks.
- Write/Do:
 - o Finish building block by Wednesday; finish peer review by Thursday.
 - o Evaluate your own building block using the rubric and submit notes on going from building block to paper on your free write doc.
- In Class:
 - o Workshop for Quantitative Sociology group.

>> Quantitative Sociology Paper due Sunday, 10/22 at 11:59pm to Canvas. See Canvas for prompt.

WEEK 8: Reading and Theorizing Philosophy of Religion

Mon., 10/23: *Reading Philosophy of Religion*

- Reading:
 - o Molly Farneth, "Feminist Jewish Thought as Postliberal Theology."
- Write/Do:
 - o Annotate for/take notes on the following questions: How does Farneth use evidence to make her argument? What moves does Farneth make? How does Farneth's analysis of evidence shape your understanding of "philosophy and ethics" as a methodology?
- In Class:
 - o Introduce Philosophy of Religion. Discuss Farneth.

Wed., 10/25: *Theorizing Philosophy of Religion*

- Reading:
 - o Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Philosophy of Religion."
- Write/Do:
 - o Annotate for/take notes on the following questions: What are some of the main features of the philosophy of religion?

- In Class:
 - Discuss approaches to philosophy of religion.

Fri., 10/27: *Theorizing Philosophy of Religion, cont.*

- Reading:
 - Immanuel Kant, "Conception of Philosophy in General," in *Introduction to Logic*.
 - Cornel West, "Introduction: Race Matters" in *Race Matters* (3 pages).
 - Write/Do:
 - Annotate for/take notes on the following questions: What arguments do Kant and West make about the method of philosophy of religion? How might we put Kant's view in conversation with West's views? How would you situate their work within the Stanford article from Wednesday?
 - In Class:
 - Introduce Philosophy of Religion Building Block and Paper.
-

WEEK 9: Doing Philosophy of Religion

Mon., 10/30: *Sources*

- Reading:
 - Richard Rorty, "Religion as a Conversation-Stopper," in *Philosophy and Social Hope*, 168-174.
 - Nicholas Wolterstorff, "An Engagement with Rorty," in *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 129-39.
 - Richard Rorty "Religion in the Public Square: A Reconsideration," in *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 141-49.
- Write/Do:
 - Annotate for/take notes on the main points of debate between Wolterstorff and Rorty. Which methods are they using to make their points?
- In Class:
 - Discuss approaches to the building block and paper.

Wed., 11/1: *Sources*

- Reading:
 - Mark Gaipa, "Breaking into the Conversation."
- Write/Do:
 - Annotate for/take notes on how you might enter the conversation between Wolterstorff and Rorty.
- In Class:
 - Discuss approaches to the building block and paper.

>> Philosophy of Religion Paper Building Block due Wed., 11/1 at 11:59pm to Canvas. See Canvas for prompt.

>> Philosophy of Religion Paper Peer Review due Thurs., 11/2 at 11:59pm by Google Docs. See Canvas for prompt.

Fri., 11/3: *Workshop*

- Reading:
 - Your peers' building blocks.
- Write/Do:
 - Finish building block by Wednesday; finish peer review by Thursday.
 - Evaluate your own building block using the rubric and submit notes on going from building block to paper on your free write doc.
- In Class:
 - Workshop for Philosophy of Religion group.

>> Philosophy of Religion Paper due Sunday, 11/5 at 11:59pm to Canvas. See Canvas for prompt.

WEEK 10: Genealogy

Mon., 11/6: *Reading Genealogy*

- Reading:
 - John Modern, "Toward a Genealogy of Spirituality" in *Secularism in Antebellum America*, 119-181.
- Write/Do:
 - Annotate for/take notes on how Modern traces the concept of spiritual over time. What sources does he use? (How) is this different than a historical method?
- In Class:
 - Introduce Genealogy as a Method.

Wed., 11/8: *Theorizing Genealogy*

- Reading:
 - Talal Asad, "The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category," in *Genealogies of Religion*, 27-54.
- Write/Do:
 - Annotate for/take notes on the implications of Asad's claims for using the genealogical method.
- In Class:
 - Discuss Asad. Start genealogy activity.

Fri., 11/10: *Doing Genealogy*

- Reading:
 - Mary Douglas, "Ritual Uncleanliness" in *Purity and Danger*, 7-29.
 - Sharon Otterman, "A White Restaurateur Advertised 'Clean' Chinese Food. Chinese-Americans Had Something to Say About It."
- Write/Do:

- o Find one more source that you might use to help you trace the genealogy of “cleanliness.” Can be a primary or scholarly source.
 - In Class:
 - o Finish genealogy activity.
-

WEEK 11: Reading and Theorizing Ethnography

Mon., 11/13: *Reading Ethnography*

- Reading:
 - o Elizabeth Pérez, Introduction to *Religion in the Kitchen: Cooking, Talking, and the Making of the Black Atlantic*.
- Write/Do:
 - o Annotate for/take notes on the following questions: What kind of evidence and analysis does she use? What is her role in the space? What kinds of claims is she able to make through this methodology?
- In Class:
 - o Introduction to ethnography.

Wed., 11/15: *Theorizing Ethnography*

- Reading:
 - o Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” in *The Interpretations of Cultures*, 3-30.
- Write/Do:
 - o Annotate for/take notes on the following questions: what does Geertz mean by “thick description.” How does he use “thick description” to theorize ethnography as a method? What kinds of evidence and analysis does he suggest that ethnographers use?
- In Class:
 - o Discuss ethnography and ethics. Introduce Ethnography Building Block and Paper.

Fri., 11/17: *Theorizing Ethnography*

- Reading:
 - o Start CTI Online Training.
 - o Sean Sherman, “The Thanksgiving Tale We Learn is a Lie.”
 - Write/Do:
 - o Take notes on ethical issues that might arise in your research.
 - In Class:
 - o Discuss building block possibilities.
 - o Annotate for/take notes on Sherman’s point about the Thanksgiving story and how this context might shape your paper.
 - o Discuss ethnographic sites. Introduce final project: research proposal.
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WEEK 12: No Class, Thanksgiving

Mon., 11/20: *No Class*

- Reading:
 - Finish CTI Online Training.
- Write/Do:
 - Take notes on ethical issues that might arise in your research.
- In Class:
 - No Class. Dr. Ribovich at a conference.

Wed., 11/22-Fri., 11/24: No Class

- No Class. Thanksgiving Break. Collect ethnographic data.
-

WEEK 13: Doing Ethnography and Your Proposals

Mon., 11/27: *Ethnographic Reflections*

- Reading:
 - Robert Emerson, et. al., *Writing Ethnographic Field Notes*, 1-20.
- Write/Do:
 - Annotate for/take notes on which kinds of field notes most appeal to you.
- In Class:
 - Discuss field notes and building blocks. Check in about research proposal.

>> Ethnography Paper Building Block due Mon., 11/27 at 11:59pm to Canvas. See Canvas for prompt.

>> Ethnography Paper Peer Review due Tues., 11/28 at 11:59pm by Google Docs. See Canvas for prompt.

Wed., 11/29: *Workshop*

- Reading:
 - Your peers' building blocks.
- Write/Do:
 - Finish building block by Wednesday; finish peer review by Thursday.
 - Evaluate your own building block using the rubric and submit notes on going from building block to paper on your free write doc.
- In Class:
 - Workshop for Ethnography group.

>> Ethnography Paper due Thurs., 11/30 at 11:59pm to Canvas. See Canvas for prompt.

Fri., 12/1: *Your Proposals*

- Reading:
 - N/A.
- Write/Do:
 - Think about possible topics for the final project.
- In Class:
 - Time to brainstorm proposals.

WEEK 14: Proposal Workshops and Conclusions

Mon., 12/4: Your Proposals

- Reading:
 - Two sources toward your proposal.
- Write/Do:
 - Annotate for/take notes on how the sources will frame your method.
- In Class:
 - Work on proposals. Introduce Final Reflection.

>> Draft Proposals due to Canvas on Tues., 12/5 at 11:59pm.

Wed., 12/6: Workshops

- Reading:
 - Read your group members' draft proposals.
- Write/Do:
 - >> Peer Review of Draft Proposals due to Google Docs before your group meeting.**
- In Class:
 - No regular class; workshop draft proposals during set meeting time.

Fri., 12/8: Conclusions

- Reading:
 - Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "Articulating an Indigenous Research Agenda" in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 123-140.
- Write/Do:
 - Work on Proposal.
 - Annotate for/take notes on how Tuhiwai Smith disrupts academic methodologies.
- In Class:
 - Conclusions. Time to work on Final Reflection.

>> Proposal due to Canvas on Tues., 12/12 at 11:59pm.

>> Final Reflection due to Canvas on Fri., 12/15 at 2pm

Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Non-Discrimination

Transylvania University is committed to providing a workplace and educational environment, as well as other benefits, programs, and activities, that are free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in accordance with Title IX of the Civil Rights Act.

To ensure compliance with federal and state civil rights laws and regulations, and to affirm our commitment to promoting the goals of fairness and equity in all aspects of the educational program or activity, Transylvania University has developed internal policies and procedures that provide a prompt, fair, and impartial process for those involved in an allegation of discrimination or harassment on the basis of protected class status, and for allegations of retaliation.

For more information about the university's policy and grievance processes, visit our [Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Non-Discrimination page](#). For more information about Title IX policies, procedures, and reporting, visit the [Title IX Office's website](#). The Title IX page also includes information about the university's [Pregnant and Parenting policy](#).

Reports of misconduct can be made to the [Title IX Coordinator](#).

Reports can also be made to the following individuals who have been designated as Mandated Reporters by the University: all cabinet members (with the exception of the Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion), department supervisors, faculty program chairs, coaches (academic and athletic), Housing and Residence Life staff (including Area Coordinators and Resident Advisors), and all staff who work for the Department of Public Safety.

These individuals are employees of Transylvania University who are obligated by policy to share knowledge, notice, and/or reports of harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation with the Title IX Coordinator.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) sets forth requirements regarding the privacy of student records. FERPA governs both the access to and release of those records, known as education records, and the information they contain. Under FERPA, faculty have a legal responsibility to protect the confidentiality of student records. Items that can never be identified as public information are a student's social security number, citizenship, gender, grades, GPA, or class schedule. All efforts will be made in this class to protect your privacy and to ensure confidential treatment of information associated with or generated by your participation in the class. For additional information, please see [Transylvania University's FERPA policy](#) or contact the [Office of the Registrar](#) (859-233-8116).

Online Conduct

Transylvania University affirms the usage of various instructional technologies within our physical and remote learning environments. Students and faculty agree to use these technologies in order to enhance learning and will refrain from disruptive, inappropriate, or aggressive digital behavior, including, but not limited to, unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class materials, cyberbullying or online harassment both within and

beyond classroom learning platforms (i.e. Learning Management Software, Social Media, Blogs, etc.), or any other technological usage that could impair a fellow student's learning or the instructor's ability to teach.

Statement of Community

Transylvania University is dedicated to creating and maintaining an environment that encourages civil academic discourse and scholarly growth. As stated in our mission, our campus community values independent thinking, open-mindedness, and creative expression. Therefore, we aim to foster a climate of respect which is vital to ensuring that all members are treated with courtesy, dignity, and compassion. Creating a community built on these ideals is a responsibility shared by all campus members. We value a willingness to listen to those whose opinions may be different than our own and showing respect to those with differing viewpoints. Our community benefits when its members engage in discussions and activities that acknowledge the value, diverse perspectives, and unique contributions each person brings to our campus. In our conversations and through our actions, we endeavor to treat our community members with the dignity and respect to which all Pioneers are entitled.

STUDENT RESOURCE INFORMATION

Student Accessibility Services

Student Accessibility Services at Transylvania University is committed to providing equitable academic access through reasonable accommodations for students with both visible and non-visible disabilities. In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Student Accessibility Services works with students to develop a plan for academic as well as residential accommodations.

Students are required to provide current documentation from a healthcare provider (therapist, psychiatrist, general practitioner, etc) of a diagnosis warranting academic accommodations. Diagnoses include, but are not limited to: specific learning disabilities, Autism, dyslexia, depression, PTSD, and anxiety. IEPs and 504 plans from high school are considered additional documentation but may not be sufficient to warrant accommodations.

Goals:

- Provide equitable opportunities for full participation in academics as well as activities outside of the classroom.
- Dissolve the stigma associated with having a visible or non-visible disability, using accommodations, and seeking/receiving assistance from our office.
- Strengthen self-advocacy skills and improve study skills within a challenging academic environment.

For additional information, contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) or visit the [office's website](#).

Testing Center

The Testing Center is available for students who have been granted testing accommodations through Transylvania University Student Accessibility Services.

Please email the [Testing Center](#) at least 3 business days before the day of the exam to reserve your space at the Testing Center. For final exams, requests need to be sent two weeks in advance due to a high volume of student use.

See the [Testing Center website](#) for more information about it and its policies.

Please contact the [Testing Center Coordinator](#) if you have any questions.

Transy Tutoring (TT) & Embedded Learning Forums (ELF)

Transy Tutoring is peer-to-peer academic tutoring and a free service for ALL Transy students. Our tutors have taken the same courses as you, are faculty recommended and trained to offer you academic support as you work through your semester.

Individual appointments and drop-in tutoring are both available online or in-person. Drop-in hours are Sunday-Thursday from 7-9 in the ACE (Library basement).

To register for an appointment, check out our [MyTRANSY APP](#). *Bookmark this [Google Doc](#) to quickly access our schedule!

For more information about Transy Tutoring, Embedded Learning Forums, or ESL support please reach out to [Laura Scroggins](#), Director of the Tutoring Center.

TU Writing Center (TUWC)

The Transylvania University Writing Center (TUWC) is a space for our campus community to discuss writing. Our trained peer consultants help students and faculty members dream, draft, and develop texts for a variety of audiences and purposes. Our patrons range from first-years honing their skills as college writers to seniors preparing themselves for the job market or graduate research.

Students do not need to have a written product in order to have a session. In fact, some of our best and most productive sessions are process-oriented and focus on brainstorming or understanding a writing assignment. Staffers are also well-trained in helping develop presentations and digital texts.

Please visit our [website](#) to learn more and make an appointment. For more information about how to make an appointment via our scheduling service, please visit our [tutorials page](#).

Religion Program Inclusive Learning Statement

The Religion Program at Transylvania University is committed to the creation and maintenance of “inclusive learning” spaces. Classrooms and other places of learning are places where you will be treated with respect and dignity and where all individuals are provided equitable opportunity to participate, contribute, and succeed.

In our courses all students are welcome regardless of race/ethnicity, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disabilities, religion, regional background, Veteran status, citizenship status, nationality and other diverse identities that we each bring to class. Indeed, we believe that the more voices that are included and empowered in our classrooms, enhances the learning experience for everyone.

Success in our classroom and beyond is enhanced by the innovation and creativity of thought that inclusive classrooms facilitate. The success of an inclusive classroom relies on the participation, support, and understanding of everyone. We encourage all of you to speak up and share your views, but also understand that you are doing so in a learning environment in which we all are expected to engage respectfully and with regard to the dignity of all others. The instructors in your courses are committed to the responsibility of creating and maintaining these inclusive spaces through dialogue and constructive exchange of ideas.

Adopted and Adapted from the KU Center For Teaching Excellence

Religion Program Writing Statement

Studying religion means studying writing. The following principles guide the Transylvania University Religion Program’s approach to writing:

- We value writing as a community, which we build when we enter the classroom. As a community, we value being open to revision, feedback, and conversation.
- Revision goes beyond the sentence level to clarifying our ideas and how we structure them. Revision sometimes feels like “rewriting,” but no writing is ever wasted. The old adage “writing is rewriting” rings true.
- Though writing is often personal, feedback on a piece of writing is a commitment to its ideas and to the author. It is not a criticism of the author as a person but encouragement for more clearly discovering and articulating the author’s voice, which has value.
- No writing is ever wasted because writing is a process. It involves reading, taking notes, having conversations, mapping ideas, gathering evidence, reading aloud, drafting, getting feedback, incorporating the feedback with attention to local and large-scale claims, and more.

- Writing is a practice; cultivating a routine around writing—whatever that looks like for us—can help it from becoming an intimidating experience.
- Racism, gender-bias, and other forms of injustice exist, [including in the English language and in approaches to teaching and practicing writing](#). By focusing on features of academic writing that allow us to develop our own voices, we aim to decolonize the notion that there is a “correct” way to write.
- Writing is a way to communicate, to express oneself, to learn. Writing is a space for articulating our own ideas and engaging with the ideas of others.
- Everyone has something to communicate and learn, so anyone can write effective, transformative work.
- Writing can create the possibility for change.

Effective essays communicate the author’s ideas clearly. The following are not rules; they are suggested tools for successfully communicating the author’s ideas to the reader. Although each professor will develop rubrics for individual classes and assignments, in general, we value the following features of academic writing:

Motive: the intellectual context that makes the thesis interesting. The question, tension, puzzle, contradiction, gap, or something else in the evidence that *motivates* the thesis, usually early on in the essay.

Thesis: the paper’s central claim, an original argument about the evidence. The thesis is arguable, meaning that someone could argue against it. It extends, critiques, or clarifies other arguments. The thesis arises from a reading of sources. As a result, the more specific the thesis, the better. This can feel counterintuitive—often the big claim about “society” can feel more effective. However, explicating how a particular dynamic is at play in a specific source or sources leads to a much more effective claim. The thesis usually appears early in the essay.

Evidence: the source material the paper draws on to make its claims. This may be a quotation from a text, the music in a television episode, or numbers from a dataset. We are open to diverse kinds of evidence. Authors choose evidence carefully. The evidence genuinely leads to the author’s point (no cherry-picking), and goes beyond summary.

Analysis: what the paper does with the evidence to reach the thesis. Analysis may be the act of assembling pieces of evidence to reach a new conclusion, or unraveling the meaning of a key term. Analysis involves explanation and interpretation in the author’s own voice. There is usually more analysis than evidence in any given paragraph.

Structure: the way the paper develops its reasoning. Papers develop the motive and thesis, step by step. Paragraphs are the logical unfolding of the thesis. Depending on what the thesis is, the structure may vary. The structure serves the reader’s understanding of the author’s ideas. Authors walk the reader through the thesis step by step, with strong topic sentences based in the author’s original claims, not a summary of what a source says or does.

An author can effectively use these features of academic writing across diverse genres and prompts. The features of writing are here to help you communicate your ideas, not limit you. Creativity is encouraged! We want to know what you have to say! We have developed these features of academic writing from Gordon Harvey's "[Elements of the Academic Essay](#)" and the Princeton Writing Programs "[A Writing Lexicon](#)," which we encourage you to read as you write an essay in a Religion course. These sources include more important features of academic writing, which we also value.