

RELS 197A: Religious Studies Seminar A

Fall 2015

W 7:30PM - 10:35PM

Daly Science 106

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Office Hours: Wed. 4-5 PM, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a two-quarter seminar for Religious Studies majors, the goal of which is the completion of the Capstone independent research and writing project. It will provide an introduction to research and writing skills, and then will segue into a structured independent study in which each student will work on an independent project with the support and feedback from the instructor and their peers. The structured independent study will occur in the RELS 197B course during Winter quarter. This course, RELS 197A, is a research practicum for students for advanced Religious Studies majors who have already fulfilled most of the major requirements; it should ideally be taken during one's junior or senior year. The goal of this course will be for each student to design, and begin work upon, her or his Capstone project. We will meet weekly to discuss issues regarding research and writing in the field of Religious Studies. By the end of the quarter, each student will design a research project and will begin work on it, undertaking both research and preliminary reporting of research findings. Students will receive feedback from the instructor and class peers at each stage in the development process. Students will work with the goal of communicating their research in both presentation and essay format. This course will require both dedicated work on the individual project, as well as regular class meetings to discuss research strategies, pitfalls, and ways to avoid or overcome them. Prerequisite: Must be a Religious Studies Major to enroll.

Required Reading:

Booth, Colomb and Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 3rd ed. (University Of Chicago Press, 2008)

Recommended Reading:

The Chicago Manual of Style, 16th ed. (University Of Chicago Press, 2010)

ASSESSMENT & GRADING:

One of the primary goals of this course is to provide students with a structured environment to hone their skills in research and writing. In particular, the ability to form an argument, and to cogently argue it in both speech and writing, will be the focus of the class. The class assignments are geared toward the production of a publishable essay, and they thus seek to advance students toward this goal via a gradual, step-by-step progression. The Capstone project will be on a subject of interest to each student.

Project Topic Statement (10%)

The initial assignment will be the formulation of a topic for the final paper. The first assignment will be to identify a topic on which the student is interested in conducting research, and drafting a short (one page) description of the research one will undertake to develop this project. This is meant to be merely a preliminary sketch of what you are interested in possibly doing. This will be due at the week 2 class.

Project Proposal (20%)

Once a topic has been selected, students will be expected to begin to research the topic, and identify a body of relevant works—books, articles, encyclopedia entries, etc.—which will be the basis of the research for the project. The project proposal is a more refined and well-crafted statement of your research interest. It should include a description of your project, including the question or problem that you will be exploring, a description of the research you will undertake to shed light on it, and a tentative statement of what you expect or hope to learn from this project. Your description should be approximately 500-1000 words in length. This should be followed by a short bibliography, listing works that address the topic that you have identified as possible sources for your research. This will be due at the week 4 class.

Conference Paper (30%)

In preparation for the presentation, each student will be expected to write and submit a draft version of their paper, approximately 1500-2000 words in length. These papers are “drafts,” and thus do not have to be fully developed. They should, however, coherently present the argument that the student will make in the final paper, with support from research done thus far. These will be due at the week 9 class.

Class Presentation (30%)

During the final week of class, each student will make a 15-20 minute presentation on the topic of their final paper to the class. Students can read their paper, or make a powerpoint presentation. Feedback will be provided by the course instructor as well as by classmates in class.

Class Participation (10%)

As this is a seminar, it is expected that students will regularly attend class, critically participate in class discussions, and provide classmates with thoughtful feedback during the presentations. Absences will be excused if the instructor is notified in advance, and a good reason is given for the absence. Failure to regularly participate in this fashion will negatively impact one's grade.

Students will be asked to assess the course via the narrative evaluations at the end of the quarter.

Students will receive regular feedback on their work from their instructor to help them improve their understanding and analytic skills. Students will also receive peer feedback for the group projects.

POLICIES

Attendance

Regular attendance is required. If you must miss a class, you should inform the instructor in advance when possible, and you are responsible for making up missed work. **Unexcused absences will significantly lower your class participation grade, and thus your final grade.**

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form (as described in the Student Conduct Code) will result in a failed grade for the project, and possibly for the course. All allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported to the department chair and Office of Student Life. For a full presentation of University policies concerning plagiarism, see: <http://scu.edu/studentlife/resources/upload/Academic-Integrity-brochure-2014.pdf>

In order to avoid the sanctions applied to cases of academic dishonesty, please make sure that you properly cite all sources that you utilize in your writing, including works that are directly quoted or paraphrased, as well as works used as a source of information. This includes both print and online sources. Your paper submissions must consist of your own writing, and any direct quotations or paraphrasing from other works must be properly cited.

Disability Accommodations:

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, www.scu.edu/disabilities as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please

discuss them with me during my office hours. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy or parenting may be eligible for accommodations.

While I am happy to assist you, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

Title IX Syllabus Statement

Santa Clara University upholds a zero tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence or stalking, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please go to www.scu.edu/studentlife and click on the link for the University's Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie at 408-554-3043 or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.com <http://stage-www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethics-point/>

Reporting Practices

While I want you to feel comfortable coming to me with issues you may be struggling with or concerns you may be having, please be aware that there are some reporting requirements that are part of my job at Santa Clara University.

For example, if you inform me of an issue of harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, I will keep the information as private as I can, but I am required to bring it to the attention of the institution's EEO and Title IX Coordinator. If you inform me that you are struggling with an issue that may be resulting in, or caused by, traumatic or unusual stress, I will likely inform the campus Student Care Team (SCU CARE).

If you would like to reach out directly to the Student Care Team for assistance, you can contact them at www.scu.edu/osl/report. If you would like to talk to the Office of EEO and Title IX directly, they can be reached at 408-554-3043 or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report

or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.com. Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to the Office of Student Life (OSL), Campus Safety Services, and local law enforcement. For confidential support, contact the Counseling and Psychological Services office (CAPS), the YWCA, or a member of the clergy (for example, a priest or minister).

Finally, please be aware that if, for some reason, our interaction involves a disruptive behavior, a concern about your safety or the safety of others, or potential violation of University policy, I will inform the Office of Student Life. The purpose of this is to keep OSL apprised of incidents of concern, and to ensure that students can receive or stay connected to the academic support and student wellness services they need.

ASSIGNMENTS

Papers should be either emailed to me by the end of the day (i.e., 12 midnight) on the day that they are due **OR** submitted as a hard copy in class. In order to save paper, I prefer email submissions, and do not require a hard copy. Please email me your papers as Microsoft Word documents (.doc or .docx) if possible, or as text files (.pdf, .txt, or .rft). I will email you a confirmation when I have received it. If you do NOT receive a confirmation within 24 hours, please check with me to confirm that I have received it. If you email me a paper and I do not receive it, I WILL count it as late if you do not check in with me the next day. Late work will only be accepted with the permission of the instructor, and will be penalized at the rate of 5 points per day late, unless the instructor has granted an extension in advance (i.e., at least 24 hours prior to the due date).

Grading Scale

94.0–100 A	87.0–89.9B+	77.0–79.9C+	67.0–69.9D+
90.0–93.9A-	83.0–86.9B	73.0–76.9C	63.0–66.9D
	80.0–82.9B-	70.0–72.9C-	60.0–62.9D-

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (9/23) Introductory Meeting

Week 2 (9/30) Research Planning

Topic: Planning your research program

- Project Topic Statement due
- Discussion Reading: 3-50

Week 3 (10/7) General Research Strategies

Topic: Researching your Topic

- Discussion Reading: 51-100

Week 4 (10/14) Making Good Arguments

Topic: How to Develop a Strong Argument

- Project Proposal due
- Discussion Reading: 101-170

Week 5 (10/21) Research Planning

Topic: Planning and Drafting your Research Project

- Discussion Reading: 173-212

Week 6 (10/28)

Open Discussion

Week 7 (11/4)

Open Discussion

Week 8 (11/11) Presenting your Research

Topic: Visually Presenting and Introducing your Research

- Discussion Reading: 213-248

Week 9 (11/18) Making Revisions

- Conference Papers Due
- Discussion Reading: 249-269

Week 10 (12/2)

Presentations