
The Problem of Religion

Required Texts:

Course Reader (Available at UCR Printing and Reprographics/Services) All readings are in **Reader**, unless otherwise specified.

Preus, *Explaining Religion*

Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History*

Books are available at UCR bookstore or online bookstores in new or used condition: www.amazon.com ; www.bookfinder.com ; www.addall.com ; www.powells.com ; www.ebay.com ; www.alibris.com ; www.abe.com ; www.bookavenue.com ; www.tomfolio.com ; www.half.com

Course Requirements:

1. **Five assigned papers** of 2-3 pages each. **At least two papers** must be taken from **each "Part"** = 50%
2. **Final exam** = 50%

Part I: Cultural Problems for Religion

- 2 Ap **Introductory Remarks**
Definitions of Religion; Is Humanism a Religion?; Koresh and the Branch Davidians, "Cult" or "Religion" Humanism, A "Religion"?
- 4 Apr **Natural Religion, Science of Religion and Deism**
Sharpe, ch 1, Samuel Preus, *Explaining Religion*, ch 1-2; "America's Unchristian Beginnings"; "Christian Influences".
- 9, 11 Apr **History and the Bible**
"Miracle' Awe Hindus Worldwide"; Preus, ch 5, "David Hume"; Charlotte Allen, "The Search for a No-Frills Jesus"; The Jesus Seminar; David Remnick on Elaine Pagels, "The Devil Problem" Immanuel Wolf, "The Science of Judaism," The Jew in the Modern World, 194-5
- 16, 18 Ap **The Shock of the Old: Max Müller and the Aryans**
Sharpe, ch 2; Friedrich Max Müller, *Natural Religion*, 212-20; "Lecture on the Vedas", 128-37, 416-33; Strenski, "Max-Müller, Myth and Religion-as-Such", 57-63
- 23, 25 Apr **The Shock of the "Primitive": Tylor, Evolution and Animism**
Preus, ch 7, "E. B. Tylor"; Tylor, "The Spirit-World"
- 30 Apr **The Shock of the "Primitive": Frazer, Robertson Smith**
Frazer, "William Robertson Smith"; Robertson Smith, Religion of the Semites 410-40; Frazer, *Golden Bough*, "Incarnate Human Gods, 105-22;" "Our Debt to the Savage", 305-7"; "Adonis and Easter", 396-420; Farewell to Nemi", 824-7.

Part II: Religious Experience: as Solution and Problem

- 2 May **Religion in and for Itself: Phenomenology and the Anatomy of Religion**
Anatomy; Gerardus van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation, ix-xii, 650-4, 666-78; Sharpe, 220-6, 229-35. Ninian Smart, The Religious Experience of Mankind, 3-17 "Empathy"
- 7 May **Religion in and for Itself: Numinous Experience**
Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy, 5-30; Ninian Smart, The Phenomenon of Religion, 121-48; Sharpe, 161-7;
- 9 May **Religious Experience Has Built the World of Capitalism**
Robert Bellah, Tokugawa Religion, 1-9, 59-84, 107-31
- 14,16 May **Religion Is Religious Experience, but Also Is Denial: Pragmatism**
Bronislaw Malinowski, "Magic, Science and Religion", 17-23, 47-53, 79-83; Strenski, "A Pragmatic Theory of Malinowski's Pragmatism", "Communication to Manipulation", 55-66; Sharpe, ch V.
- 21, 23 May **Religion Is Religious Experience, but Also Wish-Fulfillment: Psychoanalysis**
Michael Carroll, The Cult of the Virgin Mary, 22-100; Sharpe, 175f, 197-211
- 28, 30 May **Religious Experience Is Group Experience: Durkheim**
Preus, ch 8, "Durkheim"; Sharpe, pp. 82-87; Emile Durkheim, from Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, 112-61; "Religious Sentiments at the Present Time", 181-9; " Promise Keepers"
- 4, 6 June **Religious Experience Is Everywhere**
Sharpe, 213-7; Mircea Eliade, Myth and Reality, 162-93; "Crisis and Renewal" and "Cosmogonic Myth and 'Sacred History'", 54-87; Strenski, "Eliade's Theory of Myth and the 'History of Religions'", 104-22.