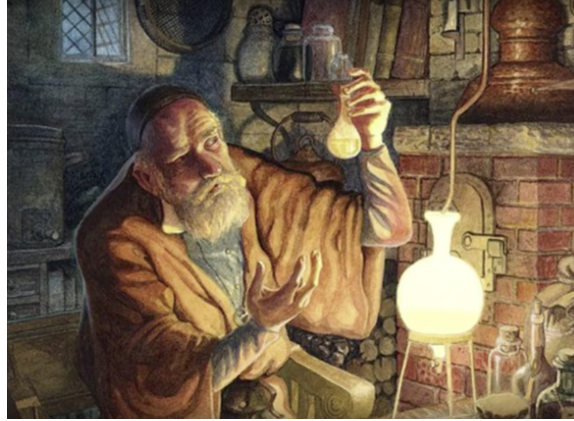


RELG 472
RELIGION AND SCIENCE: HUMAN QUESTIONS

Professor Daniel M. Stuart



Class Meetings: Tuesday/Thursday, 1:15pm–2:30pm, CLHIPP 534

Office: Rutledge 331

Office Hours: By appointment

Email: stuardd@mailbox.sc.edu

Course Overview

This course provides students an entry into the following complex theoretical questions: How do the categories “religion” and “science” relate to one another? How do the ways we speak about these categories condition our understanding of the world around us, and our lives as human beings? How do these categories come into existence historically? How do they at times mutually constitute one another? To deal with these questions, we will explore a range of theoretical approaches from a number of academic disciplines: Cognitive Science, Philosophy, Sociology, Anthropology, The History of Science, and Psychology. While grappling with this broad spread of theories, students will be asked to explore and pull apart their own suppositions about what Religion and Science are.

Grading Breakdown:

- *Attendance* (25%)—This includes regular attendance, demonstrations of engagement with the course materials, and participation in class discussions
- *Three 500–600 word papers* (45%)
- *Discussion facilitation* (5%)
- *In-class presentation on final paper* (5%)
- *Final paper* (2000–2500 words) (20%)

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge of how the categories “religion” and “science” are constituted through historical and cultural processes
- articulate a range of theoretical perspectives on how modernity has come to be through a process of defining *humans* in relationship with *nature*
- provide examples of how various *scientific* methods have been used to understand and explain religious phenomena
- explain how definitions of “science” and “religion” condition how humans understand life and its purpose

Course Policies

Participation — Participation forms an important part of the course. Meaningful contributions to class discussions and other in-class activities enhance everyone's learning experience. Students should feel free to discuss the quality of their class participation with the instructor at any point during the semester.

Attendance—Prompt and regular attendance is crucial for success in the course. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class. Attendance is mandatory, and if you miss more than three class sessions, you will lose 5% of your attendance grade for every additional class missed. If you miss more than ten classes, you will automatically fail the class. If you are absent for an excusable reason, be sure to present the needed documentation to the instructor immediately upon your return (e.g., if you are absent for a legitimate medical reason, bring a doctor's note as soon as you come back to class).

Grading Scale 100-90 A; 89-87 B+; 86-80 B; 79-77 C+; 76-70 C; 69-67 D+; 66-60 D; below 60 F

Electronic Devices: cellphone, smartphones, and other non-academic electronic devices are **NOT** permitted in class. If you use any such device during class time, you will be asked to leave and be counted as absent.

Required Course Materials:

- Boyer, Pascal. 2002. *Religion Explained*. New York: Basic Books.
- Descola, Philippe. 2014. *Beyond Nature and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Latour, Bruno. 1993 [1991]. *We Have Never Been Modern*. New York: OUP.
- McCauley, Robert N. 2013. *Why Religion is Natural and Science is Not*. New York: OUP.
- Nagel, Thomas. 2012. *Mind and Cosmos*. New York: OUP.
- Taves, Ann. 2011 [2009]. *Religious Experience Reconsidered*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Luhrmann, T. M. 2012. *When God Talks Back*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Gagliano, Monica. *Thus Spoke the Plant*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

- Additional PDF readings will be uploaded to Blackboard

Films:

Birth (2004)

What the Bleep Do We Know? (2004)

Important Dates:

Short paper #1 due: 9/24

Short paper #2 due: 10/24

Short paper #3 due: 11/19

Final paper due: 12/10 at 3:00 pm

Schedule of Weekly Readings and Assignments

8/22 (R): *Introduction and General Discussion: The categories “Religion” and “Science”*

Week 1: *What is Natural?*

8/27 (T): McCauley 2013, pp. 1–82

8/29 (R): McCauley 2013, pp. 83–143

Week 2: *What is Natural? (cont.)*

9/3 (T): McCauley 2013, pp. 145–221

9/5 (R): McCauley 2013, pp. 223–286

Week 3: *Science and Modernity?*

9/10 (T): Latour 1993 [1991], pp. 1–76

9/12 (R): Latour 1993 [1991], pp. 76–145

Prompts for first 500–600 word paper distributed

Week 4: *Mind in the Mix*

9/17 (T): Nagel 2012, pp. 3–69

9/19 (R): Nagel 2012, pp. 71–128

Week 5: *Religion Explained?*

9/24 (T): Boyer 2002, pp. 1–50

First 500–600 word paper due

9/26 (R): Boyer 2002, pp. 51–135

Week 6: *Ways of Being*

10/1 (T): Descola 2014, pp. 1–56

10/3 (R): Descola 2014, pp. 57–125; recommended but optional: pp. 391–406

Week 7: *The Building Blocks of Religious Experience?*

10/8 (T): Taves 2009, pp. 1–55

Prompts for second 500–600 word paper distributed

FALL BREAK: 10/10–11/2019

Week 8: *Intuitions and Expectations—Religious Experience?*

10/15 (T): Taves 2009, pp. 56–119 and 161–165

10/17 (R): Film—*Birth* (2005)

Week 9: *Metanarratives and Sociological Perspectives*

10/22 (T): Bellah 2011, pp. 1–43

10/24 (R): Bellah 2011, pp. 44–116

Second 500–600 word paper due

Week 10: *James and the Varieties of Religious Experience*

10/29 (T): James 1982 [1902], pp. 1–65

10/31 (R): James 1982 [1902], pp. 66–131

Week 11: *James and the Varieties of Religious Experience (cont.)*

11/5 (T): James 1982 [1902], pp. 132–149; 203–254; 294–332

11/7 (R): Luhrmann 2012a, pp. 7–50 and 79–102

Prompts for third 500–600 word paper distributed

Week 12: *Hearing Voices*

11/13 (T): Luhrmann 2012a, pp. 211–244 and 273–294

11/15 (R): Luhrmann et al. 2011; Luhrmann 2012b; Luhrman et al. 2015

Week 13: *Dubious Entanglements and Plant-Persons*

11/19 (T): Film—*What the Bleep Do We Know?* (2004)

Third 500–600 word paper due

11/21 (R): Gagliano 2018, pp. 1–71

Week 14: *Breaking Through to the Human*

11/26 (T): Gagliano 2018, pp. 72–150

THANKSGIVING RECESS: 11/27–12/1/2019

Week 15: *Developing Your Own Take*

12/3 (T): *In-class paper presentations*

12/5 (R): *In-class paper presentations*

FINAL PAPER DUE on Tuesday, December 10, at 3:00 pm

Bibliography of Additional Readings

Bellah, Robert N. 2011. *Religion in Human Evolution*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Luhrmann, T.M. “A Hyperreal God and Modern Belief: Toward an Anthropological Theory of Mind.” *Current Anthropology* 53.4 (2012b): 371–395.

Luhrmann et al. “Encountering the Supernatural: A Phenomenological Account of Mind.” *Religion and Society: Advances in Research* 2 (2011): 37–53.

Luhrmann et al. “Hearing Voices in Different Cultures: A Social Kindling Hypothesis.” *Topics in Cognitive Science* (2015): 1–18.

James, William. 1982 [1902]. *Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature, Centenary Edition*. London and New York: Routledge.