

RELG 488  
Perspectives in Religious Studies  
Fall, 2010

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**Readings** are all on Blackboard:

- Kwok Pui-Lan, "Theology and Social Theory," excerpt from *Empire*
- Darby Ray, "Anselm of Canterbury," excerpt from *Empire*
- Rieger, chapter 2 "Logic of Downturn," in *No rising Tide*
- Capps' book, Chapter 1, "Essence of Religion," and chapter 7, "Future of Religious Studies"
- Taves' *Religious Experience Reconsidered*, Chapter 1
- In *Journal of American Academy of Religion*, March 09, "Jesus Freak and the Junkyard Prophet"
- Millennials' report, Pew Research
- C. Gudorf, "The Social Construction of Sexuality," in Sands' *God Forbid*

**Course overview and objectives:**

Religious studies is a discipline that is both interdisciplinary and distinct; drawn from religions and from daily life; shaped by both intellect and passion; and institutional and personal. With these conceptual and practical poles of different foci, it is not surprising that religious studies and religions become sources for social conflict. This course considers the development of the discipline in light of cultural contexts, intellectual history, and current challenges.

The course is in two parts. The first section considers the wider view of religious studies, beginning with the field's history and development. The second section considers some contemporary issues that will definitely help shape the discipline's future.

Therefore, upon completion of the course, the student should:

- Understand the scope of the discipline of religious studies
- Better verbalize their areas of interest in the field
- Recognize some growing edges of the discipline

**Class requirements:**

The readings selected for this class are demanding. Students must maintain the reading schedule. Lectures will focus on readings, but students must be prepared to discuss them. The midterm will focus on readings through September; the final will focus on the rest.

Grading is based on the averaging of these assignments/expectations:

Attendance: we follow the university's attendance policy, which limits the number of absences. Your grade will be lowered significantly if you are absent more than 4 times.

Participation in class discussions; (there may be an additional group project; TBD)

Attend one event of Bernadin lecture and write a response paper.

Midterm

Final: this will be take-home and therefore graded more stringently

**Grading scale:**

A	100-91
B	90-81
C+	80-75
C	74-65
D	64-55
F	54 and below

**Due dates and assignments:**

August 18	Introduction to course
August 24	Millenials, Pew Research center
August 26 and 31	Ray, Anselm Anselm 's Proslogion
September 2, 7, 9	Capps, Essence
September 14, 16	Kwok, Theology
September 21, 28	Capps, Future

September 30	Test review
October 5	NO CLASS
October 7	MUST ATTEND ONE EVENT OF BERNADIN LECTURE
October 12	EXAM ON FIRST READINGS/DISCUSSIONS
October 14	MID SEMESTER BREAK< NO CLASS
October 19	Paper on lecture due; discussion of the lecture in class
October 21, 26	JAAR essay
October 28, Nov 2, 4	Rieger
Nov. 9, 11	Gudorf
Nov. 16, 18, 23	Taves
Nov. 25	HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
Nov 30	Any unfinished business? Course evaluations
Dec. 2	Review for final
Dec. 11	If no final paper, the written final will take place today