

**Junior Seminar / Bible and Religious Studies**  
REL 3931; JST 3930; Spring 2024  
Tues 8-9 (3:00-4:55) / Thurs 9 (4:05-4:55), Mat 118

Professor: Dr. Robert Kawashima  
office hours: Thursday 10:00-11:00, 1:45-2:45; or by appointment  
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Department of Religion: 107 Anderson

Course Description:

This seminar will introduce students to several major approaches to the study of religion, using Daniel Pals's textbook as a guide. Since no guide, however knowledgeable, can take the place of the primary thinkers themselves, we will also read excerpts from a number of major theorists, including some not covered by Pals. Theories of religion, in turn, cannot be understood in isolation as so many abstract ideas. We will therefore analyze various passages from the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) as empirical data with which to test some of these theories. What light (if any) does a given theory or approach shed on the Hebrew Bible and Israelite religion? The study of religion, moreover, presupposes certain critical concepts, which we must reflect on. What is Religion? What does it mean to make it an object of knowledge? What is a science, a theory, an approach? What questions can and should a theory of Religion seek to answer? Is the study of religion even a discipline – in the way that, say, mathematics and history are disciplines? What does this imply about the topic taught by our department? Finally, as one of the Religion Department's core major requirements, this seminar will actively seek to cultivate within students the all-important skills of careful reading and thinking. How should one read, think about, and interpret a religious text, a theoretical text, a scholarly text?

Required Textbooks:

Daniel L. Pals, *Nine Theories of Religion*. There is a newer edition, but we will not use it.  
*The SBL Study Bible* (recommended)  
additional secondary readings, course materials, and general information will, as much as possible, be made available through e-Learning: <https://elearning.ufl.edu>.

Accommodations for students with disabilities: students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

Course Requirements:

**Attendance is mandatory**

Participation – (10%)

2 Written Exercises (3 pages) – (30%)

2 Exams – (60%)

Make-up exams must be approved by instructor beforehand, or justified afterward by providing appropriate documentation (medical, etc.).

Grade scale:

|            |            |            |            |              |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
|            | 87–89 = B+ | 77–79 = C+ | 67–69 = D+ | below 60 = E |
| 93–100 = A | 83–86 = B  | 73–76 = C  | 63–66 = D  |              |
| 90–92 = A- | 80–82 = B- | 70–72 = C- | 60–62 = D  |              |

Schedule:

Week 1

1/9 **Introduction:** syllabus

1/11 **Introduction:** Pals, Introduction; Mueller, “Lecture 1,” pp 1-13

Week 2

1/16 **Tylor and Frazer:** Pals, chapter 1; Genesis 30-31; Levy-Bruhl, excerpt

1/18 **Tylor and Frazer:** “Epic of Baal,” excerpts; 1 Kings 18

Week 3

1/23 **Freud:** Pals, chapter 2; Freud selections: Future of an Illusion; Ego and the Id; Moses and Monotheism

1/25 **Freud:** Freud selections; Leviticus 11; 18; Deuteronomy 7

Week 4

1/30 **Durkheim:** Pals, chapter 3; Durkheim selections

2/1 **Durkheim:** Durkheim selections; Exodus 24; 32; Deuteronomy 16; 29; Joshua 22; Nehemiah 8

Week 5

2/6 **Marx:** Pals, chapter 4; Milner, “Marx and the Opium Addicts”

2/8 **Marx:** Marx, Communist Manifesto, excerpts; Schopenhauer, “On Religion,” excerpts; Exodus 1-6; 16

Week 6

2/13 **TBA**

2/15 **Nietzsche:** Nietzsche selections on the “Death of God” and the “Genealogy of Morals”

Week 7

2/20 **Weber:** Pals, chapter 5; **PAPER 1 due**

2/22 **Weber:** Weber selections; Exodus 3-4, 32-33; Leviticus 8-9; Numbers 11-12

Week 8

2/27 **EXAM 1** (1/11 to 2/22)

2/29 **Victor Turner:** Turner on rites of passage; Numbers 5-6

Week 9

3/5 **Victor Turner:** Turner on pilgrimages; Exodus 12-15; Joshua 3-5

3/7 **James:** Pals, chapter 6

Week 10

3/12 **Spring Break**

3/14 **Spring Break**

Week 11

3/19 **James:** Pals, chapter 6; Genesis 12; Exodus 32; James, *Varieties*, Lecture IX

3/21 **Rudolf Otto:** Otto selections; Exodus 33-34; Leviticus 10; 2 Samuel 6

Week 12

3/26 **Eliade:** Pals, chapter 7

3/28 **Eliade:** "Sacred Time and Myths"; "Epic of Creation"; Genesis 1, 28; Hesiod excerpts

Week 13

4/2 **Mary Douglas:** Douglas, "Abominations of Leviticus"; Genesis 1; Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14; Numbers 1-3

4/4 **Evans-Pritchard:** Pals, chapter 8; Evans-Pritchard, "Levy-Bruhl"

Week 14

4/9 **Danger Beliefs:** Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "Pollution"; Numbers 5, 13-14, 16

4/11 **Geertz:** Pals, chapter 9; Geertz selections

Week 15

4/16 **Geertz:** Geertz selections; Genesis 6-9

4/18 **EXAM 2** (2/29 to 4/16)

Week 16

4/23 **Passover: class cancelled**

**PAPER 2 due Monday, April 29**