JSIS 596
Graduate Seminar on
Religions, Cultures, and Civilizations
Winter 2015 / Tuesdays 1:30–4:20 / Thomson Hall 215

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Goals of the Seminar
This seminar will expose graduate students from across the University to a selection of key works across the social sciences and critical humanities in the general areas of “religions, cultures, and civilizations” or RCC. The RCC field engages the diversity of cultural and religious life throughout the world, anchored by concrete studies of world areas, histories, cultural and political movements, and religious institutions and practices. This field exposes students to theoretical and international debates about religions, cultures, and power. Through a survey of the major concepts, theories, and controversies in these debates, the seminar will help both masters and doctoral students gain a solid appreciation of the fundamental approaches to RCC-related works. This syllabus is the work of a collective of faculty who serve the Religions, Cultures, and Civilizations (RCC) field of the JSIS PhD Program, though each iteration is unique to the instructor’s interests. This seminar is open to any interested graduate student at the University of Washington.

Course Goals:
• To create producers of knowledge rather than consumers of knowledge.
• To produce comparative approaches to the study of religions, cultures and civilizations.
• To add to, deepen and strengthen each student’s areas of research.
• To prepare students to take on the role as scholars in the study of religions, cultures and civilizations.

Teaching Goals:
• To create an environment where questions and dialogue are expected.
• To logically unfold theoretical and empirical approaches to research.
• To be a resource for the student’s critical and creative thinking.

Assignments: Your grade for this course will be distributed evenly among three components:

• Participation—As a graduate seminar, discussion is the core of our meeting. This is not a lecture class! Class participation is measured by active engagement with the readings
and with each other’s ideas, and generally positive investment in the learning environment of the class. Active engagement in class with the course material is essential for passing this class. In addition to active participation, each student, or a group of students, will be assigned a given week in which they will help me lead discussion by writing a short “introduction” (2-3 pages) to the week’s reading that summarizing the reading, positions it within the aims of the class, within a field of literature, and an intellectual milieu. In order to prepare this introduction, you will be expected to do extra research and reading on and around the subject of our week. You’ll read this to us at the beginning of class, and also bring to class questions, topics, and/or activities to aid in discussion. Participation counts for a third of your grade.

• Weekly Reading Reflection—On Sunday night before class you will post online a short reading reflection on the readings for Tuesday. In this posting, please critically engage the readings and pose questions for group discussion. Limit your posting to 750 words. I encourage you to read one another’s postings before class, and if interested, respond online to posts by Monday night. This will account for a third of your grade. The board can be found at:

• A Final Paper—You will write a final paper, of 15-25 pages (double spaced, 10 point font, 1 inch margins). The subject of this paper is up to you, but you must consult with me about your paper topic before beginning work on the paper. If you are struggling to find a subject, I will give you several options. PhD students should use this opportunity to reflect on their proposed dissertation topics in light of the readings and extended bibliographies of this course. MA students should use this course to help fulfill requirements for their degree, such as a thesis or one of a set of papers toward degree requirements. This paper counts for a third of your grade.

Grading: I use the standard 4.0 grading system in use at the University of Washington.

Syllabus: I reserve the right to change this syllabus at any point, including the readings and assignments, as required.

Etiquette: Please do not use computers, iPhones, mobile phones, iPods, Gameboys, PS-whatevers, or other devices in class; use pen/pencil and paper to take notes and exams; do not read other materials, like books, newspapers, magazines, letters, etc., in class; do not eat in class. Please come on time and stay for the entire class.

Academic Conduct: I will strictly enforce the University of Washington Student Conduct code, including the policy on plagiarism. For your reference, the entire code can be found at http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html. If you are unsure of what plagiarism is, it is your responsibility to understand plagiarism. Ignorance of the definition of plagiarism will not excuse plagiarism in this class.
**Disability Resource Policy:** If you would like to request accommodations due to a disability, please conduct Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz Hall, 543-8924 (V/TDD). If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you require accommodations, please present the letter to me as soon as possible so that I can make necessary arrangements.

**Specific Criteria for Evaluating Papers:**
1) The writing is articulate; including grammar, sentence structure and language.
2) The student has understood the text well enough to be critical and analytical.
3) The student approaches the subject in an engaging and creative way.

**Required Texts:** You are responsible for purchasing or borrowing all required readings, whether in the course pack or among the books listed below. I have ordered the books below from the University Bookstore. I will have copies on reserve at the library as well, but be aware the check out period is only two hours for reserve books.

- *Discipline and Punish* by Michel Foucault.
- *A Secular Age*, by Charles Taylor.

**Coursepack:** Please note that all readings not in the required texts above are online and are marked on syllabus with a “[o]”. A coursepack is available at Ave Copy on the Ave, and online at:
**Syllabus**

1.6: WEEK ONE: KEY CONCEPTS IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION, CULTURE AND POWER I—First Concepts


1.13: WEEK TWO: KEY CONCEPTS IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION, CULTURE AND POWER II—Structures of Power

   **Reading:** *Discipline and Punish* by Michel Foucault, entire.

1.20: WEEK THREE: CULTURAL INTERACTIONS—COLONIALISM, EMPIRE, AND A GLOBALIZED WORLD

   **Reading:**

1.27: WEEK FOUR: COMMUNITY, NATION, AND STATE


2.3: WEEK FIVE: CULTURES, RELIGIONS, AND POLITICAL ECONOMY: SECULARISMS AND PUBLICS
Reading: 1. “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article” by Jurgen Habermas. [o]
3. The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere, by Butler, Habermas, Taylor, at al., entire.

2.10: WEEK SIX: IDENTITIES & ALTERITIES—CLASS, ETHNICITY, GENDER, SEXUALITY, RACE, RELIGION [guest professor]


2.17: WEEK SEVEN: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, RESISTANCE, AND WORLD HISTORY

Reading: 1. Hegel, selections from Elements of the Philosophy of Right (1821), “Preface” and “Introduction”, 9-65. [o]
3. Selection from The Wretched of the Earth by Frantz Fanon [“Concerning Violence.”] [o]
4. Selection from My Experiments with Truth, by M. K. Gandhi. [o]

2.24: WEEK EIGHT: CIVILIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Reading: 1. The Future of an Illusion, Sigmund Freud [o]
2. Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History” (1989) [o]
3.3: WEEK NINE: RELIGION, CULTURE, AND DEVELOPMENT—POLITICAL THEORIES OF RELIGION AND CULTURE

**Reading:** 1. Hegel, selections from *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (1821), “Preface” and “Introduction”, 9-65. [o]
2. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (1837), 1-85. [o]
3. Carl Schmitt, “Political Theology” (1922); “The Concept of the Political” (1932). [o]

3.10: WEEK TEN: RELIGION, CULTURE, AND SECURITY—THE POLITICS OF HUMANISM AND BEYOND HUMANISM

**Reading:** 1. “The Climate of History: Four Theses,” by Dipesh Chakrabarty, 2009 [o]
Supplementary Readings by Week

As with the “reservoir readings” at the end of this syllabus, these supplementary readings can be used by students to help prepare for each week or pursue their interests in a given week into new realms. These are not required readings, but represent a valuable collective resource for you.

Week One:


Week Two:

[Especially chapter 2, “The impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man,” Ch4 “Religion as a Cultural System,” and Ch. 8 “Ideology as a Cultural System”].

Week Three:


Week Four:

**Week Five:**


**Week Six:**


**Week Seven:**


**Week Eight:**


Carrasco, David, *City of Sacrifice: The Aztec Empire and the Role of Violence in Civilization*, Beacon 2000. 978-0807046432


**Week Nine:**


Easterly, William, *The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*, Penguin, 2007. 978-0143038825


**Week Ten:**


RESERVOIR READING LIST

The syllabus below identifies a “reservoir” reading list, which doctoral students can also use to advance and deepen their general knowledge of this field in preparation for the General Examination in the JSIS Ph.D. Program. In consultation with the professor of record and/or their JSIS advisors, doctoral students are advised to use and supplement the required, supplemental, and reservoir reading lists to further explore theories, concepts, and controversies that may be of more specialized interest to advancing their exam preparation and their dissertation work. The reservoir reading list also identifies works and topics that may not necessarily appear on the actual required syllabus in a given quarter.

Interested students should know that this seminar and its readings will also serve as a gateway for further study in the more specialized graduate course offerings within the RCC field. Within the Jackson School, these include (1) the graduate courses identified in the Student Handbook of the JSIS Ph.D. Program (Appendix III, Specialized JSIS Graduate Courses by Jackson School Ph.D. Program Foundational Fields), a copy of which is available online at http://jsis.washington.edu/phd/; as well as (2) 600-level Independent Study and Research courses with individual JSIS faculty members that expands upon the themes represented in the works in this seminar. Students seeking to enroll in RCC-related courses outside the Jackson School may petition the JSIS Ph.D. Program Committee.

**Week Two Reservoir: Foundational Approaches:**


Hubert, Henri, and Marcel Mauss. *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964. [Especially: Introduction (pp.vii.-ix, 1-8 ), Chapter 1: Definition and Unity of the Sacrificial System (pp. 9-18 ), Conclusion (pp.95-103)]


**Contemporary Approaches:**


Charles Taylor, “Two Theories of Modernity” in *Alternative Modernities* (Duke UP 2001)


**Case Studies:**

**Week Three Reservoir:**

**Foundational Theorists:**

**Contemporary Approaches:**

**Case Studies:**

**Week Four Reservoir:**

**Foundational Theorists:**
Steinmetz, George. *State/ Culture: State Formation After the Cultural Turn*. Ithaca: Cornell University, 1999

**Contemporary Approaches:**


**Case Studies:**


**Week Five Reservoir:**

**Foundational Theorists:**

**Contemporary Approaches:**

**Case Studies:**

**Week Six Reservoir:**

**Foundational Theorists:**
Barth, Fredrik. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural*

**Contemporary Approaches:**

**Case Studies:**
Khyati Joshi. New Roots in America's Sacred Ground: Religion, Race, and Identity in Indian America. Rutgers, 2006
Sirin, Selcuk and Michelle Fine. Muslim American Youth: Understanding Hyphenated Identities Through Multiple Methods. NYU Press, 2008

**Week Seven Reservoir:**

**Foundational Theorists:**

**Contemporary Approaches:**
**Case Studies:**

**Week Eight Reservoir:**
**Foundational Theorists:**

**Contemporary Approaches:**
Mamdani, Mahmood, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*. Pantheon Books (2004) [Especially Introduction: Modernity and Violence, 3-16]

**Case Studies:**

**Week Nine Reservoir:**
**Foundational Theorists:**
**Contemporary Approaches:**
Harrison, Lawrence E. and Samuel P. Huntington, eds. *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress,* Basic Books 2001
Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection,* Princeton, 2004

**Case Studies:**

**Week Ten Reservoir:**

**Foundational Theorists:**

**Contemporary Approaches:**

**Case Studies:**
Robert A. Pape *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism.* (Random House, 2005).