

Your Professor

Dr. Emily Clark

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

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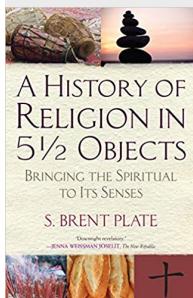
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How This Course Helps You Graduate

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

Course Texts



S. Brent Plate, [A History of Religion in 5 1/2 Objects: Bringing the Spiritual to Its Senses](#) (Beacon Press).

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 methods 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 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

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." I do enforce the attendance policy because attendance is necessary for success in a discussion-based course.

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS

"In compliance with Washington State law (RCW 28.10.039), it is the policy of Gonzaga University to reasonably accommodate students who, due to the observance of religious holidays, expect to be absent or endure a significant hardship during certain days of their academic course or program. [The Policy on Religious Accommodations for Students](#) describes procedures for students requesting a Religious Accommodation and for faculty responding to such a request."

PLAGIARISM POLICY

I do not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. We are an intellectual and academic community, and all of us are responsible to act with integrity. All violations of the Gonzaga Academic Honesty Policy will result in a zero on the assignment. Plagiarism is the act of passing another's work off as your own. Whether intentional or not, all plagiarized assignments will receive a zero. If you have questions or

concerns about plagiarism, consult the guide on blackboard. [Click here for more on Academic Citizenship at Gonzaga.](#)

SCREEN POLICY

You are welcome to use your computer or tablet in class to take notes and refer to pdf readings you did not print out. Screens are **not** to be allowed for other purposes during class. If you have your screen open, you have agreed that I can cold-call on you at any time. The only exceptions to this rule are those with relevant disability accommodations.

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 28: Course Introduction, Plans, and Goals

Friday, Aug 30: What is Religion?

Reading: "Religion: Some Basics" on blackboard

Week 2: What Is Religion?

Monday, Sept 2: No Class. Labor Day

Intellectual Autobiography Due, September 3rd at 5pm

Wednesday, Sept 4: What is Religion?

Reading: “Religion, Religions, Religious” on blackboard

Friday, Sept 6: An Early Academic Definition

Reading: “Animism” on blackboard

Week 3: Culture and Power

Monday, Sept 9: Religion, Symbols, Culture

Reading: “Religion as a Cultural System” on blackboard

Wednesday, Sept 11: Habitus, Class, and Power

Reading: “Habitus” on blackboard

Friday, Sept 13: Theology and Culture

Reading: “Cultural Labor and Theological Critique” on blackboard

Week 4: Power, Theology, and Religion

Monday, Sept 16: Power and Religion

Reading: “A Theology of Liberation” on blackboard

Wednesday, Sept 18: Power and Theology

Reading: “Black Theology & Black Power” on blackboard

Friday, Sept 20: Theology and the Modern University (with Dr. Vander Schell!)

Reading: “Conflict of the Faculties” on blackboard

Week 5: Religion, Theology, and Gender

Monday, Sept 23: Gender and Culture

Reading: “Social Construction of Gender” on blackboard

Wednesday, Sept 25: Feminist Theology (with Dr. McCabe!)

Reading: “She Who Is” on blackboard

Friday, Sept 27: Gender and Bodies

Reading: “The Devil, the Body, and the Feminine Soul in Puritan New England” on blackboard

Week 6: Religion and “Doing”

Monday, Sept 30: Bodies and Suffering

Reading: “Mildred, Is It Fun to be a Cripple” on blackboard

Wednesday, Oct 2: What does Ritual do?

Reading: “The Bare Facts of Ritual” on blackboard

Friday, Oct 4: Ritual from a Non-Western Perspective

Reading: “Navajo Ritual and the Experience of Time” on blackboard

Week 7: Religion and Reading Texts

Monday, Oct 7: Emotion and Religion

Reading: “Reading Anger in an Early Medieval Saint’s Life” on blackboard

Wednesday, Oct 9: Texts and Purity

Reading: “Abominations of Leviticus” on blackboard

Friday, Oct 11: Texts and Narrative (with Dr. McCruden!)

Reading: “Narrative Criticism” on blackboard; and Mark 8:22-10:52 (NSRV translation)

Week 8: Religion and The Material

Monday, Oct 14: Religion and Popular Culture

Reading: “The Church of Baseball, the Fetish of Coca-Cola, and the Potlatch of Rock 'n' Roll” on blackboard

Wednesday, Oct 16: No Class. Dr. Clark will be at a meeting.

Friday, Oct 18: Religion in 5 1/2 Objects

Reading: “1/2” in *A History of Religion in 5 1/2 Objects*

Week 9: Religion and The Material

Monday, Oct 21: No Class. Founder's Day

Wednesday, Oct 23: Religion in 5 1/2 Objects

Reading: “Stones” in *A History of Religion in 5 1/2 Objects*

Friday, Oct 25: Religion in 5 1/2 Objects

Reading: “Incense” in *A History of Religion in 5 1/2 Objects*

Week 10: Religion and The Material

Monday, Oct 28: Religion in 5 1/2 Objects

Reading: “Drums” in *A History of Religion in 5 1/2 Objects*

Wednesday, Oct 30: No Class. Dr. Clark will be at a meeting.

Friday, Nov 1: Religion in 5 1/2 Objects

Reading: “Crosses” in *A History of Religion in 5 1/2 Objects*

Week 11: Religion and The Material

Monday, Nov 4: Religion in 5 1/2 Objects

Reading: “Bread” in *A History of Religion in 5 1/2 Objects*

Wednesday, Nov 6: Religion in 5 1/2 Objects

Reading: “Soul” in *A History of Religion in 5 1/2 Objects*

Friday, Nov 8: Reflecting on *Religion in 5 1/2 Objects*

Week 12: Doing Scholarship

Monday, Nov 11: The Space Between Scholar and Subject

Reading: "Snakes Alive" on blackboard

Wednesday, Nov 13: Final Paper Workshop

Friday, Nov 15: Final Paper Workshop

Week 13: Final Papers Workshop

Monday, Nov 18: Final Paper Workshop

Wednesday, Nov 20: Final Paper Workshop

Friday, Nov 22: No Class. Dr. Clark will be at the American Academy of Religion National Meeting.
But be working on your paper.

Week 14: No Class.

Nov 25 - Nov 29: No Class. Dr. Clark will be out of town at a conference, and then Thanksgiving!

Week 15: Final Papers

Monday, Dec 2: Final Paper Workshop

Wednesday, Dec 4: Peer Review

Friday, Dec 6: Peer Review

Final Exam Week

Tuesday, Dec 10: 10:30 am - 12:30 pm