

RELS 197A: Religious Studies Seminar A

Fall 2017

Time & Place TBA

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Office Hours: Mon. 10 AM-12 noon, 1-2 PM; WR 1-2 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 or Minor to enroll.

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

Academic Integrity

The Academic Integrity pledge is an expression of the University's commitment to fostering an understanding of -- and commitment to -- a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. The Academic Integrity pledge, which applies to all students, states:

I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code.

Students are expected to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this class. For more information about Santa Clara University's academic integrity pledge and resources about ensuring academic integrity in your work, see www.scu.edu/academic-integrity.

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. Quoting or paraphrasing another work *without acknowledging it* IS plagiarism.

Disabilities Resources

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, <http://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.

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.

Accommodations for Pregnancy and Parenting

In alignment with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and with the California Education Code, Section 66281.7, Santa Clara University provides reasonable accommodations to students who are pregnant, have recently experienced childbirth, and/or have medically related needs. Pregnant and parenting students can often arrange accommodations by working directly with their instructors, supervisors, or departments. Alternatively, a pregnant or parenting student experiencing related medical conditions may request accommodations through Disability Resources.

Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct (Title IX)

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/dating violence, or stalking, I encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please consult the University's Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy [at http://bit.ly/2ce1hBb](http://bit.ly/2ce1hBb) or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie, at [408-554-3043](tel:408-554-3043), bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through

<https://www.scu.edu/osl/report/> or anonymously through Ethicspoint
<https://www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethicspoint/>

ASSIGNMENTS

Papers should be submitted as digital files (via Camino or email) by 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 digital submissions, and do not require a hard copy. Please email me your papers as documents in the Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or Pages (.pages) formats if possible, or as text files (.pdf, .txt, or .rft). If you submit your paper via email, 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 within 24 hours. 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 (including weekends), unless the instructor has granted an extension in advance (i.e., at least 24 hours prior to the due date). Note that if instructor does grant an extension, but the assignment is turned in late, i.e., after the extended due date, the late penalty will be calculated based on the day the assignment was originally due.

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-

Recommended Reading:

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

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

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (9/18-22) Introductory Meeting

Week 2 (9/25-29) Research Planning

Topic: Planning your research program

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

Week 3 (10/2-6) General Research Strategies

Topic: Researching your Topic

- Discussion Reading: CoR 51-100

Week 4 (10/9-13) Making Good Arguments

Topic: How to Develop a Strong Argument

- Project Proposal due
- Discussion Reading: CoR 101-170

Week 5 (10/16-20) Research Planning

Topic: Planning and Drafting your Research Project

- Discussion Reading: CoR 173-212

Week 6 (10/23-27)

Open Research/Discussion

Week 7 (10/30-11/3)

Open Research/Discussion

Week 8 (11/6-10) Presenting your Research

Topic: Visually Presenting and Introducing your Research

- Discussion Reading: CoR 213-248

Week 9 (11/13-15) **Making Revisions**

- Conference Papers Due

- Discussion Reading: CoR 249-269

Week 10 (11/27-12/1)

Presentations