

RLST 202
Contemporary Theory in the Study of Religion
Fall 2021
Wednesdays 9:00-11:50
INTN 2009

Instructor: Dr. Amanda
Lucia Email:
Office hours:

Course Description: This course provides a graduate level introduction to contemporary theoretical interventions that can be useful in the study of religion. It also analyzes contemporary cultural issues that pose challenges to the nature of religion and the way it is studied. Issues discussed include race, gender, power, colonialism, and religious commitment.

Course Objectives:

- Articulate an understanding of the key thematics of the readings
- Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical interventions covered, and their context
- Develop critical thinking and academic writing skills

Requirements:

- 1) **Educated participation and regular attendance.** This class will be conducted seminar style and mostly dependent on class discussion. I expect students to attend class each session, arrive promptly, and participate in active and educated discussions. Students are expected to actively engage and assist in leading discussions.
- 2) **Read.** You must read in a detailed manner for this course. Failure to exhibit that you have read effectively and thoroughly will significantly impact your final grade.
- 3) **Discussion Leader:** Students will choose one reading assignment and prepare remarks to introduce the text (10 minutes).
- 4) **Discussion Paper:** This short paper (800-1000) words should be an introduction to and a summation of the critical interventions made by the author(s) of the text that the student introduced as the Discussion Leader. Students can use this paper as a guide for their efforts as Discussion Leaders. They should be turned in at the start of the class wherein the Discussion occurs.
- 5) **Research Paper:** This paper should be on a topic of students' choosing related to ONE PASSAGE of one of the theorists that we are studying in this course. Students should evaluate the passage, consider its import with regard to the theorist's larger oeuvre of work, as well as its implications for scholarship and the study of religion. *Students are highly encouraged to meet with the instructor during office hours to discuss paper topics.* This paper is due at the end of the course and should be 15-20 pages long.

Grading:

Attendance/Discussion/Effective Reading	20%
Discussion Leader	20%
Discussion Paper	20%
Final Paper	40%

*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.***

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

WEEK 1 (9/29)

Hermeneutics

Hans Gadamer/Jacques Derrida debate, *Dialogue and Deconstruction* (ilearn PDF)

WEEK 2 (10/6)

Anthropological Critique

Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*

Or Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*

WEEK 3 (10/13)

Poststructuralism/History

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

Or *The Birth of Biopolitics*

WEEK 4 (10/20)

Postcolonial Theory/Subaltern

Studies/NeoMarxism Dipesh Chakrabarty,
Provincializing Europe

Or Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

WEEK 5 (10/27)

Cultural Studies/Social History

Stuart Hall, *Representations*

Or Robert Young, *White Mythologies*

WEEK 6 (11/3)

Race/Ethnic Studies

Denise Ferreira de Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*

Or John L. and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc.*

WEEK 7 (11/10)

Gender Studies

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*

Or M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*

WEEK 8 (11/17)

Post-structuralism/Sociology

Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*

Or Ann Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered*

WEEK 9 (11/24)

Psychology

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

Or Peter Sloterdijk, *You Must Change your Life*

WEEK 10 (12/1)

Post-Foucaultian/Anthropology

Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*

Or William Mazzarella, *The Mana of Mass Society*

Final Paper Due: Thursday December 9th by midnight

