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Office Hours: T/R 9:00 -11:00 a.m.
and by appointment.

CEDAR CREST COLLEGE
REL 100 00 Introduction to Religion and Culture
Fall 2008
T, R 2:30-3:45 p.m., CUR 135

In order to help Cedar Crest meet its accreditation standards the following objectives, outcomes and methods of assessment will be used in Religion 100:

Objective: At the completion of the course, students will be able to describe perceptions of the sacred in American popular culture.

Outcome: To analyze the nature of religious experiences and the human perception of the sacred in keeping with the college's mission to engage in critical analysis and qualitative reasoning.

Assessment of Outcomes: Students will complete a short paper analyzing perceptions of the sacred in the media and American popular culture.

Objective: At the completion of the course, students will understand the nature of divergent religious systems and their expression in culture.

Outcome: To demonstrate analytical and perceptual skills in keeping with the college's mission to understand and articulate values and to understand the value systems of others.

Assessment of Outcomes: Students will complete a short paper analyzing the nature of a ritual and its function within society. Midterm and final examinations will also measure analytical ability and knowledge of the discipline.

Objective: The course will enable students to understand the nature of societal conflict in which religion has a significant role; to look for common ground and to understand differences.

Outcome: To demonstrate objectivity in social research in keeping with the college's mission to engage in critical analysis and qualitative reasoning.

Assessment of Outcomes: Students will prepare a short paper analyzing both sides of a societal conflict, avoiding support for either position.

NOTE: Students are required to save a copy on disc of take home exams and papers for the duration of the course.

Course Schedule

August

- 26 Course Introduction
- 28 Describing the Sacred in Symbols and Myth
Cunningham: Chs.1 and 2
Hinnells: Chs. 6, 25

September

- 2 Describing the Sacred in Symbols and Myth
Film: "Sacred Spaces"
Cunningham: Ch. 3
Hinnells: Chs. 1, 28
- 4 Describing the Sacred in Symbols and Myth
- 9 Film: "The Power of Myth," Part Two
- 11 Myth and Ritual
Cunningham: Ch. 5
Hinnells: Ch. 20
- 16 Ritual. Wallace (reserve) Religion: An Anthropological View, pp 102-166.
- 18 Ritual
- 23 Religion and Community
Cunningham: Ch. 6
Hinnells: Ch. 7
- 25 Religion and Community
- 30 Primitive Religion
First Paper Due

October

- 2 Primitive Religion
Take Home Midterm Examination Distributed
Noss: (Library Reserve), Ch. 1
- 7 Primitive Religion
Film: "Shamanism: An Ancient Tradition"
Hinnells: Ch. 8
- 9 Religious Systems: Monotheism
Hutchinson (Library Reserve), Ch. 11
Take Home Midterm Examination Collected
- 16 Religious Systems: Monotheism
- 21 Religious Systems: Monotheism, Secularization, and Fundamentalism
Hinnells: Chs. 16, 19
- 23 Religious Systems: Henotheism in Vedic India

- 28 Religious Systems: Henotheism in Ancient Egypt – The problem of Akhenaton:
Monotheism as a Heresy
Film: “Akhenaton”
Brandon (Library Reserve), Ch. 1
- 30 Henotheism Continued.

November

- 4 Religious Systems: Monism
Second Paper Due
Hutchinson (Library Reserve), Ch. 5
- 6 Monism: Buddhism
Hutchinson (Library Reserve), Ch. 6
Disciplines and the Study of Religion
- 11 Disciplines and the Study of Religion
Hinnells: Chs. 2, 10
- 13 Contemporary Issues and Religion
Film: “Casting the First Stone”
- 18 Contemporary Issues and Religion
Hinnells: Ch. 24
- 20 Cults on the Internet (computer classroom to be assigned)
- 25 Cults on the Internet continued
- 27 Thanksgiving Break

December

- 2 Historical/Biblical Criticism
Hinnells: Ch. 22
- 4 Historical/Biblical Criticism
Take Home Final Examination Distributed
Third Paper Due

Methods of Evaluation

Students write three short papers on the manifestation of the sacred in popular culture, ritual, and a critical analysis of a contemporary issue in which religion is a primary concern. In addition, mid-term and final examinations coupled with participation in classroom discussions help measure the ability of students to think critically and to reflect on the changing role of religion in an increasingly pluralistic society.

	Percentage
Class participation	10%
Mid-term examination	25%
Final examination	25%
Papers	<u>40%</u>
	100%

Each student is expected to write three papers, each 5 to 8 pages in length. Papers are to be typed and should follow an accepted style manual (MLA, Turabian or APA).

Paper #1 (due October 30) - The sacred in contemporary culture and society.

#2 Analysis of a ritual (due November 4)

#3 Contemporary issues in religion and religious thought (due December 4).

1. The Sacred in contemporary culture and society.

Most societies in most periods exhibit their perceptions of the sacred in art, music, and literature. These expressions often go beyond the formal structures of organized religion. Describe an example of the portrayal of the sacred in popular art, music, drama, or literature. Discuss its significance.

2. Analysis of a ritual

Choose either a ritual that has strong ecclesiastical significance (Protestant communion, Catholic mass, Hindu puja, etc), a ritual that is a rite of passage (Bar-Mitzvah, marriage, funeral), or a public, societal ritual (New Years, Halloween, or Christmas as a secular rite) and analyze its purpose and meaning. What does the ritual do for those who perform it? What symbol and myths does it employ?

3. Contemporary issues in religion and religious thought

Choose a current issue that involves religion (such as abortion, prayer in public schools, cults, etc) and analyze the basis for conflict and societal change. How are opposing views different and how are they the same? What religious issues form the basis of the conflict?

Cedar Crest College Honor Code

This course fully supports the Cedar Crest College Honor Code and the Classroom Protocol code as stated in the Customs Book, Catalog, and the Faculty Handbook, including the statement on Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism.

Attendance

Unless excused for health or personal emergency, students are expected to be in class. Students missing more than three classes without a valid excuse will lose 2 points from their final course grade for each day absent.

Standards for the Academic Study of Religion

The academic study of religion is grounded in the assumption that the human experience of the sacred can be studied as an intellectual and societal phenomenon without bias. Accordingly, with the exception of theology, the major disciplines for the study of religion depend on the same objectivity that would be assumed in the humanities and social sciences.

In keeping with this perspective, the study of religion at Cedar Crest College depends on the ability of students to think critically and objectively about both the nature of religion and religious practices. Value judgments about any religion or perspectives from a faith position are outside of this approach and properly belong in bible colleges and seminaries where a religious perspective is assumed. Any student having difficulty with this approach should contact the instructor at the earliest possible point in the course.

Drafts of Papers

Partial drafts of any of the three papers can be turned in any time up to a week before the due date. A “pencil” grade will be assigned. If no further revisions are completed, the pencil grade will be entered as a permanent grade once the complete paper is submitted. If revisions are done, the pencil grade will either remain the same or increase and cannot be lowered.

Any completed paper may be revised and resubmitted before the last class.

Required Readings Available in the Cedar Crest College Bookstore

Lawrence S. Cunningham et al. The Sacred Quest: An Invitation to the Study of Religion, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall, 1995).

John R. Hinnells, ed. The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion (New York, 2007).

Available on Library Reserve

S. F. G. Brandon. The Judgment of the Dead: The Idea of Life After Death in the Major Religions (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), Chapter 1.

John A Hutchinson. Paths of Faith (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991), Chapters 5-6, 11, 14.

David S. Noss, John B. Noss, A History of the World's Religions, 9th ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1994), Chapter 1.

Anthony F. C. Wallace. Religion: An Anthropological View. (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 102-166, 233-244

PLAGIARISM AND THE HONOR CODE

Plagiarism is “the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work,” (The Random House College Dictionary, Revised Edition, New York: Random House, 1975, p. 1014). The Cedar Crest College Faculty Handbook (Book Four, Article B, Section 3, p. 14) further defines it:

Any language taken from another source, whether individual words or entire paragraphs, must be placed within quotation marks and attributed to the source, following the citation format specified by the instructor. Paraphrased material from an outside source must also be attributed. In addition, if the student is indebted to another source for a specific perspective or a line of argument—regardless of whether the student has directly quoted the source or not—that debt must be acknowledged.

In consideration of these ideas, all Religious Studies courses will treat plagiarism in the following ways. Inadvertent plagiarism, the occasional failure to include a citation or the occasional use of a phrase from another source or the omission of a reference, represents sloppy scholarship and is subject to the loss of points on the paper or examination on which it occurs. However, the importation of either complete sentences or paragraphs from an external source and integrating them within the body of a paper constitutes plagiarism and will result in a failing grade being given for the entire course.

Academic papers or projects submitted for another college course cannot be re-submitted for any Religious Studies course without the permission of both instructors. Dual submission of papers is a violation of academic policy and will result in a failure for the course.

INTERNET SOURCES

Internet sources on all academic papers must be used with discretion since they represent a surface level of research and are often not subjected to peer review prior to publication. Research papers must include at least ten sources and no more than four internet citations with the exception of on line journals and academic papers available on educational (.edu) sites. Encyclopedias (including Wikipedia) cannot be cited as resources in research papers.

GRADE REQUIREMENTS FOR PAPERS

An “A” paper must have:

- Excellence in the creative and critical presentation of an argument relevant to the assignment.
- A clearly identified thesis or central idea.
- A structure that connects the ideas in the paper with the thesis.
- A complete bibliography or “works cited” page(s) in appropriate format.
- Clearly articulated relevance and significance of the subject matter.
- The paper must be grammatically correct and relatively free from errors in grammar, syntax or spelling. It must also contain appropriate references in the text and follow an accepted style system.

A “B” paper must have:

- A clearly identified thesis or central idea.
- A structure that relates to the thesis but may lack some connections.
- A bibliography or “works cited” page(s) that is relatively free from error.
- Appropriate connections with the assignment.
- The paper must be relatively free from errors in grammar, syntax or spelling. It must also contain appropriate references in the text and follow an accepted style system.

A “C” paper is identified by:

- A poorly constructed central idea and the absence of a thesis.
- Poor structure.
- Incomplete bibliography, “works cited” and references in the text.
- Appropriate connections with the assignment.
- Errors in grammar, syntax or spelling.

A “D” paper is identified by:

- No central idea.
- Little or no structure.
- Incomplete or missing bibliography, “works cited” and references in the text.
- Abundant errors in grammar, syntax or spelling.
- Unclear or confused relationship to the assignment.

A failing paper is identified by:

- No central idea or structure.
- Failure to include bibliography “works cited” or references in the text.
- Abundant errors in grammar, syntax or spelling.
- Lack of relationship to the assignment.