Theories of Religious Studies
RELS5005
Day and Time: Thursdays, 19:00 – 21:30
Venue: ELB_403

Instructor: WeiShan Huang
Email: weishan@cuhk.edu.hk
Office: Leung Kau Kui Building, #322

Research Helper: TBA

Course Description

From the establishment of the sociological endeavor, the study of religion has been central to the understanding of modern societies. This course will continue in this tradition by surveying the interactions between religion and society while developing the sociological and Anthropological approach to the study of religion as a social institution. In particular, we will look at the ways in which religion is transformed by, and plays a role in the transformation of, a global society. This course is designed to give students tools and concepts with which to understand the social organization of religion and the role of religion in society. We will focus on classical and emerging themes in the field, and analyze case studies that relate to them. Students will:

- learn how religion is shaped by and, in turn, shapes the larger social field in which it exists;
- become familiar with the dynamics of secularization, ecological theories, and other developments;
- develop an understanding of the ways in which religion interacts with other social institutions such as the state and economy, and culture.

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge Outcomes:
Upon completion of the subject, student will be able to
1) Understand the establishment of knowledge of Religious Studies and research ethics;
2) Learn the key writers on Religious Studies, Sociology of Religion, and Anthropology of Religion;
3) Understand the key theories of Religious Studies in classical themes;
4) Learn the major issues in the field of Religious Studies in contemporary scholarship;
5) Develop the critical thinking on the debates regarding religious diversity, migration and religion, religious movement and so on.
**Teaching Method**

The course will consist of required readings, lecturing, group discussions, and class debates. Readings are selected so as to cover a wide range of theoretical and empirical approaches to the study of immigrant and Cities. You are expected to come to class having read all required materials (not including recommended readings) and being prepared to engage in class discussions.

**Student Contribution and Evaluation**

A. *Presentation: 35%

The class presentation is meant to stimulate the discussion by presenting the argument of additional readings and relating it to the other readings. Students may choose any articles from any academic source in either English or Chinese.

B. *Final paper:*

1. The final paper 65%; English 4000, 中文 Chinese 5000 words, (word counts not including reference and footnotes,) which is due on Dec 15, 2018, takes the form of a *research proposal:* Choose a specific research problem in the research fields covered by the course that is of interest of you, review the relevant existing literature, derive expectations from existing theories, and propose data and methods that would allow settling controversial issues.

**Note:** All written work should be submitted in Times New Roman 12pt., double-spaced, standard margins.

**Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on honesty in academic work submitted by students, and adopts a policy of zero tolerance on cheating and plagiarism. Any related offence will lead to disciplinary action including termination of studies at the University. All student assignments in undergraduate and postgraduate programs should be submitted via VeriGuide: [https://veriguide2.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/cuhk/](https://veriguide2.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/cuhk/)

**Grading Rubric**

Please refer to the blackboard of this course.

**Course Schedule**

***6 September

**Introduction and Overview**

- Introduction of the course.
- How to write a proposal?
• How to conduct research?

***13 September
The Construction of a Subject

***20 September
Methods and Worldviews:
• 黎志添：《導論：宗教研究的歷史與方法》。香港：香港中文大學出版社，2003，頁 1-12。

Recommended:

***27 September
Economics and Religion

Recommended:

***4 October
Secularization
• How to write a proposal?

Recommended:
• Peter Berger, "Chapters 5-7", The Sacred Canopy, New York: Garden City, 1967, Pages: 105-174.
11 October

**Individuals, Rituals, and Practices**

- Catherine Bell. “Acting Ritually: Evidence from the Social Life of Chinese Rites. (Fenn)

Recommended:

- 譚偉倫, <中國地方宗教儀式>, 《中國地方宗教儀式論集》。譚偉倫主編。香港：香港中文大學崇基學院宗教與中國社會研究中心，2011，頁 1-15。
- Talk by Julia Huang, “Dying to Give: Buddhism and Cadaver Donations for Medical Education in Modern Taiwan” (video on backboard.)

18 October

**Religion and Gender**

- Student Presentation

Recommended:

- Mary Daly. “The Spiritual Revolution: Women’s Liberation as Theological Re-education”
- Carolyn Pevey, Christine William, and Christopher Ellison. “Male God Imagery and Female Submission: Lessons from a Southern Baptist Ladies’ Bible Class”

25 October

**Organizations and Collectivities**

• Student Presentation

Recommended:

***1 November

**Migration and Religion**

• Student Presentation

Recommended:
  ✓ “Introduction”

***8 November


  ✓ “Introduction”
  ✓ Chapter 13. “Global Religions, Ethnic Identities, and Geopolitics”
• Student Presentation

Recommended:
  1. Proposed Argument xviii
  2. Chapter 1. Cultural Revolution: Sources, Character, Niches
• 邢福增，梁家麟：《五十年代三自運動的研究》，香港：建道神學院，1996.

***15 November

Religion and the Public

  ✓ 2. Tzu Chi: The Modernization of Buddhist Compassion
  ✓ 3. Buddha’s Light Mountain: The Buddhist Contribution to Democratic Civil Religion
  ✓ 5. The Enacting Heaven Temple: Hybrid Modernity
• Student Presentation

Recommended:
• 邢福增，《新酒與舊皮袋：中國宗教立法與<宗教事務條例解讀>》，香港：中文大學崇基學院宗教與中國社會研究中心，2006。

***22 November

Religion and Globalization


Recommended:

***Nov 29

Urban and Ecological Approach