

Your Professor

Dr. Emily Clark

clarke2@gonzaga.edu

Twitter: [@clark_ems](https://twitter.com/clark_ems)

Humanities Building 335

Office Phone: 313-6781

Office Hours: M 1:00-2:00 pm,
and Tues 11:00 am-2:00 pm, and
by appointment

Inside this Syllabus

Course Description

Course Texts

Course Learning Outcomes

How to Succeed in This Course

Course Policies

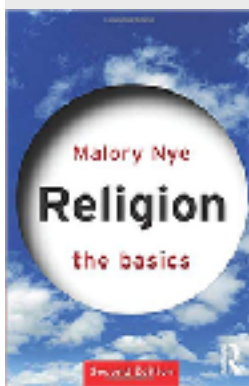
Assignments & Grading

Course Schedule

How This Course Helps You Graduate

This is a required course for graduating seniors in Religious Studies.

Course Texts



Malory Nye,
Religion: The Basics
(Routledge,
2nd
Edition).

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Please bring your readings to class.

SENIOR SEMINAR IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES & THEOLOGY

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.

Seminar Leader: 150 points	A range: 1000-895 points	C+/C cutoff at 755
Autobio: 150 points	A/A- cutoff at 925	D range: 694 points and below
Reflection Journal: 100 points	B range: 894-795 points	D+/D cutoff at 665
Final Paper: 350 points	B+/B cutoff at 855	
Participation: 250 points	B/B- cutoff at 825	
Total: 1000 points	C range: 794-695 points	

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](#), 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 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.

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 Racist 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