

RSOC 9: *Ways of Understanding Religion* [Honors Section] Spring, 2015

Instructor: Prof. Akiba Lerner [ALerner@SCU.edu]

Office: 300G Kenna Off. Hrs: Tues. and Thur. 3:50 – 4:50

[Fulfills Core RTC 1]

Course Description:

This is an introductory course to the study of religion and to the field of religious studies. Together we will explore a range of ideas and thinkers that have historically shaped our understanding of the complex social, political, philosophical, and psychological dynamics that impact upon religious communities and belief systems. This course is designed around a sampling of fundamental thinkers, texts, terms, and questions that have defined modern intellectual discussions over the role of religion within society. This class is designed to be a comprehensive survey of the essential critical categories for understanding religious phenomena. Students are encouraged to critically reflect on how and why the texts and intellectual categories we use for understanding religion have developed and how they may apply to students' own experiences, if any, within the religious world. This course provides a safe space through which students can reflect on fundamental existential questions such as, what gives them hope? Is there a larger meaning to human existence? How does religion help or thwart individual self-expression and the quest for authenticity? What are our ethical obligations to ourselves, what are our obligations to others? What is the proper relationship between religion and the public realm? Do the values and activities of a religious community necessary conflict with the presumed neutrality of the public sphere within liberal societies? Is it possible to be both critical of religion and appreciate the role of religion at the same time? Do we have to justify our beliefs? What does it mean to be spiritual but not religious? Is there a common denominator to being religious, or are religious experiences always individual and cultural specific? Is there an inherent tension between being religious and tolerating "otherness" (*Alterity*)? How can religion help us to better understand the need for compassion? What is the relationship between religion and globalization? What is the relationship between religion and violence? Is there a connection between religion and false consciousness? What is the relationship between religion and social hierarchies? Do the secular tendencies of modernity undermine or reinforce religious identity? How does the study of religion better help us to understand the relationship between the individual and society? These and many more are the types of questions that define this course.

Required Texts:

Gary E. Kessler, *Studying Religion: An Introduction Through Cases* (McGraw-Hill, 3rd Edition) [ISBN: 978-07-338659]

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (Norton)
[ISBN: 9780393301588]

Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (Hackett)
[ISBN: 0-87220-283-6]

Mircea Eliade, *Patterns In Comparative Religion* (Bison Books)
[ISBN: 0-8032-6733-9]

Shunryu Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* [ISBN: 0-8348-0079-9]

Martin Luther King, Jr. *Strength to Love* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981)
[ISBN – 0-8006-1441-0]

[All “Assigned Readings” must be brought to each class.]

Recommended Texts: Huston Smith, *Why Religion Matters: The Fate Of The Human Spirit In An Age of Disbelief* [ISBN: 9780060671020]

(Students are encouraged to draw on this text, but are not required to purchase this text)

[All assigned texts that are not listed as “required texts” above can be found on SCU’s Camino system for this course]

RTC.1 Core Learning Objectives:

- Goals: Global Cultures, Critical Thinking, Complexity, Religious Reflection
- Objectives: Students will...
 1. Describe and compare the central religious ideas and practices from several traditions or within one, and from at least two globally distinct regions. (Knowledge of Global Cultures; Complexity of content as well as method; Ambiguity)
 2. Use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs and the religious dimensions of human existence. (Critical Thinking; Complexity of Method; Reflection)

Additional Learning Goals: Students will be able to describe and evaluate the fundamental terms and categories for analyzing religious ideas and practices within the modern world. A list of terms and quotes on defining religion and religious studies will be provided at the beginning and elaborated upon throughout the course. Students will critically reflect on their own assumptions about religion and will analyze the intellectual orientations of the thinkers and texts covered in this course. Students will analyze the tension between personal spiritual experiences and the academic terms used to evaluate such experiences from the presumed distance of an outside “objective” observer. Students will be able to express a critical understanding of both their own orientations and the positions of theorists who have written, and continue to write about religion.

Course Requirements:

A. Class participation: [20% of final grade]

Student’s class participation grade will mostly depend on their ability to engage in thoughtful conversation on the course material and assignments, and on how they conduct themselves with reference to their peers and the professor.

Students are expected to demonstrate their understanding of the material and mastery of the ideas and terms provided through lecture and the readings by actively engaging in discussions, presenting on the material, asking questions, and participating in small group exercises and assignments. Students are expected to have completed the assigned reading before each class and to bring the assigned material to each class ready to discuss. Students will also be given a set of questions to guide their reading and discussions. Students are expected to come to class ready to discuss the questions in relation to the readings assigned. Students will be called on at random in class to provide their own insights and reflections on the readings and questions assigned. Students are also expected to have underlined key sections of the assigned reading and should be prepared to demonstrate their reading comprehension in class.

Discussion of the questions in relationship to the reading is an opportunity for students to demonstrate...

- a) An understanding of the texts and ideas
- b) An ability to analyze and critical reflect on the course material
- c) The student’s ability to critically examine their own beliefs by relating the questions and ideas from the texts and lectures to their own lives and experiences. [fulfills “Core Learning Objective” 2]

Class attendance is a necessary prerequisite for intellectual engagement, but is not sufficient for counting as class participation. [i.e. simply showing up to class

will not help the student's grade, but not coming to class, however, will adversely affect the final grade]. Attending class is mandatory and attendance will be noted. If a student is not present in the classroom when attendance is taken they will be marked down as absent. Missing more than **six** classes – no matter the excuse including playing on a team – will automatically result in a reduction of the final grade. A student cannot pass the class if they miss **8** or more classes. If a student misses the first day of class their position in the class may be given to another student. If a student misses the first two sessions of the course they will be automatically cut from the class. Students who are not enrolled in the course and miss the first day of class must get special permission to add the class from the professor. If the class is already full but a student wishes to add the class if another student decides to drop the class, the student who wants to add the class must be in attendance for the first week of class.

Further details on class participation expectations will be elaborated upon in class.

B. Self-Analysis Essay: [2% of final grade]

Students are required to turn in a **2-3 page** essay in which they critically reflect on their own understanding of religion. Students will be given a handout of a variety of quotes from prominent thinkers on the meaning of religion. Students are required to choose **2 quotes** they agree with and **2 quotes** with which they disagree. As part of an overall critical examination of the student's own beliefs and preconceptions about religion and religious studies, students are required to write on why they chose their quotes. [Citations of the quotes provided should be no more than two sentences. See format instructions below for all writing assignments]

In the essay students must also address the following:

- a) how the student **defines religion**.
- b) what the student thinks it means to have a **religious experience**.
- c) how the student defines their **ultimate hopes**. [i.e. highest hopes for one's life]
- d) what the student hopes to **learn most** from this course.

[Essays should be emailed to the professor on a word document. See formatting guidelines for papers below. Essay grade will be graded Pass/No Pass. This exercise is mapped to "Core Learning Objectives" 2]

C. Mid-term: [20% of final Grade]

For the mid-term students are required to draw on the lectures and material covered in order to answer a selection of questions. Questions and quotes sent

out each week to guide readings and discussion should be consulted as a study-guide for the midterm. Further details will be provided in class.

D. Final Presentation: Visit of a Religious Site and Critical Evaluation of a “Religious Experience”

Students are expected to visit at least one religious site before their presentations in which religious rituals central to a particular religious system can be observed. Students are required to choose a religious tradition and site with which they have no, or very little familiarity, [i.e. if you a student was brought up in Christian religious tradition they cannot choose to observe a Christian ritual]. Prior to visiting, the professor must approve the location selected. For the final in-class presentation students are expected to reflect on their experience of what they witnessed with reference to the texts and ideas covered throughout the course. Students will be given a set of guidelines and questions to help direct their experiences and final reports. Students are additionally encouraged to draw on the resources provided by the “**Local Religions Project**” as part of the Religious Studies Department. For more on the LRP’s guidelines for visiting religious sites go to

<http://www.scu.edu/cas/religiousstudies/lrp/research/guide/main.cfm>.

Further details will be provided in class.

[Presentation is worth 20% of total class grade. This exercise fulfills “Core Learning Objective” 2]

E. Final Essay: Comparative Religious Approaches to Compassion and Hope

For the final essay, students are expected to compare and contrast the models of **compassion** and **hope** within Shunryu Suzuki’s text *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind* (as representative of Buddhism, from the global regions of Asia and North America) and King’s prophetic Christianity, (as representative of the North American, European, and Middle Eastern global regions). Students must also engage 4 different quotes from 4 different thinkers from the assigned readings in their final papers. The final essay is also an opportunity for students to critically examine their own beliefs about religion and to reflect on how their views of religion have changed since writing their first self-analysis essay.

[Further details and guidelines for the final essay will be presented in class. This exercise fulfills “Core Learning Objective” 1. This exercise is worth 38% of final grade. A student cannot pass this course if they do not write the final paper. The final essay should be emailed via “word” document.]

Extra Credit Options:

1. **Critical Evaluation of Media:** Students seeking to improve their final grade are allowed to write a 4-5 page essay for extra credit. Through consultation with the professor, students may choose a controversial religious topic [such as abortion, stem cell research, death penalty, terrorism, martyrdom, religious tolerance, women's rights, sexuality/gender, creationism and the teaching of religion/prayer in public schools, state funded faith based initiatives, asylum, etc.] and find at least **two articles** from respected mainstream media sources that present opposite positions of the issue. Drawing on the readings, students will analyze the assumptions made by the authors selected. For example, does the author assume that religion is mostly a reflection of personal psychology, society, culture, economics, geography, power, society, etc? Does the author think religion plays a positive or a negative role in society? Students are allowed to choose the same topic, but must focus on different articles or media formats. Movies and TV shows are an acceptable media format but students are required to provide a copy of whatever media selected. Students are required to quote at least 4 different thinkers/texts from readings assigned in this course for their extra credit essays. [Essays will be either assigned 2-0 points. Each essay is worth 1% of final grade. Extra credit essays are an opportunity for students to improve their final grades. Example: two extra credit essays that have both received 2 points can move a final grade from 89 (B+) to 90 (A-). Students are allowed to write a total of 2 extra credit essays]. Students must get approval for their topic from the professor before writing an extra credit essay. All extra credit assignments must be turned in on the same due date for the final paper.

2. *Campus Events/Lectures:* Students will also be given an opportunity to earn extra credit points by attending and reporting on select events/lectures during the quarter. In order to receive extra credit for talks or lectures approved by the professor, students are allowed to write a **two** page paper in which they are required to both summarize the main points of the talk, and connect the content of the talk with at least **two** separate texts/thinkers from the assigned readings. [Essays will be graded from 2-0 points. Each essay is worth 1% of final grade. Follow standard writing format instructions]

Academic Integrity, Technology, Mindfulness, and Classroom Decorum:

Students cannot engage electronic devices in class unless given permission from the professor! We will collectively create a safe and dynamic space in which each student will be expected to share his/her insights into the texts, ideas, and traditions covered, while retaining a respectful openness to the opinions and identity commitments of the other students in the class. It is important to demonstrate your respect for both the instructor and your fellow

peers by reframing from using technological devices unless authorized by the professor. It is also important to develop greater concentration, appreciation, and awareness by engaging in a learning process that is not solely dependent on external technological stimulation. The classroom will be a sanctuary from the distractions and social alienation sometimes caused by an overuse of technological devices. Reducing technological distractions will also increase the possibility of students taking more responsibility for the learning process by allowing new ideas to become part of their consciousness. In order to foster this greater state of “mindfulness,” students are additionally expected to demonstrate their “presence” during class by reframing from distracting activities such as texting, having un-authorized side conversations, side jokes (unless really funny and shared with the class), and/or engaging in other disruptive behavior like coming into the classroom late or packing up before the class has ended. Any disruptive behavior can affect the final class participation grade. All texting should take place outside the classroom. The classroom is for engaging ideas, texts, and creating discussion. If you are caught using any form of technology (i.e. computer, answering phones, texting, etc.) your final grade may be affected. Additionally, students should reframe from leaving in the middle of class, even for the bathroom, unless absolutely necessary.

A student caught plagiarizing cannot pass the course and their case will be turned over to proper academic authorities within the University. Additionally, all integrity and policy standards already laid out in the University bulletin apply.

(For further see www.scu.edu/studentlife/resources/academicintegrity)

Format for all writing assignments: All paper assignments should be double-spaced, 12 font text, 1 inch margins. Additionally, all written assignments must include a proper title page with the students name, class number (RSOC.9) and section time, and the professor’s name at the bottom.

Footnote or Endnote Citations: Provide the author’s last name, title of the text, and page number in either a footnote or endnote, but don’t waste space in your paper. [Example: Freud, *Civilization And Its Discontents*, 60] Do not put large amount of texts in your essays, cite just a word or a few sentences at the most.

Feedback on course assignments: Students will receive feedback on their work through a combination of written grades, comments, and conversations. If a student has any questions about the course I encourage them to come visit me during office hours. All additional requirements and expectations will be elaborated on in class.

Grading Structure: A=100-95, A-=94-90, B+=89-87, B=86-83, B-=82-80, C+=79-77, C=76-73, C-=72-70, D=69-60, F=below 60

Grading and Evaluation: Grades are earned, they are not guaranteed. I will be as explicit as possible about what the expectations are and how to earn a superior grade on any given assignment, but simply completing the work to the letter of the assignment will not guarantee you a student an A or even a B. Earning a superior grade depends on the student's ability to combine texts, lectures, films, and, most importantly, critical thinking with their own work. The challenge is for students to translate ideas into writing that is intelligible to the professor. Excellence is the ultimate aspiration for this course, competence will allow students to merely pass. Essays not turned in on time will be automatically reduced one full grade for every 24hr period not received by the professor. [i.e. an A paper is dropped to a B] All grades are non-negotiable except for clerical error.

Office Hours and E-mails: I encourage all students to visit during my office hours. E-mails should be thoughtful and concise. I would rather meet during office hours to discuss issues of greater length. Students should feel free to contact me to set up an alternative appointment if they have a serious conflict with my offices hours.

[When sending an e-mail to the professor students should begin the email with "Dear Professor," and always include the course number and section number in the "subject" title section plus a few words on the topic. Example: "RSOC.9, 12:10 Section, question regarding reading assignment"]

Disability Accommodations: Students are expected to notify me at the beginning of the course if they need any special accommodations. To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must be registered with Disabilities Resources, located in Benson, room 216. In order to register, please go on-line to www.scu.edu/disabilities. You will need to register and provide professional documentation of a disability prior to receiving academic accommodations. It is best to read "Required Documentation" on the website before starting the registration process in order to determine what is needed. You may contact Disabilities Resources at [408-554-4109](tel:408-554-4109) if you have questions.

PART A: INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIOLOGY AND STUDY OF RELIGION [Disenchantment]

1. [3/31] *Introduction:*

[Handout: Quotes defining Religion and Religious Studies]

Recommended Reading:

Huston Smith, *Why Religion Matters: The Fate Of The Human Spirit In An Age of Disbelief*

Selections: Chapter 1: Who's Right About Reality; Traditionalist, Modernists, or the Postmoderns?, Chapter 14: The Big Picture, Chapter 15: Spiritual Personality Types, Chapter 16: Spirit

“Why Study Religion” a response by the AAR
<http://www.studyreligion.org/why/index.html>

2. [4/2] *Defining Religion and Religious Studies*

Assigned Reading:

Gary E. **Kessler**, *Studying Religion: An Introduction Through Cases Selections*: Chapter 1: “Thinking About Being a Student of Religion”
Chapter 2: “On Defining and Studying Religion”

Recommended Reading:

Karen Armstrong, Chapter One: “Homo Religiosus,”
[Located in *The Case For God*]
Charles Taylor, essays “Disenchantment – Re-enchantment,” and “What Does Secularism Mean?” [loc in *Dilemmas and Connections*]
The Moral Animal, editorial in the NYT by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/24/opinion/the-moral-animal.html?>

3. [4/7] *Religion and the Social Construction of Reality*

Assigned Reading:

Gary E. **Kessler**, *Studying Religion: An Introduction Through Cases Selection*: Chapter 4: “Myth as Sacred Story”
Gary E. Kessler, *Studying Religion: An Introduction Through Cases Selection*: Chapter 8: “Explaining Evil”

Recommended Reading:

Peter **Berger**, chapter, “Religion and World-Construction,” located in *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*
Gary E. Kessler, *Studying Religion: An Introduction Through Cases, Selection*:
Chapter 3: Sacred Power

4. [4/9] *The Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Marxism, Religion, Civil Society and Human Emancipation*

Assigned Reading:

Gary E. **Kessler**, *Studying Religion: An Introduction Through Cases Selections*: “Agnosticism and Atheism,” Pages, 54-5,

David Loy, "The Religion of the Market," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 65/2 (1997): 275-290.

Recommended Reading:

Daniel Pals, "Religion as Alienation: Karl Marx," [located in *Eight Theories of Religion*]

Peter Berger, chapter "Religion and Alienation" located in *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*

Film: *There Will Be Blood*, (2007) directed, written and co-produced by Paul Anderson

5. [4/14] *The Transvaluation of Religious Values*

Assigned Reading:

Friedrich **Nietzsche**, *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Selections: First Treatise, [All]

Second Treatise: sections 1-7, 11-13, 16-25

Recommended Reading:

Introduction, Preface, to On the Genealogy of Morality

6. [4/16] *Ascetic Priests and Nietzsche's Critique of Compassion*

Assigned Reading: Friedrich **Nietzsche**, *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Selections: Third Treatise

Recommended:

Alasdair MacIntyre, "Nietzsche or Aristotle?" [loc in *After Virtue*]

Film: *Fight Club*, (1999) Directed by David Fincher [139 min]

7. [4/21] *Psychoanalysis and Religion*

Assigned Reading: Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents
Selections: Chapters I-V

Gary E. **Kessler**, *Studying Religion: An Introduction Through Cases*
Selections: "Psychoanalytic Theories" Pages, 148-152

8. [4/23] *The "Oceanic Feeling" and Eros*

Assigned Reading: Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents
Selections: Chapters VI-VIII

[Film clip: "When Nietzsche Wept," "The Beach"]

Recommended Reading:

Philip Rieff, "The Analytic Attitude: Freud's Legacy and Its Inheritors"
[located in *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith after Freud*]

[*Self-Analysis Essay Due – via email by 5pm*]

9. [4/28] *Religion, False Consciousness, and Violence*

Assigned Reading: Gary E. Kessler, Studying Religion
Selections: Chapter 5, "Ritual as Sacred Action"

Film: *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (1989) [107 min] Director, Woody Allen

Recommended:

Leo Strauss, essay "Jerusalem and Athens" [1967]

Rene Girard, chapter, "The Sacrificial Crisis" [located in *Violence and the Sacred*]

Peter Minowitz, "Crimes and Controversies: Nihilism from Machiavelli to
Woody Allen" [located in *Literature/Film Quarterly*, vol.19, 1991 No.2]

Thomas Nagel, essay "The Absurd" [located in *Mortal Questions*]

10. [4/30] *Prometheus Unbound: Modernity and the Dialectics of Disenchantment/ Re-enchantment* [Review, Debate, and Discussion – Students announce in class their religious site for the observation exercise – Review of Guidelines –
[Film clips: "Deconstructing Harry," "Whatever Works," by Woody Allen]

11. [5/5] **Mid-Term:** [details discussed in class]

**PART B: RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE, COMPASSION, AND COMMUNITY
[Re-enchantment]**

12. [5/7] *Spirituality, Modernity, and Comparative Religious Studies*

Assigned Reading: Mircea **Eliade**, *Patterns In Comparative Religion*

Selections: Pages XVII-23, 30-33

(AUTHOR'S FORWARD, 1."SACRED" AND "PROFANE," 2. DIFFICULTIES OF METHOD, 3. THE VARIETY AMONG HIEROPHANIES, 4. THE MULTIPLICITY OF HIEROPHANIES, 5. THE DIALECTIC OF HIEROPHANIES, 6. THE TABOO AND THE AMBIVALENCE OF THE SACRED, 7. MANA, 10. THE COMPLEXITY OF "PRIMITIVE" RELIGION),

Recommended Reading:

P. 38-41 (11. THE SACREDNESS OF THE SKY)

P. 124-126, (36. HIEROPHANIES OF THE SUN AND "RATIONALIZATION")

P. 154-156, (47. THE MOON AND TIME)

P. 188-190, (60. WATER AND THE SEEDS OF THINGS)

P. 194-199, (64. THE SYMBOLISM OF IMMERSION, 65. BAPTISM)

P. 216-217, (74. STONES AS MANIFESTING POWER)

P. 265-273, (95. A PRELIMINARY CLASSIFICATION, 96. THE SACRED TREE)

P. 331-334, (125. AGRICULTURAL RITES, 126. WOMEN, SEXUALITY AND

AGRICULTURE) P. 354-361, (136. SEXUAL LIFE AND THE FERTILITY OF THE

FIELDS, 137. THE RITUAL FUNCTION OF THE ORGY, 138. ORGY AND

REINTEGRATION) P. 367-369, (140. HIEROPHANIES AND REPETITION)

P. 374-379, (143. THE "CENTRE OF THE WORLD")

P. 388-391, (147. THE HETEROGENEOUSNESS OF TIME)

P. 407-408, (155. TOTAL REGENERATION)

P. 451-453 (171. THE FUNCTION OF SYMBOLS)

William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience Selections:* section on "Mysticism," p.379-429

13. [5/12] *Compassion and Mindfulness*

Assigned Reading: Shunryu **Suzuki**, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*
Selections: Part I, Part II

Gary E. Kessler, *Studying Religion: An Introduction Through Cases*
Selections: Chapter 7, Experiencing the Sacred
Also, Pages, 296-298 [located in chapter 12]

[Film Clips: *Baraka*, [Power] (1992) directed by Ron Fricke]

Recommended Reading: William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*
Selections: section on "Mysticism," p.379-429

14. [5/14] *Spirituality and Modernity*

Assigned Reading: Shunryu **Suzuki**, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*
Selections: Part III

15. [5/19] *Prophetic Hope, Compassion and Global Ethics*

Assigned Reading: Martin Luther **King**, essay "On being a Good Neighbor"
[located in *Strength to Love*]

Gary E. **Kessler**, *Studying Religion: An Introduction Through Cases*
Selections: Chapter 12: Human Existence and Destiny

Recommended: M.L. King, "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence" (1960) in *African American Political Thought*, vol. 2, *Confrontation vs. Compromise: 1945 to the Present*, ed.

Marcus Pohlmann (New York: Routledge, 2004), 32-49.
[Handout--Camino] Gandhi and King: Comparative Approaches to Nonviolence
and Compassion

16. [5/21] *Loving Your Enemies and Inter-Religious Dialogue*

Assigned Reading: Martin Luther **King**, essay “Loving your Enemies”
[located in *Strength to Love*]

The **Dalai Lama**, Chap. “Christ And the Bodhisattva Ideal” [loc in *Toward A True Kingship Of Faiths: How The World’s Religions Can Come Together*]

Rabbi Abraham J. **Heschel**, Essays “No Religion Is An Island” (1966) [located in *No Religion Is an Island: Abraham Joshua Heschel and Interreligious Dialogue*, editors Harold Kasimow and Byron Sherwin]

[Debate: Universal Love vs. Universal Suspicion, a reply to Nietzsche]

Recommended:

“Religion in a Free Society” (1958) [located in *The Insecurity of Freedom*]

Thich Nhat Hanh, *Living Buddha, Living Christ* (Riverhead Books, 2007)

Thich Nhat Hanh, “What I would say to Osama Bin Laden?”

<http://beliefnet.com>

Richard Rorty, essay “Failed Prophecies, Glorious Hopes”

[located in *Philosophy and Social Hope* (1999)]

Stephen Prothero, *God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run The World* (Harper One, 2010)

17. [5/26] *Prophets, Pragmatism, and Religion*

Cornel **West**, chapter 5. “The Crisis Of Christian Identity In America”

[located in *Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight Against Imperialism* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004)]

Richard **Rorty**, essay “Failed Prophecies, Glorious Hopes”

[located in *Philosophy and Social Hope* (1999)]

Thomas **Nagel**, essay “The Absurd” [located in *Mortal Questions*]

[Film clip from “Whatever Works,” by Woody Allen]

Recommended Reading:

William Kingdom Clifford, essay: “The Ethics of Belief” (1877)

William James, essay: "The Will to Believe" (1896)

Aurora Forum at Stanford University, "An Evening with Cornel West," video, audio (iTunes), and transcript available at

<http://auroraforum.stanford.edu/event/democracy-matters> [113 min]

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS ON RITUAL OBSERVATION PROJECTS

18. [5/28] Student Presentations:

19. [6/2] Student Presentations:

20. [6/4] Student Presentations/Final Reflections and Conclusion

Final Papers Due: Wednesday [6/10] at 5:00 pm

Send to the professor, via email, on attached word document.

[Essays not turned in on time will be automatically reduced one full grade for every 24hr period not received by the professor.]