RLST 103 Decolonizing Religion
Spring 2022
University of California-Riverside

Instructor: Dr. Amanda Lucia
Email:
Office hours: Mondays 12:30-2pm (in person)

Course Description:
This course investigates the constitution of the Western category of religion as it was (and is) fortified through colonial encounter. Engaging deeply with colonial archives, this course underscores the collaboration between religion and colonial domination. It also mines the archive for the principles of the study of comparative religion, whereby it critically engages the foundations of the discipline of Religious Studies. Students will explore how the colonial theater gave rise to the modern category of religion and the study of comparative religions. It will also explore decolonizing methodologies in Religious Studies, including liberation theology and critical theory.

Prerequisites: This is an upper-division course. Students must have upper-division standing or consent of instructor.

Course Objectives:
- Articulate an understanding of how religion has operated and continues to operate in a variety of colonial encounters
- Craft a reflexive historiography of the category of religion, and the discourses through which religion and the study of religion are constituted
- Demonstrate knowledge of a diversity of religious justifications for colonization, but also how religion was (and is) used for projects of liberation and decolonization
- Demonstrate a familiarity with key theoretical ideas
- Develop critical thinking and academic writing skills

Requirements:
1) Educated participation and regular attendance. This class will be structured around lectures, films, and class discussion. I expect students to attend class each session, arrive promptly, and participate in active and educated discussions. Not only is class participation a considerable portion of your grade (10% - a full letter grade), but also you will find class discussion to be helpful in understanding and processing these materials. Educated discussion means that you have read the assigned materials, thought about the content, and posed a question or two (if not more) in the margins that might be points of inquiry.

2) There will be a midterm and a final exam, each of which will consist of multiple choice and short essays. Students may bring in a 3x5 notecard with handwritten notes for reference during the exams.

3) Film review: Students will watch a film situated in a colonial context and critically analyze portrayals of colonialism therein using the theoretical tools discussed in class. Many films are appropriate for this assignment, but films must be approved by Dr. Lucia. There is also a film list on ilearn that lists possible options. Students will write a 2-page-review of the film (12pt. font, double spaced). The film review must be turned in by the last day of class.

4) 1500 word (6-page) research paper: Students must choose ONE colonial era historical event (recent history in a settler colonial context is also fine) as a focus of their research paper. Students should then investigate this event ***using primary sources*** and write a 1500 word (6-page) paper explaining its ramifications and how it was influential in the colonial context both for the colonized and the colonizer, e.g. both "at home" and in "the territories." Examples from the Indian context: the 1857 "Indian Mutiny," the 1829 ban on "Sati," the establishment of Sir William Jones' Asiatick Researches (1784), Macaulay's "Minute on Education" (1835), and so on. [Students should feel free to choose a historical example from any other colonial context – whether discussed in class or discovered outside of class.] Both academic sources (peer reviewed articles and books) and primary sources (travelogues, missionary accounts, administrative records, letters, budgets, etc.) should be used to formulate and support the paper's argument. *Time will be designated during lectures to discuss and experiment with archival methodologies. Students are also strongly encouraged to discuss topics and research methods with the professor in office hours.*

5) Oral presentation: Pieces of the archive. Students will present a piece of the archive in a 5-minute oral presentation. Oral presentations should address the contents, notable features, class themes represented, vocality, perspective, and social and historical context. Presentations should also hypothesize next steps if one wanted to learn more about the material addressed in that primary document. Student should turn in a printed page of the archive under discussion and a 1 page synopsis of the oral presentation.

UCR Digital Archives: https://guides.lib.ucr.edu/az.php?v=49420

Grading:

1500 word (6-page) research paper	25%
Midterm exam	25%
Final Exam	25%
Participation: Attendance and Class Discussion	10%
Film Review	10%
Oral Presentation	5%

Grading:

Grading Scale:

A+ = 98-100%	B+ = 88-89%	C+ = 78-79%	D+ = 68-69%
A = 92-97%	B = 82-87%	C = 72-77%	D = 62-67%
A- = 90-91%	B- = 80-81%	C- = 70-71%	D- = 60-61%
			F = <59%

This course operates under University of California-Riverside Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures. Academic honesty is absolutely necessary. Please refer to http://conduct.ucr.edu for information on this subject. Plagiarism is not tolerated at UCR and has serious consequences. Your essays and exams must be your own work and inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism. The consequences for plagiarism in any form range from a zero on the assignment in question to a failing grade in the course. If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor.

Upsetting materials: The contents of the colonial archive are inherently violent. This violence is racialized and sexualized, and it will hit differently depending on one's positionality and personal relation to the materials. Please come to class with the acute recognition and visible awareness of that fact. Privilege the voices of POC students in discussion. All students are expected to engage with all course materials. If students are unprepared to do so, they should not take this class. If students find they are struggling with the violence of a particular reading/discussion/oral presentation, *they should excuse themselves without question and contact the professor for a "check in" and an alternate assignment.* To the extent possible, please give trigger warnings when appropriate during oral presentations, the professor will do so as well during lectures.

*The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed. *

Required Books:
all course materials are available on ilearn in PDF format

Course Schedule and Assignments:

FOUNDATIONAL EPISTEMOLOGIES

WEEK 1 (3/28 and 3/30)
Monday: Introduction to Decolonizing Religion
Assignment due on Wednesday: Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Chapter 2, p. 44-60 (ilearn PDF)

Wednesday: The Construction of Categories: Defining Knowledge, Defining Disciplines
Assignment due on Monday: Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Chapter 3, p. 61-80 (ilearn PDF)

WEEK 2: (4/4 and 4/6)
Monday: The Construction of Categories: Cultural Encounter
Assignment due on Wednesday: Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, "Does the Colonial Exist," 1-18 and "Portrait of the Colonized," 77-89 (ilearn PDF)

COLONIZER/COLONIZED

Wednesday: The Colonizer and the Colonized
Assignment due on Monday: Franz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, "The Black Man and Language," p. 1-23.

WEEK 3: (4/11 and 4/13)
Monday: Race in the Periphery and in the Center
Assignment due on Wednesday: Jennifer Scheper Hughes, "The Colony as the Mystical Body of Christ," *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Anthropology*, Volume 64, Issue 4, 21–41 (ilearn PDF)

Wednesday: Bodies of Territory/Territories of Bodies
Assignment due on Monday: Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Introduction, pp. 1-30 (ilearn PDF)

WEEK 4: (4/18 and 4/20)
Monday: Imagining Self and Other
Assignment due on Wednesday: Edward Said, *Orientalism*, "Knowing the Oriental," 31-48. (ilearn PDF)

Wednesday: Defining Europe through the Colony
Assignment due on Monday: Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, "Interrogating Identity: Franz Fanon and the Postcolonial Prerogative," p. 57-93 (ilearn PDF)

WEEK 5: (4/25 and 4/27)
Monday: Colonial Hybridities: Self and Other
Assignment due on Wednesday: STUDY FOR MIDTERM EXAM

Wednesday: MIDTERM EXAM
Assignment due on Monday: Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*, "The Religions of the World Before 'World Religions,'" p. 37-71 (ilearn PDF)

INVENTING RELIGION

WEEK 6: (5/2 and 5/4)
Monday: Inventing World Religions
Assignment due on Wednesday: Brian Pennington, *Was Hinduism Invented?* "Constructing Colonial Dharma in Calcutta," p. 139-165 (ilearn PDF) **OR** Jason Josephson Storm, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, "Inventing Japanese Religions," p. 192-224 (ilearn PDF) **OR** William Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish" *Anthropology and Aesthetics*, No. 9 (Spring, 1985), pp. 5-17 (ilearn, PDF) **OR** Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Chapter 6, "Colonialism as a System for Underdeveloping Africa," (ilearn, PDF)

Wednesday: Inventing Religion in Context
Assignment due on Monday: Noura Erakat, *Justice for Some*, "Colonial Erasures," p. 23-61.

INVENTING THE NATION

WEEK 7: (5/9 and 5/11)
Monday: Inventing the Nation
Assignment due on Wednesday: Sumathi Ramaswamy, "Art on the Line: Cartography and Creativity in a Divided World," Chapter 7 in *Decolonizing the Map* (ilearn PDF)

Wednesday: Decolonizing the Map
Assignment due on Monday: Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, "On Violence," p, 1-51 (ilearn PDF)

LIBERATION THEOLOGY AND DECOLONIZATION

WEEK 8: (5/16 and 5/18) (
(BOTH CLASSES OVER ZOOM)
Monday: Introducing a Path to Decolonization
Assignment due on Wednesday: Ngũgĩ wa Thiongo, "Decolonising the Mind," *Diogenes*, Volume: 46 issue: 184, page(s): 101-104, December 1, 1998 (ilearn PDF)

Wednesday: Decolonizing the mind/Decolonizing Language
Assignment due on Monday: Gustavo Gutierrez, *Theology of Liberation*, "The Church: Sacrament of History," p. 143-161 (ilearn PDF)
FINAL PAPER DUE (by Saturday at 11:59pm)

WEEK 9: (5/23 and 5/25)
Monday: Introduction to Liberation Theology
Assignment due on Wednesday: James Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, 99-126 (ilearn PDF)

Wednesday: Introduction to Black Liberation Theology
Assignment due on Monday: George L. Jackson, *Blood in my Eye*, 1-41 (ilearn PDF)

WEEK 10: (5/30 and 6/1)
Monday: NO CLASS – MEMORIAL DAY – (It's a good day to watch a film!)
Assignment due on Wednesday: Tyson Yunkaporta, *Sand Talk: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World*, 1-40 (ilearn PDF)

Wednesday: Decolonization in Present and Future: from Self-Reflexivity to Armed Struggle

FILM REVIEW DUE (by Wednesday *during class*)

FINAL EXAM: Monday June 6th, 8am – 11am