Course Description

This senior seminar is a 3-credit hour course for graduating majors in Religious Studies. This fall we will be looking at various methodological and theoretical approaches used by scholars of religion and theology. We'll examine theories, methods, and examples of scholarship in the field to analyze how scholarship is done. By methodological approaches, we mean the methods by which scholars in our field do their work. How do we study religion and theology? How do we do work in religious studies? How do we do work in theological studies? How do we identify the best method for particular questions and specific topics?

This class will take a true seminar format, requiring participation from all enrolled students. The class will culminate with the writing of a paper that analyzes a religious/theological phenomenon using a chosen method/thinker/approach in the field. As such, the class emphasizes not just understanding different methods used by scholars but also includes the successful use of one to do analytical, scholarly work.
Course Learning Outcomes

1. Critically analyze methodologies and theories used by scholars of religion and theology.
2. Compare various approaches to thinking about religion, theology, and culture today.
3. Reflect on culmination of department curriculum and student engagement with topic.
4. Demonstrate mastery of one chosen methodological approach in Religious Studies and/or Theology.

How to Succeed in This Course

1) Come to class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire meeting.
2) Complete readings before class begins and take notes while you read. This is the capstone course for your major. All these readings should be up your alley!
3) Contribute to class discussions. This is a small seminar course. There is no hiding, but conversation should be easy. We're all interested in this topic!
4) Complete all assignments on time. Extensions are allowed if requested at least 12 hours before an assignment is due.
5) Ask for help when you need it. I am happy to assist students in their attempts to master course materials and successfully complete course assignments. Come to my office hours and I am always available via email.

Assignments and Grading

1) Seminar Leader: You'll each be the seminar leader on 3 occasions, for which you'll sign up at the beginning of the semester. During those days, you will lead the class for the first 10-15 minutes. A fuller description and rubric is on blackboard. Worth 150 points in total.
2) Intellectual Autobiography: This will be a 500–750-word essay that describes your own intellectual biography in Religious Studies and Theology. Questions center on your experiences in your RELI courses and future plans with your degree. Full prompt on the blackboard site. Worth 150 points.
3) Weekly Reflective Journals: Once a week, you'll upload a ~500-word journal entry reflecting on the past week. It'll be due just before class on Fridays for Weeks 2-11. That will be ten entries in total. Worth 100 points.
4) Final Paper: You will write a final paper that applies a methodological approach to a religious phenomenon of your choice. A long paper (~18 pages), this assignment demonstrates mastery of the material through discussion and application of a scholarly method in Religious Studies and/or Theology. A more expansive prompt will be posted to blackboard. Worth 350 points.
5) Participation: The least boring and most effective way to learn is to participate fully in the process.
You are expected to contribute to the success of this course by: Reading the assigned materials, attending every class, taking notes, listening respectfully, staying on task, and actively contributing to class discussions. Worth 250 points. An in-class participation rubric can be found on blackboard in the Guides folder.

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade Range</th>
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<td>Total</td>
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**Course Policies**

**RESPECT FOR THE MATERIAL AND YOUR PEERS**
We will be reading a variety of thinkers and scholars on religion and theology. You will agree with some of them, you’ll disagree with some of them, you’ll be challenged by some of them, and some of them are going to confuse the heck out of you. That’s all part of reading and thinking about theory and method in Religious Studies and Theology. Furthermore, you will be expected to communicate in a civil manner at all times, both in and out of the classroom. This means that interactions are to be carried out in a polite, courteous, and dignified way.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**
According to the [Gonzaga University attendance policy](https://www.gonzaga.edu/studenthandbook), if you miss more than 6 class meetings, you will receive a “V” for this class, which is the same as a “F.”

**A NOTE ON HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**
Consistent with its mission, Gonzaga seeks to assure all community members learn and work in a welcoming and inclusive environment. Title VII, Title IX and Gonzaga’s policy prohibit harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct. Gonzaga encourages anyone experiencing harassment, discrimination or sexual misconduct to talk to someone from the Campus and Local Resources list found in the Student Handbook: [www.gonzaga.edu/studenthandbook](http://www.gonzaga.edu/studenthandbook) about what happened so they can get the support they need and Gonzaga can respond appropriately. There are both confidential and non-confidential resources and reporting options available to you. Gonzaga is legally obligated to respond to reports of sexual misconduct, and therefore we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of a report, unless made to a confidential resource. Responses may vary from support services to formal investigations. As a faculty member, I am required to report incidents of sexual misconduct and thus cannot guarantee confidentiality. I must provide our Title IX coordinator with relevant details such as the names of those involved in the incident. For more information about
policies and resources or reporting options, please visit the following website: www.gonzaga.edu/titleix. My office is a safe space, but I am legally required to report sexual misconduct.

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Course Schedule

Note: You need to come to class having already read the assigned reading for that day; in other words, readings are due the date listed. Near the end of the semester, we’ll be spending some class time to work and workshop final papers. If not everyone has a laptop, that’s no problem. We’ll move our working day sessions to the library.

**Week 1: Course Introduction**

**Wednesday, Aug 29:** Course Introduction, Plans, and Goals  
**Friday, Aug 31:** What is Religion? (Like, the term and its history)  
Reading: “Religion, Religions, Religious” on blackboard

**Week 2: What is Religion**  
**Monday, Sept 3:** No Class. Labor Day  
**Intellectual Autobiography Due, September 4th at 5pm**  
**Wednesday, Sept 5:** What is Religion?  
Reading: Chapter 1, Religion: Some Basics in *Religion*  
**Friday, Sept 7:** Religion and Culture  
Reading: Chapter 2, Culture in *Religion*

**Week 3: Culture, Religion, and Theology**  
**Monday, Sept 10:** Religion, Symbols, Culture  
Reading: “Religion as a Cultural System” on blackboard  
**Wednesday, Sept 12:** Habitus, Class, and Power  
Reading: “Habitus” on blackboard  
**Friday, Sept 14:** Culture and Ethnography  
Reading: “Mules and Men” on blackboard

**Week 4: Power, Theology, and Religion**  
**Monday, Sept 17:** Theology and Culture  
Reading: “Cultural Labor and Theological Critique” on blackboard  
**Wednesday, Sept 19:** Power and Religion  
Reading: Chapter 3, Power in *Religion*  
**Friday, Sept 21:** Power and Theology  
Reading: “A Theology of Liberation” on blackboard
Week 5: Power and Bodies
Monday, Sept 24: Power and Theology
Reading: “Black Theology & Black Power” on blackboard
Wednesday, Sept 26: Bodies and Suffering
Reading: “Mildred, Is It Fun to be a Cripple” on blackboard
Friday, Sept 28: Gender and Religion
Reading: Chapter 4, Gender in Religion

Week 6: Gender
Monday, Oct 1: Gender and Culture
Reading: “Social Construction of Gender” on blackboard
Wednesday, Oct 3: Feminist Theology (with Dr. McCabe)
Reading: “She Who Is” on blackboard
Friday, Oct 5: Gender and Bodies
Reading: “The Devil, the Body, and the Feminine Soul in Puritan New England”

Week 7: How Belief Functions
Monday, Oct 8: What is Belief?
Reading: Chapter 5, Belief in Religion
Wednesday, Oct 10: Theology and the Modern University (with Dr. Vander Schel)
Reading: “Conflict of the Faculties” and “Brief Outline” on blackboard
Friday, Oct 12: Religion and Psychology
Reading: “Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices” on blackboard

Week 8: Religion and “Doing”
Monday, Oct 15: Emotion and Religion
Reading: “Reading Anger in an Early Medieval Saint's Life” on blackboard
Wednesday, Oct 17: What is Ritual
Reading: Chapter 6, Ritual in Religion
Friday, Oct 19: What does Ritual do
Reading: “The Bare Facts of Ritual” on blackboard

Week 9: Ritual and Texts
Monday, Oct 22: No Class. Founder's Day
Wednesday, Oct 24: Ritual from a Non-Western Perspective
Reading: “Navajo Ritual and the Experience of Time” on blackboard
Friday, Oct 26: Texts
Reading: Chapter 7, Texts in Religion
**Week 10: Text Analysis**

**Monday, Oct 29:** Texts and Purity  
Reading: “Abominations of Leviticus” on blackboard  

**Wednesday, Oct 31:** (Un)Reading a Text and Discovering Its Potential Meanings (with Dr. Rindge)  
Reading: TBA on blackboard  

**Friday, Nov 2:** Texts and Narrative (with Dr. McCruden)  
Reading: “Narrative Criticism” on blackboard; and Mark 8:22-10:52 (NSRV translation)

**Week 11: Religion and Contemporary America**

**Monday, Nov 5:** Religion Today  
Reading: Chapter 8, Contemporary Religions, Contemporary Cultures in Religion  

**Wednesday, Nov 7:** Race, Sociology, and Religion  
Reading: “Religion in the Collective Identity of the White Racialist Movement” on blackboard  

**Friday, Nov 9:** Religion and Popular Culture  
Reading: “The Church of Baseball, the Fetish of Coca-Cola, and the Potlatch of Rock 'n' Roll” on blackboard

**Week 12: Doing Scholarship**

**Monday, Nov 12:** The Space between Subject and Scholar  
Reading: “Snakes Alive” on blackboard  

**Wednesday, Nov 14:** What does it mean to do scholarship?  

**Friday, Nov 16:** No Class. Dr. Clark will be at the American Academy of Religion National Meeting. But start outlining/thinking about your paper.

**Week 13: No Class.**  
Nov 19 - Nov 23: No Class. Dr. Clark will be out of town at a conference, and **then Thanksgiving**!

**Week 14: Final Papers**

**Monday, Nov 26:** Final Paper Workshop  
**Wednesday, Nov 28:** Final Paper Workshop  
**Friday, Nov 30:** Final Paper Workshop

**Week 15: Final Papers**

**Monday, Dec 3:** Final Paper Workshop  
**Wednesday, Dec 5:** Peer Review  
**Friday, Dec 7:** Peer Review

**Final Exam Week**

Tuesday, Dec 11: 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm