

Exploring Religious Studies – RELS 4001, Thursdays 4:35-7 pm /459 CTIHB

Maera Shreiber (m.shreiber@utah.edu) 123 CITHB . Office Hours T/Th 1-2 and by appointment

Course Objectives

This course is designed to acquaint students with a range of methods and approaches to the study of religion as an academic discipline and to help students prepare for their capstone projects. It also seeks to give students the opportunity to consider a range of career opportunities available to them as religious studies majors. The major promotes clear conceptual, cultural, analytic and writing skills that can lead to a range of interesting and challenging careers both locally and abroad.

Each week a faculty member or a professional working in a field relevant to religious studies will discuss their field of expertise, followed by questions and discussion. Weekly readings and papers will address scholarly topics, contemporary issues, career avenues and capstone projects.

Readings

All readings will be on canvas –as pdf's or as link, unless indicated otherwise.

(*) - Canvas

Assignments

Ten one page reading responses that pose question and topics for discussion – 30% these pages are due electronically on the **Tuesday** before class. My email is: m.shreiber@utah.edu

One final essay (8 pages) describing your capstone project and detailing your plans. You will give a short presentation of this project on the last day of class. 30%

Participation/Attendance – 40%

Schedule (Tentative)

8/25 Introduction and presentation by Emily McCoy Marley (Career Services)

<http://www.sltrib.com/blogs/4040247-155/tattoo-dilemma-leaves-its-marks-on>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2015/04/20/what-happened-when-this-feisty-woman-got-fined-2000-for-feeding-the-homeless/>

Schreier, "Constructing Local Theologies" (*)

9/1 Nathan Devir (World Languages and Middle East Center); Maera Shreiber, Issues in Jewish Identity

"Children of Ephraim" (*) ; Shaul Magid, "Be the Jew You Make"; Karl Shapiro, "The Cross in the Filing Box" (*)

9/8 Robert Nelson , Associate Librarian, (Religious Studies) We meet at the Marriott Library (Faculty Center - 1st floor)

9/ 15 Safi Safiullah

9/22 Winston Kyan (Art History)

Readings - "Kyan, Art History" (*)

9/29 Eric Hutton (Philosophy, University of Utah) and Pierre Julien Harter (University of Chicago)
Issues in Ancient Chinese Thought

Readings: Lee, "Engaging Comparative Religion"; Berkson, "Xunzi's Reinterpretation of Ritual" (*)

10/6 Stephen Prothero , author of Religious Literacy - SPECIAL EVENT

9 am breakfast with Professor Prothero (Jewel Box CITHB)

Stephen Prothero, McMurrin lecture, 7 pm Salt Lake Public Library

Readings: excerpts from Religious Literacy (*)

10/13 Fall Break

10/20 Professor Peggy Battin,(Philosophy) "The Ethics of Suicide" Readings TBA

10/27 "Spiritual Care" -Reverend Dr. Genny Rowley and Reverend Susan Roberts, University of Utah
Hospital

Readings: <http://huc.edu/ckimages/files/Kalsman/Feldstein.PDF>; "White Paper"; "Physician and Nurse
Barriers"; "Spiritual Care Rising"; "Spiritual Care Providers" (*)

11/3 Religion as a Vocation – A Panel Presentation by Reverend Tom Goldsmith (First Unitarian
Church, Salt Lake City), Rabbi Dr. David Levinsky (Temple Har Shalom, Park City) , Charity Van
Maren, (Director of Religious Education, St. Ambrose, Salt Lake City

11/10 Law

11/17 Interfaith Dialogue – Professors David Derezotes (University of Utah, Peace and Conflict Studies)
George Handley (Brigham Young University),Susan Soleil(Interfaith Roundtable)

Readings:

<https://dharmacowgirl.wordpress.com/2012/05/19/sitting-almost-in-the-fire-book-review/>

<http://www.law.utah.edu/event/12233/> (video of Stegner Law Symposium, featuring Professor
Handley)

"Letter to a Student", George Handley (*)

"Environmental Ethics" George Handley (*)

Kathleen Dean Moore, Great Tide Rising (available online Marriott Library). Our speaker recommends
the entire book. But if you are pressed for time, be sure to read:

Introduction (by Mary Evelyn Tucker) (pages 1 to 4); Preface; "The Power of Moral Affirmation"; "Why
it's Wrong to Wreck the Planet (pages 21 to 29)

11/24 – Thanksgiving

12/ 1 Caren Frost and Sierra Phillip (University of Utah) - Gender and the Muslim World

Readings: Abbas, "Veil"; Al-Hibri, "Muslim Women's Rights"; Haddad, "Women's Roles in Syria"; Wilson Center, "Women after Arab Awakening" (*)

12/8 – Last Class – Your presentation

Policies

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the instructor and to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801.581.5020 (V/TDD) to make arrangements for accommodations. Also see <http://disability.utah.edu>.

Attendance & Punctuality: Attendance is important for this course. While in some courses you may be able to master the material on your own using the textbook that is not the case for our class. Students are expected to attend and contribute to class activities and discussions. I understand that illness or other factors may interfere with your ability to attend class. However, we only meet once a week. Therefore, you will be allowed to miss one class period no questions asked, but if circumstances require you to miss more than that please talk to me about your reasons for being absent to . Other behaviors that may negatively affect your participation grade include digital distractions (cell phone or computer use not related to the class) and lack of participation during group work. Behaviors that will increase your participation grade include speaking out during class discussion, engaging fully in group activities, and contributing to a dynamic learning environment.

Late work: Turn in all assignments on time. If you have a compelling reason for turning in an assignment late, I will work with you, but you need to inform me of that reason ahead of time Late work will be accepted any time during the semester for up to 50% credit.

Computers: Please use your laptop only in ways that are related to class activities.

Canvas: Much of the business of this course will be conducted on Canvas. I will send out important announcements through Canvas messaging.

Respectful Conduct: The Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities (the “Student Code,” viewable at <http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html>) guarantees that all students at the U have the right to a “climate conducive to thinking and learning.” The Student Code also protects all members of the university community—including instructors—from intentional disruption of classes and other university activities and from intentionally disrespectful and threatening behavior or language

Content Accommodations: Some of the assignments in this course may include material that conflicts with the core beliefs of some students. Please review the syllabus carefully to see if the course is one that you are committed to taking. If you have a concern, please discuss it with me at your earliest convenience.

Academic Honesty: At all times in this course, you should document and be prepared to prove where you get information you use—especially when you write that information into your own assignments. Willfully copying another’s work and presenting it as if it were your own constitutes **plagiarism**.

Drop/Withdrawal: To learn more about the University's Drop/Withdrawal Policy, go to <http://www.acs.utah.edu/sched/handbook/wddeadlines.htm>. The last day to withdraw from classes for Fall 2016 is October 21.

The University Writing Center offers one-on-one assistance with writing. Tutors can help you understand your writing assignments, work through the writing process, and/or polish your drafts for all the courses in which you are enrolled. Sessions are free of charge, and you can meet as often as you need. To make an appointment, call 801-587-9122. The Writing Center is located on the second floor of the Marriott Library. Visit the website at writingcenter.utah.edu.

Wellness

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources contact the Center for Student Wellness - www.wellness.utah.edu; 801-581-7776.

Veterans Center

If you are a **student veteran**, please note the U of Utah has a Veterans Support Center on campus. They are located in Room 161 in the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. Please visit their website for more information about what support they offer, a list of ongoing events and links to outside resources: <http://veteranscenter.utah.edu/>. Please also let me know if you need any additional support in this class for any reason.

LGBT Resource Center

If you are a member of the LGBTQ community, I want you to know that my classroom is a safe zone. Please also note that the U of Utah has an LGBT Resource Center on campus. They are located in Room 409 in the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8 a.m.-5pm. You can visit their website to find more information about the support they can offer, a list of events through the center and links to additional resources: <http://lgbt.utah.edu/>. Please also let me know if there is any additional support you need in this class.