REL3030 - Religion, Ritual and Consciousness

Course Coordinator  Dr Colin Wilks
Semester  Semester 2 - 2008
Unit Weighting  10
Teaching Methods  Seminar

Brief Course Description
Examines the essential elements of religion which are common to all traditions, including ritual, myth, creed, space and time structures, special persons and sacred experience, and the worldviews to which these essential elements give phenomenal expression.

Contact Hours
Seminar for 2 Hours per Week

Course Objectives
At the conclusion of this course students will understand the various phenomena which characterise religion, understand methodologies appropriate to the comparative study of religions, have detailed knowledge of phenomena characteristic of particular religious traditions and the worldviews to which they give expression, and will have acquired advanced writing, research and information technology skills appropriate to religious studies.

Course Content
Specific course foci will be drawn from the following areas: the phenomena of religion, sacred ritual, sacred mythology, sacred creeds, sacred spatial and temporal structures, sacred persons, sacred experience, the nature of religious consciousness and worldviews, and the interface between religion and broader society.

Assessment Items
| Essays / Written Assignments | Three written assignments, minor essay 30%, major essay 40%, field report 30% |

Assumed Knowledge: Nil

Callaghan Campus Timetable
REL3030 RELIGION, RITUAL AND CONSCIOUSNESS
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 2 – 2008
Seminar  Wednesday  15:00 - 17:00  [V02]
**Plagiarism:** University policy prohibits plagiarism under any circumstances. A student plagiarises if she presents the thoughts or works of another as her own. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include (i) copying or paraphrasing material from any source without acknowledgment; (ii) using another's ideas without due acknowledgment; (iii) working with others without permission and presenting the work as though it was completed independently. Plagiarism is not only related to written works, but to data, images, music, formulae, websites and computer programs. Aiding another student to plagiarise is also a violation of the Plagiarism Policy and may invoke a penalty. For further information on the University policy on plagiarism, please refer to the Policy on Student Academic Integrity at following link - [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000608.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000608.html)

The University has established a software plagiarism detection system called Turnitin. When you submit assessment items please be aware that for purpose of assessing any assessment item the University may:

- Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or
- Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking).
- Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking

**Written Assessment Items**

Students may be required to provide assessment items in electronic form as well as hard copy.

**Marks and Grades Released During Term**

All marks and grades released during the semester, are indicative only until formally approved by the Head of School on the recommendation of the School Assessment body.

**Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations**

Students are required to submit assessment items by due date, as advised in Course Outline, unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension of time for submission. University policy is that an assessment item submitted after the due date, without an approved extension, will be penalised. Any student:

1. who is applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or
2. whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, to the appropriate officer following instructions provided in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Procedure - Policy 000641. **Note:** different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks.

Please go to the Policy at [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html) for further information, particularly for info on options available to you. Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:

- **Requests for Special Consideration** must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.
- **Requests for Extensions on Assessment Items** must be lodged no later than due date of item.

Your application may not be accepted if it is received after the deadline. In the first instance, students who are unable to meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak to their Program Officer.

**Changing your Enrolment**

The census date below is the last date to withdraw without academic penalty. For onshore students, withdrawal on or before the census date means no financial penalty. **For semester 2 courses:** 31 August 2008. Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of semester. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of semester will result in a fail grade. Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of semester/trimester, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of semester/trimester must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with staff in the Student Hubs.

To check or change your enrolment online, please refer to Self Service: [https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au](https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au)

**Faculty of Education and Arts:** [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/)

The Student Hubs are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students studying in Australia. The four Student Hubs are located at:
Callaghan campus: Shortland Hub: Lev 3, Shortland Union Building or Hunter Hub: Student Services Centre

City Precinct: City Hub & Information Common: University House, ground floor

Ourimbah campus: Ourimbah Hub: Administration Building

Contact Details

Callahan, City and Port Macquarie: Phone: 02 4921 5000, Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

Ourimbah: Phone: 02 4348 4030, Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

The Dean of Students
Resolution Precinct: Phone: 02 4921 5806, Fax: 02 4921 7151
Email: resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

Deputy Dean of Students (Ourimbah)
Phone: 02 4348 4123, Fax: 02 4348 4145
Email: resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

Various services are offered by the University Student Support Unit:

Alteration of this Course Outline: No change to this course outline will be permitted after the end of the second week of the term except in exceptional circumstances and with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of any approved changes to this outline.

Web Address for Rules Governing Undergraduate Academic Awards

Web Address for Rules Governing Postgraduate Academic Awards

Web Address for Rules Governing Professional Doctorate Awards

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS
The University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with disabilities or chronic illness. If you have a disability or chronic illness which may impact on your studies, please discuss your needs with your lecturer or course coordinator. Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this support. To register please contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, or via email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au
As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester. For more information related to confidentiality and documentation please visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website at: www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability

Online Tutorial Registration: Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system. Refer - http://studinfo1.newcastle.edu.au/rego/stud_choose_login.cfm
NB: Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

Studentmail and Blackboard: Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/
This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

Important Additional Information
Details about the following are available on course Blackboard site. Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
- Online copy submission to Turnitin
- Penalties for Late Assignments
- Special Circumstances
- Return of Assignments

Essential Online Information for Students
Consultation

By appointment or by phone or email at any time (49215192 or Colin.Wilks@newcastle.edu.au).

Assessment

Students need to submit three assessment items:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Item</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Word Count</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minor Essay</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>1000-1500</td>
<td>September 8th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Essay</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>1500-2000</td>
<td>November 4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Report</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>1000-1500</td>
<td>November 4th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The assessment items require students to engage with as much of the subject matter as possible. One of the essays will deal with the subject matter for weeks 1-6 and the other with an aspect of the subject matter from weeks 7-13. The Field Report (or third essay) will deal with an aspect of the subject matter from weeks 7-13 not dealt with in either of the essays, and should be based, to some extent, on some form of field work.

Essay Questions

QUESTION 1 (this question deals with subject matter for Weeks 1-6)

What is a worldview and how does a religious worldview differ from a secular one?

QUESTION 2 (this question deals with subject matter for weeks 7-13)

With reference to at least one specific example, prepare a general account of one particular phenomena which is common to religions in general.

(the idea here is to show how the specific example(s) conform(s) to the general pattern which is characteristic for the phenomenon in question)

The religious phenomenon which can be focussed on for the purpose of this essay are:

- Religious Myth and Narrative
- Religious Ritual
- Religious Space and Time
- Religious Art
- Religious Persons
- Religious Experience
- Religious Change

It is up to students to decide which of these questions they answer as their minor essay and which as their major essay. When essays are submitted, however, they should be clearly labelled Minor or Major.

Field Report Topics (or third essay topics)

The range of fieldwork topics is completely open, but students should have the topic they choose approved by the course coordinator prior to embarking on the fieldwork and writing up the field work experience. If, for whatever reason, students are unable to undertake fieldwork, they will be able to submit a third essay instead. Field Reports should be based on actual experience of some kind (either the student=s own experience of the phenomenon in question, or some other person=s experience of the phenomenon in question) rather than on what can be gleaned from text books.

Topics for the Field Report fall into five broad categories:

- Religious Ritual
- Religious Space and Time
- Religious Art
- Religious Persons
- Religious Experience

More details on the Field Report will be provided in class.
Seminar Presentation

Students will be encouraged to present a short seminar paper in which they discuss the subject matter of their second essay or field report. In week 5 students will be asked to nominate the subject matter on which they intend to present so that a schedule can be drawn up.

Referencing in Assignments

When making use of reference material from books, articles, video recordings etc, you must acknowledge that you are making use of it by referencing it. There are numerous referencing systems which different people in different parts of the university use. If you have already started using one of these and you are comfortable with it, then stick with it. Late Submissions

Reading Guide

Cowen, J. G., The Elements of the Aborigine Tradition, Element, 1992
Hume, L., The Dreaming, Consciousness, and Aboriginal Australians, Melbourne Uni, 2002
Jones, L., The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture, 2000,
Kelsay, M., Tongue Speaking: The History and Meaning of Charismatic Experience, 1981
Mann, A. T., Sacred Architecture, Element, 1993
Tacey, D., The Spirituality Revolution
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>July 23</td>
<td>INTRODUCTORY SESSION: What is Religion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>July 30</td>
<td>ORIGINS OF RELIGION: Where, when, why and how did religion arise? Functionalist and Non-Functionalist theories of religion’s origins.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3    | Aug 6  | WORLDVIEWS: STRUCTURE, FORMATION AND FUNCTION  
What are worldviews? How do they form and what is their function? |
| 4    | Aug 13 | WORLDVIEWS: RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR  
How does a religious worldview differ from a secular one? |
| 5    | Aug 20 | NO CLASS                                                                      |
| 6    | Aug 27 | WORLDVIEWS AND MODERNITY  
Worldviews, Modernity and worldviews within worldviews |
| 7    | Sept 3 | BELIEFS AND BELIEVING  
SEMINAR |
| 8    | Sept 10| RELIGIOUS MYTHS, NARRATIVES AND PARABLES  
SEMINAR |
| 9    | Sept 17| RELIGIOUS RITUAL  
SEMINAR |
| 10   | Sept 24| RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE  
SEMINAR |

**MID-SEMESTER BREAK – Monday 29th September to Friday 10th October**

| 11   | Oct 15 | RELIGIOUS PERSONS  
GUEST LECTURE |
| 12   | Oct 22 | RELIGIOUS TIME, SPACE AND ART  
SEMINAR |
| 13   | Oct 29 | NEW AGE RELIGION/ RELIGION IN THE MODERN WORLD  
SEMINAR |
| 14   | Nov 5  | REVIEW |