CURE1111 THE STUDY OF RELIGION
2012-2013 First Term
Lecture: Mo 04:30PM-06:15PM (WMY_507)

Teacher: Prof. YEUNG Kwok Keung (Dept of CRS)
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Tutors: Mr. FUNG Tsiu Chung Brian (Dept of CRS)
Mr. LEE Chi Shing (Dept of CRS)

1. Course Description
This course introduces students to the different understandings of religion and the key theories and concepts in the study of religion. It is an introductory course and expects no prerequisite knowledge from students. It will explore a variety of main themes such as sacred power, myth, ritual, human existence, religious experience, morality, and religious institution. It is the aim of this course to prepare students to learn some of the basic analytical tools and embark in their studies of different forms of religious phenomenon in history and in contemporary society.

2. Learning Outcomes
Knowledge outcomes
1. To become familiar with the basic vocabulary of the field of religious studies
2. To develop an understanding of the key theories, concepts, and issues in the study of religion
3. To be able to reflect on the relationship between religion and the human condition
4. To be able to engage in a critical analysis of religious phenomena in the perspectives of the key theories and concepts, taking into account of the key issues involved

Attitude outcomes
1. To develop a critical yet sympathetic attitude in understanding religious phenomena.
2. To develop a sensitivity to religious dimension of human life.

3. Assessment Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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3.1 Class & Tutorial Participation
The success of this course depends on the participation of all of us. You will be permitted 2 unexcused absences during the course. You are also encouraged to actively participate in the
discussion both in the class and in tutorials.

3.2 Group Project & Presentation
You will work, in a group of 3-4 students, on a project of research on a religious phenomenon using the theories and concepts learned in the course. Each group is required to discuss their research proposal (with a one-page outline) with the tutors. Each group will give a **20-minute presentation** on the result of their research project in the tutorial period.

3.3 Final Paper
You will submit a final paper, based on the above group project or otherwise. The length of the paper should be around 2,000 to 2,500 English words or 3,500 to 4,000 Chinese words. A soft copy of the paper (point 12, Times New Roman or 新细明体; single line spacing) should be submitted on or before **14 Dec 2011 (Fri)** to Moodle and VeriGuide. No hardcopy needs to be submitted. Marks may be deducted for late submission.

3.4 Learning Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture (hr) in /out class</th>
<th>Tutorial (hr) in /out class</th>
<th>Group Projects (hr) in /out class</th>
<th>Final Paper (hr) in /out class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M: Mandatory activity O: Optional activity NA: Not applicable

4. Course Content and Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Basic Readings</th>
<th>Tutorial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Course overview</strong></td>
<td>Kessler, Chapter 1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 10</td>
<td>Key concepts: Studying religions: purposes and attitudes; religious studies and theology</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Defining religion</strong></td>
<td>Kessler, Chapter 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 17</td>
<td>Key concepts: Functional, substantive and cluster definitions; superstition, magic and religion; working definitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>The Field of Religious Studies</strong></td>
<td>Kessler, Chapter 2</td>
<td>Forming project groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 24</td>
<td>Key concepts: Understanding and explaining; goals and methods</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Public holiday – The day following Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Sacred Power</strong></td>
<td>Kessler, Chapter 4</td>
<td>Meeting with tutors on project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 8</td>
<td>Key concepts: Spirits, ancestors, and totems;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Key Concepts</td>
<td>Textbook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 15</td>
<td><strong>Human Existence and Destiny</strong></td>
<td>Salvation, religious values, and human existence</td>
<td>Kessler, Chapter 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 22</td>
<td><strong>Religious Experience</strong></td>
<td>The nature of religious experience; mystical experiences</td>
<td>Kessler, Chapter 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 29</td>
<td><strong>Religion and Morality</strong></td>
<td>Identifying and legitimating moral norms; retribution and guilt</td>
<td>Kessler, Chapter 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 5</td>
<td><strong>Myth as Sacred Story</strong></td>
<td>Types and functions of myth; theories of myth; myth and science</td>
<td>Kessler, Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 12</td>
<td><strong>Ritual as Sacred Action</strong></td>
<td>Types and functions of ritual; myth and ritual</td>
<td>Kessler, Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 19</td>
<td><strong>Sacred Space and Time</strong></td>
<td>Features of sacred space and time; religion and art and architecture</td>
<td>Kessler, Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 26</td>
<td><strong>Evil and Theodicy</strong></td>
<td>Theodicy and the problem of evil; religions of salvation and society; three paths to salvation</td>
<td>Kessler, Chapter 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 3</td>
<td><strong>Institutionalized Religion</strong></td>
<td>Institutionalization; types of authority; Scripture</td>
<td>Kessler, Chapter 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1 **Basic Readings:**

4.2 **Further Readings**
Sept 17 – Defining religion
Sept 24 – The Field of Religious Studies
游淙祺 (1998)〈宗教現象學：其緣起、發展及困境〉，《哲學雜誌》，26: 24-43.
Smart, N. (1993) Chapter one: overview of asian religions, in Religions of Asia, 9-34.
An introduction to Key Ideas and Methods, 210-237. London: Continuum.

Oct 8 – Sacred Power
by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. Princeton University Press. 
136-159. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Oct 15 – Human Existence and Destiny
馬丁•里普 (Martin Repp). (2008) 〈往生淨土與肉身復活——對淨土宗教的比 
較研究〉，《天國、淨土與人間：佛教對話與社會關懷》，賴品超、學愚編，頁207-220.
陳純菁. (2002) 〈重進魅幻時代的香港：一個新興宗教的個案研究〉，《諸神嘉年華 ：香 
港宗教研究》 陳慎慶編. 468-515. 香港：牛津出版社.

Oct 22 – Religious Experience
謝穎思，陳慎慶. (2002) 〈皈依宗教與追尋靈性〉，《諸神嘉年華：香港宗教研究》， 陳慎 
慶編. 468-515.香港：牛津出版社.

Oct 29 – Religion and Morality
Ammerman, N. T. (1997) Golden rule Christianity: lived religion in the American mainstream, 
University Press.
Darley, J. M.; Batson, C. D. (1973) "From Jerusalem to Jericho": A study of situational and 
dispositional variables in helping behavior. Journal of Personality and Social 

Nov 5 – Myth as Sacred Story
德：〈宇宙創生神話和「神聖的歷史」〉，《西方神話學讀本》169－186)
李亦園. (2004) 〈寒食與介之推———則中國古代神話與儀式的結構學研究〉，《宗教與
Nov 12 – Ritual as Sacred Action
黎志添. (2005)〈從打齋儀式看道教對死亡的處理：一個死魂遠遊旅程的救濟：拔罪、救苦、度亡及成仙〉，載《凝視死亡：死與人間的多元省思》，梁美儀、張燦輝編. 香港：中文大學出版社.
蔡志祥. (2002)〈族群凝聚力的強化：長洲醮會〉，《諸神嘉年華：香港宗教研究》 陳慎慶編. 199-211. 香港：牛津出版社.

Nov 19 – Sacred Space and Time

Nov 26 – Evil and Theodicy
學愚：〈苦與苦滅〉，《天國、淨土與人間：耶佛對話與社會關懷》，賴品超、學愚編，頁 175-196.

Dec 3 – Institutionalized Religion

5. Learning resources for students
The basic readings for the course are stated above. Other suggested readings, if any, will be
given in class and through Moodle.

6. Feedback for evaluation
Students are welcome to give comments and feedback on the course through emails in Moodle or personal exchanges with instructor and/or tutors. An end-of-term university wide course evaluation will be conducted in class.

7. A facility for posting course announcements
Course announcements, assignment, and feedback will be given through Moodle. All questions with regard to the course could be posted on the discussion forum or via e-mails within the Moodle.

8. Academic honesty and plagiarism
Each student must upload a soft copy of the completed final paper to the plagiarism detection engine VeriGuide, at the URL: https://veriguide2.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/cuhk/. The system will issue a receipt which also contains a declaration of honesty, which should be signed and handed in to the tutors.