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Tools and theories in the study of religion: historical, cognitive, and social-scientific approaches

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Tools and Theories in the Study of Religion: Historical, Cognitive, and Social-Scientific Approaches

5074V02

Academic Year 2026-2027
Semester 1

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EC	10
Level	500
Language	English
Class meetings	Fridays 10.15-13.00 p.m., Lipsius 2.24 [unless otherwise indicated]

Admission Requirements

This course requires a broad background knowledge on method and theory in the study of religion. Students without a full BA in the study of religion can catch up by studying the following material before the first class. (Also for students with a BA in the study of religion, examining this material will not hurt).

- The chapters on Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, Mircea Eliade, and Clifford Geertz in Daniel Pals. 2021. *Ten Theories of Religion*, 4th ed. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press. (You can also use the 2nd or 3rd editions titled *Eight Theories of Religion* and *Nine Theories of Religion*). These are four classical theoretical positions in the study of religion that I expect students to be familiar with. Study this material well.
- Either Ivan Strenski. 2015. *Understanding Theories of Religion: An Introduction*, second edition. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, or Jeppe Sinding Jensen. 2025. *What Is Religion?* third edition. London: Routledge (an earlier edition will also do). Skim one of these books to get an overview of the study of religion as an academic discipline.

Course Description

In *Tools and Theories in the Study of Religion*, we critically examine theories of religion, and practice how to ‘toy with theory.’ Students are introduced to a range of influential theories that model and explain central aspects of religion, including religious narratives, religious beliefs and thinking, religious experiences, and religious practices. These theories draw on a wide range of humanistic and social-scientific disciplines, including literary studies, cognitive science, and anthropology.

In class, we approach the theories through different forms of metatheory. Using metatheory on what makes a good theory of religion, we analyse the ‘theorising logic’ of the individual theories. We discuss what the theories aim to explain (i.e. the specificity, ontology, origin, configuration, and effects of an aspect of religion) and evaluate whether they do so convincingly. Furthermore, we ‘toy with the theories.’ Using metatheory on how to ‘work the data-theory spectrum’ we operationalise the theories as analytical tools and use them to examine concrete cases. In two Tools Assignments, students go on to make research designs that operationalise and apply theories with the aim of testing and possibly improving them. We also examine how our middle range theories on aspects of religion may be fitted together to form a coherent theory (or theory complex) for religion as a whole. Armed with metatheory on conceptual modelling, emergence, and causality, we explore how religious beliefs, rituals, experiences, and narratives affect each other within religious systems, and consider which other aspects of religion may play a role as well (such as moral intuitions, institutions, and identity). Particular attention is given to causality that crosses ontological levels—e.g., cognitive and embodied dispositions with cultural effects, and social dynamics that effect religious cognition in individuals. Rounding off the course, students write a Theory Paper in which they discuss and model the theories on one of the building-blocks of religion treated in the course (beliefs, rituals, experiences, or narratives) in relation to theory on the other building-blocks. This exercise of conceptual model building and theory integration helps consolidate students’ overview of the theories discussed in class.

Course Objectives

Knowledge, insight, and content-bound skills

After successfully completing this course,

- students know several important theories on aspects of religion and can identify the ‘theorising logic’ of these theories;
- students can operationalise theories of religion into analytical tools, and draw up research designs that may test and improve the theories through confrontation with new data;

- students can combine several middle range theories on aspects of religion into a comprehensive theoretical model of religion in general.

Transferable skills

After successfully completing this course,

- students have refined their research skills, in particular their skills at carefully analysing theoretical arguments and at working creatively with theory;
- students have refined their cooperation skills, including their skills at giving and receiving good quality peer feedback;
- students have refined their skills at writing well-argued, academic papers; and
- students have refined their skills at oral discussion and oral presentation in English.

Course Readings

We will primarily read research articles that are accessible online via the university library. Students are responsible for downloading, printing (!), and reading these articles before class. Links to the literature will be provided on Brightspace. We will also read a number of book chapters and articles from journals, as well as primary sources, that are not available online from the UB. This material, too, will be made available through Brightspace.

The number of pages for all the shared readings in this class totals **628**. In addition, students are required to find and use about 60-100 pages of additional literature for the two Tools Assignments.

Course Requirements and Examination

1. Code of Conduct. To ensure an inclusive and safe learning and working environment for students and staff, the Faculty of Humanities has formulated a [Code of Conduct](#). The core of the Code is the expectation that students and staff together form an academic community based on respect, inclusion, and professionalism in which every topic can be discussed and debated academically. These values guide our course.

2. Attendance is required. This is a seminar-based class and will only work if everyone is present and engaged. I will take attendance in each class and will contact you if you are not present. If you miss more than two sessions—for whatever reason—you cannot continue with the course. Please email me in advance if you are unable to attend a session.

3. Reading is required. I realise that for many of the sessions I require you to do a lot of (sometimes difficult) readings. Expect to use a full day (8 hours) for reading and note taking as preparation for each session.

4. Note-taking is important. As you read, make sure to take notes, as you will need those for the class discussions and course assignments. You don't need to take notes page-by-page. Instead, summarise for yourself the main argument of each article, note down the meaning/definitions of key concepts, 'draw' the argument or the conceptual models, formulate any criticism and questions you may have, and reflect on how the theories might be improved, combined, or applied. **Bring these notes to class.** In class, we will talk about the main points and key concepts in each article we read together. Furthermore, when taking notes make sure to make page references and to underline in the text; this will help you find back definitions and key passages later. For most readings, the syllabus includes hints on what to look for when reading. Paying attention to those hints will help your note-taking.

5. Class participation is important. I expect 10-15 students in this class which means that all students are expected to contribute to the discussion in every class session.

6. Printing. Cognitive studies of learning have demonstrated that students learn more from reading printed texts than from reading from the screen. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to print out all readings and read them on paper – with pen, ruler, and paper for note-taking at hand. Also, you must always bring the printed readings to class. During classroom discussions, I want you to focus on the texts that we discuss. Not convinced yet – read [here](#).

7. Tools Assignments. To help you reflect on how the theoretical tools discussed in class can be applied to novel problems, you are required to write two Tools Assignments:

- (i) one on how the tools discussed in sessions 3 and 4 can be used to analyse religious narratives in the context of an MA thesis (**deadline 27 October**); and
- (ii) one on how the tools discussed in sessions 6 through 10 can be used to analyse religious beliefs, rituals, experiences, and social effects in the context of an MA thesis (**deadline 8 December**).

Each assignment should be 1000-1500 words long (excluding bibliography) and be handed in via Brightspace. In each assignment:

- (a) identify and present a **corpus** of empirical material that you would like to analyse and demonstrate that this corpus is available/obtainable within the limits of an MA thesis project;
- (b) introduce the **theory/tool(s)** from our sessions you plan to use and operationalise it/them into a concrete set of **research questions** for analysing your corpus [Note: this is the most important aspect!]; and
- (c) reflect on the (empirical and/or theoretical) **problem(s)** that your concrete analysis can help shed light on.

The Tools Assignments are graded and each counts 15 % towards the final grade for the course. The Tools Assignments should be formatted as small papers (= with proper referencing and a bibliography). Good marks will be given for assignments for which corpus and theories are well-aligned, the theories are operationalised well, and students reflect on why the suggested research is worth carrying out (= why the problem is relevant, how the selected theories can help, and why the particular corpus has been selected). Please note: For each Tools Assignment, students are expected to search for and use two-three additional relevant sources (either primary sources to be studied, or secondary sources that connect to and deepen the theories discussed in class, and that can be operationalised in the analysis). Students receive written feedback on each Tools Assignment.

8. Theory Paper. During class, we analyse to what extent the different theories help answer Michael Stausberg's five core questions: what is *specific* about religion, what is the *ontology* of religion, what is the *origin* of religion, how is religion *configured*, and what are the *effects* of religion. We also compare the different theories with each other and examine how they complement each other. We do this throughout the course, but especially in session 5 and sessions 10 through 13. This work on analysing, modelling, and integrating theories culminates the **Theory Paper**. In the Theory Paper, students either (i) take their point of departure in one of the main 'religious building-blocks' (i.e. religious narratives, beliefs, rituals, or experiences) and ask to what extent the literature on this building-block contributes to answering Stausberg's five core questions on religion; or (ii) they take their point of departure in one of Stausberg's core questions and ask to what extent the literature on the different religious building-blocks (students must use at least three) contribute to answering that question.

The Theory Paper consists of the following elements:

- (a) introduction: presentation of a research problem (see options above; c. 300 words);
- (b) toying with the theories: analysis of the relevant theories, evaluation and possibly improvement of them, and integration of (parts of) them into a new conceptual model (c. 2400 words);
- (c) widening of the perspective: reflection on how other material from the course relates to the developing theoretical model, i.e. Theory Papers focused on one building-block relate to other building-blocks, and Theory Papers focused on one core question relate to other core questions (c. 600 words);

- (d) reflection and conclusion: what can be gained from toying with theory? (c. 300 words); and
- (e) bibliography.

The paper should be in total 3200-4000 words long, excluding apparatus (front page, footnotes, bibliography).

9. Presentations. Students are required to give a short (five minutes) oral presentation (pitch) on their idea for the Theory Paper (see above).

10. Entitlement to do the exam. Please note that to be entitled to hand in the Theory Paper, students must:

1. have been present and active in class,
2. have handed in both Tools Assignments on time, and
3. have handed in a draft version of the Theory Paper on time.

11. Late assignments. Please make *every effort* to submit your work on time. As per programme policy, late submissions will not be accepted. Theory Papers that are handed in after the deadline will be graded together with the resits.

Assessment (overview)

The course includes four constituent exams:

1. Oral contributions in class, including one or two short presentations. This constituent exam is graded and counts 10 % towards the final mark of the course.
2. Tools Assignment A. This constituent exam is graded and counts 15 % towards the final mark of the course.
3. Tools Assignment B. This constituent exam is graded and counts 15 % towards the final mark of the course.
4. Theory Paper. This constituent exam is graded and counts 60 % towards the final mark of the course.

Note: To pass the course, students must obtain at least a sufficient mark (5.5) as the weighted average of the four marks AND receive a sufficient mark (6.0) on the Theory Paper. If the weighted average is higher than 5.5, but the Theory Paper scores 5.0 or lower, the final mark for the course will be a 5.0.

Re-exam

- Students who score an insufficient mark for one of the Tools Assignments, may retake the assignment by submitting a new version. The new version should be resubmitted before the deadline for the workshop on the Theory Paper.
- Likewise, students who score an insufficient mark on the Theory Paper, may submit a new version of the paper.
- In the rare case that students score an insufficient mark for Oral Contributions in class which they cannot sufficiently compensate with the marks for the other constituent exams, they will be given a substitute assignment.

Course Overview

Part 1: Introduction and Metatheory

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|---|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | September 11 | Systematic Science of Religion |
| 2 | September 18 | Metatheory in the Study of Religion |
| | September 25 | No class |

Part 2: Theorising Religious Narratives

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|---|------------|---|
| 3 | October 2 | Content and Plot in Religious Narratives |
| 4 | October 9 | Use and Function of Religious Narratives |
| 5 | October 16 | Theorising and Analysing Religious Narratives |
| | October 23 | No class |
| | October 27 | Deadline Tools Assignment A |

Part 3: Theorising Religion

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|----|-------------|--|
| 6 | October 30 | The Naturalness of Religious Belief and the Notion of Cognitively Optimal Religion |
| 7 | November 6 | Dynamics of Religious Belief: Interpretive Drift and Second Order Beliefs
Modes |
| 8 | November 13 | Experiences as Foundation for Religion |
| 9 | November 20 | Religious Rituals: Form and Exchange |
| 10 | November 27 | The Religious and the Social |
| | December 4 | No class |
| | December 8 | Deadline Tools Assignment B |

Part 4: Modelling Religion

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|-----|----------------|--|
| 11 | December 11 | Conceptual Modelling in the Study of Religion [NB: 9.15-11.00] |
| 12A | December 11 | Symposium 'Geloof in de politiek', Tilburg |
| 12B | December 14-16 | Conference 'Ancient Religions and the Materiality of Danger', Leiden |
| 13 | December 18 | Workshop on Theory Paper (with brief pitches) |
| | January 15 | Deadline Theory Paper |
| | January 30 | Deadline re-exam |

Detailed Course Overview

Part 1: Introduction and Metatheory

Session 1 | 11 Sep | 10.15-13.00 | Systematic Science of Religion

PROGRAMME

A. Presentation Round

B. The Idea Behind the Course

* Theory and theorising in the Study of Religion.

C. The Formalities of the Course

* Introduction to the work forms and learning objectives of the course.

* Examination in the course (active participation, oral presentations, Tools Assignments, Theory Paper).

* How to study effectively for this course.

D. The Study of Religion in the Netherlands: Recent History, Current Crisis, and Visions for the Future

* The history of the study of religion in the Netherlands since 1970, and analysis of the current situation: fragmentation and disinterest in comparison and theory/theorising (Davidsen).

* Ontological and epistemological assumptions in the study of religion: methodological naturalism (and its alternatives) (Davidsen).

* Analytical theorising within the framework of a systematic science of religion: definition, comparison, explanation (Davidsen; Rakow; Brand).

READINGS [65 pages]

- (1) Davidsen, Markus Altena. 2020a. "Theo van Baaren's Systematic Science of Religion Revisited: The Current Crisis in Dutch Study of Religion and a Way Out." *NTT Journal for Theology and the Study of Religion* 74(3): 213-241 [29].
- (2) Rakow, Katja. 2020. "Of Bogeymen and The Promises of the Past or How to Construct a Uniform Identity: A Response to Markus Davidsen." *NTT Journal for Theology and the Study of Religion* 74(3): 253-262 [10].
- (3) Davidsen, Markus Altena. 2020b. "Fundamental Problems and Methods in the Study of Religion: A Reply to My Critics." *NTT Journal for Theology and the Study of Religion* 74(3): 277-283 [7].
- (4) Brand, Mattias. Forthcoming 2026. "Comparison, Generalisations, and Relationality in the Study of Religion's." *ARGOS* [19].

Context of articles. The first article was published as a target article in a thematic issue of *NTT Journal for Theology and the Study of Religion* (formerly *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift*). The issue, entitled 'Religious Studies in the Netherlands: Debating the Field's Future,' included my target article, five responses, and my reply to my critics. The target article briefly reviews the history of Dutch study of religion, noting the international importance of the Netherlands (and Leiden) within the discipline until about 1970—after then, it went downhill. The main problem is that in taking leave of the phenomenology of religion as the leading theoretical paradigm around 1970, the study of religion lost its disciplinary identity, its interest in comparative work, and its ambition to build theories. The discipline also stopped popularising its research for the general public. The Nordic countries, which came from a similar starting point, retained these academic virtues. I argue that it is now time to reorganise the study of religion in the Netherlands around a set of shared research problems. The article originated as a commentary to an interview with Jan G. Platvoet, a retired associate professor from Leiden (a predecessor of Ab de Jong), which was later published as Davidsen, Markus Altena. 2021. "There Was No Dutch School of Phenomenology of Religion—The Netherlands." In *Global Phenomenologies of Religion: An Oral History in Interviews*, edited by Satoko Fujiwara, David Thurffjel, and Steven Engler, 245-276. London: Equinox. The commentary grew to become an article of its own, and I organised a research meeting around it in June 2019 for scholars from Leiden, Utrecht, and Amsterdam. The *NTT* thematic issue grew out of this meeting. The

colleagues who were asked by the editorial board of the journal to respond to my article largely agree with my description of the field—it is “undisciplined” (Eric Venbrux) and “a huge mess” (Kocku von Stuckrad), but they disagree wholeheartedly with the course of action I suggest for the future. I have included the longest and most interesting response (by Katja Rakow), as well as my reply to all five critics. The debate has continued in other journals with particular attention to debate with Rakow. I give you here an article by Mattas Brand who attempts to bridge the gap between us; he leans more my way (for an alternative article that leans towards Rakow and misrepresents my position, see the article by Rafal Stepień (2023) in the further reading section).

Function of articles in this course. I have included these articles in the course to give you an idea of the current state and recent history of our discipline in the Netherlands (which is not properly thematised in any of the BA courses) and to share with you my vision for the discipline. Tools and Theories in the Study of Religion is built on the methodological vision for the study of religion presented in the target article and my reply. The response by Rakow introduces you to a different view on the study of religion which is shared by many scholars of religion and which you need to know.

What to look for when reading. Think about the following: do you recognise the two paradigms of contemporary Dutch science of religion (systematism and particularism) from your earlier studies (BA Religious Studies or minor Religion in a Changing World)? Also, think about what the goal of the study of religion as an academic discipline should/could be. Do you agree with the programme I formulate—or do I go too far, or not far enough? What are the strong points raised by my critics?

Session 2 | 18 Sep | 10.15-13.00 | Metatheory in the Study of Religion

PROGRAMME

A. Metatheory in the Study of Religion [2 hours]

- * What is a theory? Which questions are central to theories of religion? (Stausberg).
- * The ontology of religion (Schilbrack; Theissen).

B. An Example of a Theory of Religion [1 hour]

- * Gerd Theissen’s theory of religion (of primitive Christianity) (Theissen).

READINGS [67]

(1) Stausberg, Michael. 2025. Ch. 1 “On Theories of Religion: Varieties, distinctions, questions.” In Michael Stausberg (ed.), *21st Century Theories of Religion*, 1-31. London & New York: Routledge. [31].

Context of chapter. Michael Stausberg is the scholar who has published most on theories in the study of religion. In this introductory chapter to his overview volume on leading theories on religion, he discusses what we mean by ‘theory’ in the study of religion.

Function of chapter in this course. What we need from this chapter is vocabulary and insights that can help us do two things later in the course: (i) to analyse the ‘theorising logic’ in finished theories (in the ‘context of justification’) and (ii) to guide our own theorising practice (in the ‘context of discovery’).

What to look for when reading. Think about the following: What constitutes a (good) theory? What kinds of questions can/should a theory of religion address? We will discuss the adequacy of Stausberg’s model in class and possibly improve it.

(2) Schilbrack, Kevin. 2017. “A Realist Social Ontology of Religion.” *Religion* 47(2): 161-178 [18].

(3) Theissen, Gerd. 1999. Ch. 1 “Introduction: The Programme of a Theory of Primitive Christian Religion.” In *A Theory of Primitive Christian Religion*, 1-18. London: SCM Press. [18].

Context of article and chapter. Kevin Schilbrack is the most important proponent of a substantive approach to defining religion. In this article he addresses Stausberg’s questions on the ontology and specificity of religion. Gerd Theissen is a retired German New Testament scholar, known for his broad use of theory from the study of religion. Our text is the theoretical introduction to a book on

early Christianity; in it, Theissen outlines a general theory of religion which he in the rest of his book uses as a framework for his study of early Christianity.

Function of chapter in this course. We use these two texts, in combination with the texts from the first session, to establish a metatheoretical baseline for the course that (i) takes religion to exist (ii) as a form of meaning or sign system (an idea that Theissen adopts from Clifford Geertz).

What to look for when reading. Think about the following: how does Schilbrack address Stausberg's questions on the ontology and specificity of religion? Does he do so convincingly? Which of Stausberg's core questions does Theissen's theory address, and how? What does it mean that religion is a 'sign system'?

NB: Students who have not read Geertz' classic essay in an earlier course, read it for this class:

Geertz, Clifford. 1966. "Religion as a Cultural System." In *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, edited by Michael Banton, 1-46. London: Tavistock Publications. Republished as: Geertz, Clifford. 1973. Ch. 4 "Religion as a Cultural System." In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz*, 87-125. New York: Basic Books.

25 Sep | No class (Markus at the EASR)

Part 2: Religious Narratives

Session 3 | 2 Oct | 10.15-13.00 | Content and Plot in Religious Narratives

PROGRAMME

A. Narratology and Religious Narratives [½ hour]

- * Introduction to narratology and the narratological study of religious narratives (Genette and Bal in Davidsen & Van Rijn; Davidsen; Feldt).

B. The Narratological Method [2 hours]

- * The narratological study of plot structures in religious narratives (Feldt; Greimas handout; Davidsen, drawing on Hogan who in turn draws on Greimas).
- * Analysis of religious experience narratives (Davidsen & Van Rijn).

C. Theorising Religious Narratives [½ hour]

- * To what extent does the literature treat Stausberg's questions, especially (i) *origin*: why are there religious narratives in the first place? (ii) *configuration*: which kinds of religious narratives are there, and what is the content and structure of religious narratives? and (iii) *effects*: which psychological and social effects can religious narratives have?

READINGS [58 pages]

- (1) Feldt, Laura. 2013. "Myths and Narratology: Narrative Form, Meaning and Function in the Standard-Babylonian *Epic of Anzû*." *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 42(4): 22-29. [8].

Context of article. Laura Feldt is a Danish historian of religion specializing in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Mesopotamian mythology. The study of myth has long been one of the cornerstones of the history of religion. In this chapter, Feldt aims to show how narratology, the systematic study of (literary) narratives, can be applied to myths. She draws on the narratology of Mieke Bal, the most important Dutch narratologist.

Function of article in this course. To introduce the narratological study of myth.

What to look for when reading. Try to get a good grasp on the narratological terms explained in the article (such as the three levels of the narrative text: fabula, story, and narrative). Think about which other myths, which you might be familiar with from other courses, Feldt's approach could be applied to.

- (2) Davidsen, Markus Altena. 2025. "Narrative Prototypicality and the Depiction of Evil in *The Lord of the Rings*." In *Evil in Eä* (Lembas Extra 2024), edited by Jan van Breda, Chiara Marchetti, Jonne Steen Redeker, and Renée Vink, 81-94. Leiden: Tolkien Genootschap Unquendor. [14].

Context of article. This article draws on Patrick Colm Hogan's idea that there exist a few universal narrative plot structures. This particular article shows that these plot structures are present in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Function of chapter in this course. To raise the question whether the plot structures identified by Hogan may also be typical of religious narratives.

What to look for when reading. Try to get a good grasp of the narratological terms explained in the article. Can Hogan's theory shed light on the Stausberg questions?

- (3) Handout with excerpts from the Gospels of Luke and Mark. [4].

Context of texts. These are primary texts which we will analyse together in class using the analytical tools from the secondary literature.

What to look for when reading. Before class, read the texts through so that you are familiar with the content. You don't have to (but of course may) analyse the texts using the narratological tools from the secondary literature.

- (4) Davidsen, Markus Altena, and Bastiaan van Rijn. 2020. "Studying Religions as Narrative Cultures: Angel Experience Narratives in the Netherlands and Some Ideas for a Narrative Research Program for the Study of Religion." In Dirk Johannsen, Anja Kirsch, and Jens Kreinath (eds.), *Narrative Cultures and the Aesthetics of Religion: Storytelling—Imagination—Efficacy*, 91-122. Leiden: Brill. [32].

Context of chapter. I have co-written this chapter with a former MA student who in 2017 was employed as a research trainee in the project 'Religious Narratives as Plausibility Structures.' The chapter was published in an anthology on the importance of narratives and narrativity in the study of religion. We focus on angel memorates (or experience narratives) from the Netherlands, that is stories people tell or publish about alleged encounters with angels. We use a method inspired by narratology to analyse the structure and function of such texts.

Function of chapter in this course. To show that experience narratives are interesting material for the study of religion and that narratology can be used to analyse also this kind of texts.

What to look for when reading. The chapter begins with a discussion of angel beliefs in the West and in the Netherlands specifically. We will not discuss that in class, but focus on two other things. Pay attention to section 3 in which the material is analysed: aim to get a good grasp on the method developed here and the key concepts introduced, and think about which other narratives our approach could be applied to. Also, look carefully at the theoretical framework in the introduction and in section 4: how are Stausberg's questions treated here?

Additional literature

In class, we will briefly discuss Greimas's 'narrative schema.' We will do that based on a handout that you get in class. The literature below is not mandatory but may be useful for students who take up the issue of plot in religious narratives in their Tools Assignment. I have uploaded it to Brightspace already.

- * Greimas, Algirdas Julien. 1982. Article "Narrative schema." In *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary*, 203-206. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Translated from French by Larry Crist and Daniel Pette, with James Lee, Edward McMahon II, Gary Phillips, and Michael Rengstorf. Originally published in French in 1979 as *Semiotique: Dictionnaire raisonné de la théorie du langage*. [LUB online].

- * Martin, Bronwen & Felizitas Ringham. 2006. *Key Terms in Semiotics*. London & New York: Continuum. Esp. the article "Narrative schema," but also the articles "Adjudicator," "Contract," "Decisive test," "Glorifying test," "Lack," "Qualifying test," "Sanction," "Sender," and "Sender-adjudicator."

Context of articles. A.J. Greimas was a Lithuanian linguist and semiotician who worked in Paris. Several aspects of his semiotics have been used in the study of religion. What we take is his work on plot or the 'narrative schema.'

- * Hogan, Patrick Colm. 2003. Ch. 7 “The Structure of Stories.” In *The Mind and Its Stories: Narrative Universals and Human Emotion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Context of chapter. In this chapter Hogan discusses prototypical modes of narration (which turn out to be particularly intense in religious narratives), and identifies three universal plot structures, which we also find in religious narratives.

Session 4 | 9 Oct | 10.15-13.00 | Use and Function of Religious Narratives

PROGRAMME

A. Persuasion in Religious Narratives [1½ hours]

- * The religious affordance of narratives as theory and method (Davidsen; Cook).

B. Intertextuality [1½ hours]

- * Different types of transtextuality (Genette, discussed in Larsen and on handout).
 * Case study of hypertextuality, i.e. new texts building purposefully on earlier authoritative hypotexts (Larsen + the texts in the handout)].

READINGS [71]

- (1) Davidsen, Markus Altena. 2016. “The Religious Affordance of Fiction: A Semiotic Approach.” *Religion* 46(4): 521-549. [29].

Context of article. This article is based on my PhD dissertation on *The Spiritual Tolkien Milieu* and was published as part of a thematic issue on ‘Religion and Fiction’ in the journal *Religion*. It attempts to explain why some works of supernatural fiction (can) inspire religious belief, while others cannot. I argue that texts that afford religious use do so because they include ‘narrative religion’ and ‘veracity mechanisms’ which also characterise conventional religious narratives. To systematise the veracity mechanisms, I make use of narratology in the tradition of Gérard Genette.

Function of article in this course. To illustrate a core focus of post-classical narratology, namely the study of how texts affect their readers. The article develops a theory that can be tested on other third-person supernatural narratives (religious narratives and supernatural fiction).

What to look for when reading. The article is conceptually dense, and not all of the theory is equally important for us. Try to get a hang on the most important theoretical concepts and how they relate to each other (religious affordance, veracity mechanism, evidence mechanism, and anchoring mechanism). Think, too, about which of the ten veracity mechanisms are most important/effective. (We will not discuss the section of the article that covers conceptual blending.) Think about which other narratives the ‘affordance’-approach could be applied to.

- (2) Tolkien, J.R.R. 1954. “Foreword.” In *The Fellowship of the Ring, Being the First Part of The Lord of the Rings*, 7-8. London: George Allen & Unwin. [2].

What to look for when reading. Before class, read the text through so that you are familiar with the content. You don’t have to (but of course may) analyse which veracity mechanisms the text makes use of.

- (3) Cook, Michael. 2014. “Fundamentalism: Introduction to Part Three” and “Islam and Fundamentalism.” In *Ancient Religions, Modern Politics: The Islamic Case in Comparative Perspective*, 371-398. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [22].

* *Context of chapter.* In his important book, *Ancient Religions, Modern Politics*, Michael Cook raises the question why Islam seems to be more political than the other major religions in the world. He observes that scholars and debaters tend to provide one of two answers to this question. One camp argues that Islam is political/violent/fundamentalist by its very nature and that Muslims who interpret Islam apolitically are no real Muslims. The other camp argues that Islam is nothing in itself and that Muslims are free to interpret their authoritative texts as they choose. Unsatisfied with both of these answers, Cook seeks a middle-way that is essentially a variation of the ‘textual affordance’

theory even though he does not use this term. According to Cook, the authoritative texts in Islam (Quran and hadith) discuss identity, politics, and warfare in such a way that it is relatively easier for Muslims to legitimize fundamentalism and the political use of religion than it is, for example, for Christians and Hindus. This is because, we could say, the sacred Muslim texts afford a political reading with more force.

- * *Function of chapter in this course.* To illustrate how the content of an authoritative text corpus affects (but does not determine completely) how it can be read and mobilized. Furthermore, this chapter shows that the notion of textual/religious affordances is useful in general and not only in the context of fiction-based religion.
- * *What to look for when reading.* Pay attention to how Cook argues that the ‘substance’ of the Islamic tradition impacts the ‘form’ that Islam has actually taken.

- (4) Larsen, Kasper Bro. 2019. “Fan fiction and early Christian apocrypha: Comparing hypertextual practices.” *Studia Theologica: Nordic Journal of Theology* 73(1): 43-59. [17].

Context of article. Scholars of religion of all kinds have taken an interest in inter/transtextuality, for example to analyse how contemporary religious groups (e.g., Islamic State or new religious movements) legitimise their beliefs and practices through the selective use of older, authoritative hypotexts. No group, however, has been more interested in issues of intertextuality than New Testament scholars. Long before the very term ‘intertextuality’ was introduced, New Testament scholars were interested in scrutinizing the New Testament texts’ use of the Old Testament, and of determining textual loans between the four gospels. Larsen stands in this tradition. In this article, he draws on Gérard Genette, as well as on fan fiction studies.

Function of the article in this course. To offer an example of a concrete analysis of intertextuality in religious discourse that can be used as models for our own research. In addition, to illustrate how theory from one context (fan fiction) can be fruitfully transferred to another context (developing religious narrational traditions).

What to look for when reading. Pay attention to how Larsen expands Genette’s model of hypertextuality with key terms from fan fiction research. Which hypertextual operations does he identify? Which functions/effects can hypertextual rewritings of religious narratives have? Think also about which other textual traditions or transtextual relations could be studied using the approach developed by Larsen.

- (5) Version A of the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, from Elliott, J. K. 1993. *Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation*. Oxford: Clarendon. [6].

- (6) Handout with overview of Genette’s modes of transtextuality, with some texts that can be used to illustrate the forms of transtextuality discussed by Larsen. [5].

Context of texts. These are primary texts which we will analyse together in class using the analytical tools from Larsen’s article. The Genette overview supports Larsen’s article.

What to look for when reading. Before class, read the texts in the handout (including the excerpt from the Infancy Gospel of Thomas). Familiarize yourself with the content of these texts and use Larsen to analyse what kind of hypertextuality is going on in these texts. We will work with this in class.

Session 5 | 16 Oct | 10.15-13.00 | Theorising and Analysing Religious Narratives

PROGRAMME

A. Religious Narratives: Recapitulation [2 hours]

- * Theory of religious narratives: to what extent does the literature treat Stausberg’s five questions, i.e. on the specificity, ontology, origin, configuration, and effects of religious narratives? Can we combine the theoretical bits into one coherent theory of religious narratives, or even of religion in general? Which pieces are still missing?

- * Methods for studying religious narratives: how can the theories and methods from the previous two sessions be operationalised for studies of empirical material, in order to shed light on that material and/or to test the theories.

B. Introduction to the Tools Assignments [1 hour]

- * Introduction to Tools Assignment A.
- * Selecting a good corpus: source collections and comparative research designs (Freiberger).

READING [14 pages]

- (1) Freiberger, Oliver. 2018. "Elements of a Comparative Methodology in the Study of Religion." *Religions* 9(38). [14].

Context of article. In this article Freiberger offers a systematic discussion of what comparison is/can be in the study of religion. This is one of the most influential articles on comparison in the study of religion.

Function of chapter in this course. The discussion of different forms of comparison in this article may help us make good research designs for the Tools Assignments.

What to look for when reading. In particular, pay attention to the various modes of comparison that Freiberger distinguishes, and the steps in the comparative method. Think about what the aim of comparison is for Freiberger.

23 Oct | No class (Teaching free week)

27 Oct | Deadline Tools Assignment A

Part 3: Theorising Religion

Session 6 | 30 Oct | 10.15-13.00 | The Naturalness of Religious Belief and the Notion of Cognitively Optimal Religion

PROGRAMME

A. Feedback on Tools Assignment A [½ hour]

B. Cognitively Optimal Religion [2½ hours]

- * Pascal Boyer's theory of minimal counterintuitiveness (MCI) as a core characteristic of cognitively optimal religion (Boyer).
- * Test case 1: Early Christ religion (Czachesz).
- * The notion of 'cognitively optimal religion' (Whitehouse): CSR on the origin of religion.
- * Test case 2: New Age (Hammer).

READINGS [81 pages]

A. Minimally Counterintuitive Representations and Religious Beliefs

- (1) Boyer, Pascal. 2001. Ch. 2 "What supernatural concepts are like." In *Religion Explained: The Human Instincts that Fashion Gods, Spirits and Ancestors*. London: Heinemann. Note: The pagination of the book version (2001) and the online version (2007) in the UB differ. In the 2001/book version we read pages 58-105. In the 2007/online version we read pages 51-91. [41].

Context of book. Pascal Boyer is one of the most important figures in the cognitive science of religion (CSR). He belongs to the anthropological-theoretical wing of CSR, rather than to the psychological-experimental wing. The main idea that Boyer puts forward in our text is that human beings think in terms of certain ontological templates (NATURAL OBJECT, ARTEFACT, PLANT, ANIMAL, PERSON). Religious

beliefs are special because they involve breaches on intuitive ontology. For example, the Snake in Paradise is an ANIMAL with certain PERSON-elements attributed (it talks, has intentions). Boyer argues that representations that include breaches (= are counter-intuitive, or run counter to intuitive logic), but are not too weird (= are *minimally* counter-intuitive), are maximally attention gripping and hence tend to survive through cultural transmission. Most religious concepts are of this sort.

Function of chapter in this course. To introduce one of the most influential ideas in CSR: that religious beliefs are natural by-products of normal, human cognition. Within the range of theories in CSR, I have chosen to focus on Boyer's theory of minimal counterintuitiveness as this theory has proven relatively easy to operationalise by historically and ethnographically oriented scholars of religion.

What to look for when reading. Try to get a good grasp of what Boyer says about intuitive cognition (e.g., the ontological templates) and about how religious representations arise as attention-gripping breaches of intuitive concepts.

- (2) Czachesz, István. 2007. "Early Christian Views on Jesus' Resurrection: Towards a Cognitive Psychological Interpretation." *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 51(1): 47-59. [13].

- (3) Handout with primary texts discussed by Czachesz: Acts of John 97-98, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, and Luke 24:13-31. [4].

Context of article. Czachesz is a theologian and historian of religion. When he wrote this article, he worked at the University of Groningen; I met him when I studied in Heidelberg. Together with scholars such as Ilkka Pyysiäinen, Czachesz has produced much insightful scholarship that applies cognitive studies of religion to (ancient) religious texts. In his work, Czachesz draws also on other strands of cognitive theory than Boyer's, but I have chosen this text for our course because it uses Boyer's ideas in particular.

Function of chapter in this course. To serve as an example for how to apply theory on minimal counter-intuitiveness (MCI theory) to a concrete case study, with a focus on how belief develops over time.

What to look for when reading. Which parts of Boyer's theory does Czachesz use? And how? What does he achieve by drawing on Boyer? Does he in some way criticise, modify, and/or expand Boyer's theory? Think also about which other research questions Boyer's theory might be used to address and which other sources could be analysed. Read also the primary texts discussed by Czachesz. We will discuss these texts in class.

- (4) Whitehouse, Harvey. 2004. Ch. 2 "Cognitively Optimal Religion." In *Modes of Religiosity: A Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission*, 29-47. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press. [18].

Context of chapter. Like Boyer, Harvey Whitehouse belongs to the anthropological-theoretical founding fathers of CSR. His 'modes theories,' which explains the psychological and social structures that sustain cognitively costly religion, is one of the most influential CSR-theories. This chapter gives an overview of CSR research on cognitively optimal religion. (We return to the modes theory in session 7).

Function of chapter in this course. To introduce the notion of cognitively optimal religion and CSR more broadly.

What to look for when reading. What does CSR consider to be cognitively optimal religion? How can theories on cognitively optimal religion help explain the origin of religion? How do CSR ideas on the origin of religion relate to ideas of the origin of religion that we have already encountered in the readings on religious narratives?

- (5) Hammer, Olav. 2013. "Cognitively Optimal Religiosity: New Age as a Case Study." In *New Age Spirituality: Rethinking Religion*, edited by Steven J. Sutcliffe & Ingvild Sælid Gilhus, 212-226. Durham: Acumen. [15].

Context of chapter. Hammer is a Swedish-Danish scholar (now retired) of new age and esotericism.

Function of chapter in this course. In this chapter, Hammer examines whether New Age, which lacks the plausibility structures that support Whitehouse's cognitively costly modes of religiosity, can be considered a form of cognitively optimal religion.

What to look for when reading. How does Hammer conceptualise cognitively optimal religion? Which additional literature/ideas does he use besides what we have found in Boyer and Whitehouse? What are the results of his test: Is new age a form of cognitively optimal religion? Does the notion of cognitively optimal religion prove analytically useful?

Session 7 | 6 Nov | 10.15-13.00 | Dynamics of Religious Belief: Interpretive Drift and Second Order Beliefs

PROGRAMME

A. Dynamics of Religious Belief [2 hours]

- * Religious beliefs as religious representations made plausible through practice: the notions of belief and interpretive drift (Luhmann).
- * First- and second-order beliefs; elemental and rationalised religion (Davidsen; Smith).
- * The modes theory of religious belief: An attractor model (Whitehouse).

B. Toying with Theory [1 hour]

- * To what extent does the combined literature on religious belief treat Stausberg's five questions, i.e. on the specificity, ontology, origin, configuration, and effects of religious belief?
- * How can the theories/methods on religious belief be operationalised for empirical studies?

READINGS [63 pages]

- (1) Luhmann, Tanya M. 1989. Ch. 21 "Interpretive Drift: The Slow Shift Towards Belief." In *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England*, 307-323. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [17].

Context of article. Luhmann is one of my greatest heroes. She does not belong to the CSR crowd but is an anthropologist of religion who uses psychological methods when it suits her. She is most famous for her book *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft* (1989) on how neo-pagans and magicians come to be believe in magic. More recently she published *When God Talks Back* (2012) on how American evangelicals learn to experience God's voice. A big assumption in her work is that religious faith is not natural nor easy but requires practice, hard work, and social support.

- (2) Davidsen, Markus Altena. 2014. Excerpts from Ch. 5 "Dynamics of belief in religious traditions." In *The Spiritual Tolkien Milieu: A Study of Fiction-based Religion*, doct. diss., 120-137. Leiden University. [17].
Context of chapter. In my doctoral dissertation on Tolkien Spirituality, I developed two theoretical ideas: one on the 'affordances' of religious narratives which we encountered in session 4, and this one on the dynamics of religious belief.

Function of chapter in this course. To raise questions about how religious beliefs develop over time and how different levels of belief interact within religious traditions.

What to look for when reading. Get a good grip on the theoretical terms, especially those in figure 5.2.

- (3) Smith, Christian. 2010. "On 'Moralistic Therapeutic Deism' as US Teenagers' Actual, Tacit, De Facto Religious Belief." In *Religion and Youth*, edited by Sylvia Collins-Mayo & Pink Dandelion, 41-46. Farnham: Ashgate. [6].

Context of chapter. Christian Smith is an important American sociologist of religion whom we will return to later in the course. In this brief text he describes how the belief of American teenagers (and probably many other Christians) differ from theological doctrine.

What to look for when reading. Analyse the position of moralistic therapeutic deism with the analytical terms provided by Davidsen (2014). What kind of folk rationalization do we see here?

- (4) Whitehouse, Harvey. 2002. "Modes of Religiosity: Towards a Cognitive Explanation of the Sociopolitical Dynamics of Religion." *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 14(3-4): 293-315. [23].

Context of article. This article summarizes Whitehouse's modes theory.

What to look for when reading. How are the two modes (imagistic and doctrinal) structured? Compare Whitehouse's model of cognitively optimal vs. cognitively costly religion to Davidsen's model of elemental religion vs. rationalized religion.

Session 8 | 13 Nov | 10.15-13.00 | Experiences as Foundation for Religion

PROGRAMME

A. Extraordinary Experiences and Religion [2 hours]

- * The physical foundations of extraordinary experiences (Shushan).
- * The use of extraordinary experiences in the development of religious traditions (Hammer).

B. Existential Experiences and the Human Condition [1 hour]

- * Existential experiences and the human condition as foundations for religion (Ter Borg).

READINGS [55 pages]

- (1) Shushan, Gregory. 2014. "Extraordinary Experiences and Religious Beliefs: Deconstructing Some Contemporary Philosophical Axioms." *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 26(4-5): 384-416. [33].
- (2) Hammer, Olav. 2016. "Towards a Secular Theory of Religious Experience." In *Contemporary Views on Comparative Religion in Celebration of Tim Jensen's 65th Birthday*, edited by Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz, and Mikael Rothstein, 115-126. Sheffield, UK & Bristol, CT: Equinox. [12].
 - * *Context of the articles.* Shushan is known for his ground-breaking comparative studies of extraordinary experiences; this article deftly summarises his position. Hammer is a scholar of esotericism, well-known for his important work on legitimisation strategies. We encountered him in the session on cognitively optimal religion.
 - * *What to look for when reading.* Analyse the argument made by each author: what do they say about the origin and ontology of religious experiences (i.e. which assumptions does the author make about the existence or non-existence of such things as spirits and an afterlife?), about the specificity of religious experiences (i.e. what makes a religious experience 'religious?'), and about the effects/functions of such experiences? Shushan and Hammer's approaches differ—are they competitors or can they be combined?
- (3) Borg, Meerten ter. 2008. "Transcendence and Religion." *Implicit Religion* 11(3): 229-238. [10].
 - * *Context of the article.* Meerten ter Borg was a famous Dutch sociologist of religion, and my predecessor in Leiden. Inspired by Friedrich Nietzsche and Thomas Luckmann, his sociological work had a philosophical bent and focused on the human need for (ultimate) meaning, which seemed to become only more profound in modern society. This brief article summarises ideas that Ter Borg presented in more detail elsewhere, especially in *Een uitgewaaierde eeuwigheid: Het menselijk tekort in de moderne cultuur* (1991).
 - * *What to look for when reading.* How does Ter Borg analyse the human existential condition? What is religion's function, and is religion the only possible response to humans' existential needs?

Session 9 | 20 Nov | 10.15-13.00 | Religious Rituals: Form and Exchange

PROGRAMME

A. Roy Rappaport on the Obvious Aspects of Rituals [2 hours]

- * Rappaport's theory of ritual form, and of the relation between ritual, meaning, acceptance, and belief (Rappaport).

B. Martin Riesebrodt's Theory of Religious Practices [1 hour]

- * Martin Riesebrodt's theory of religion centred on interventive practices that promise salvation (Van der Haven).

READINGS [62 pages]

(1) Rappaport, Roy A. 1999. Ch. 1 “The ritual form” and parts of Ch. 4 “Enactments of meaning.” In *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, 23-58 and 107-124. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [43].

* *Context of chapters.* Rappaport is one of the major anthropologists of religion of his generation and counts as one of the ‘big three’ in contemporary ritual studies (together with Ronald Grimes and Catherine Bell; but Rappaport is my absolute favourite). Rappaport aims to understand ritual as a special form of action. He uses Peircean semiotics and Austin’s speech act theory to shed light on how rituals work, given their very form, as a particular form of performance and communication.

* *Function of chapters in this course.* To give an example of how thinking tools from semiotics (Peirce’s typology of signs) and analytical philosophy (Austin’s and Searle’s speech acts) can be used to analyse rituals (as being characterised by the presence of two types of communication: self-referential (in earlier articles: indexical) and canonical messages). Rappaport developed his theory of religious ritual on the basis of fieldwork among the Maringa of New Guinea, but since his theory is presented as universal, we can also use it to inform our own studies of ritual and ritual complexes, past and present.

* *What to look for when reading.* This is a difficult and dense text. There are many important concepts in these chapters, and try to get a good grip on as many of them as possible. In chapter 1, pay attention to Rappaport’s definition of ritual and to his unpacking of the ‘perceptible’ features of ritual. Here, Rappaport treats the ontology, specificity, and configuration of religious rituals. Furthermore, pay attention to what Rappaport has to say on the effects of ritual. He touches upon this in chapter 1 and returns to it in chapter 4. Try to get clear what how Rappaport theorises the relation between self-referential and canonical messages.

(2) Haven, Alexander van der. 2025. “Practices and the Promise of Salvation: On Martin Riesebrodt, *The Promise of Salvation* (2007/2010).” In *21st Century Theories of Religion*, edited by Michael Stausberg, 138-156. London: Routledge. [19].

* *Context of chapter.* Martin Riesebrodt was a German sociologist of religion who worked most of his career in Chicago. His thinking about religion is inspired by Max Weber, Clifford Geertz, and Melford Spiro, whom we have encountered earlier in the course. For a sociologist of religion, Riesebrodt’s field of expertise was broad: he was interested in both contemporary and ancient religion and was a specialist in Chinese religion. His main work from 2010, *The Promise of Salvation: A Theory of Religion*, was a general theory of religion that situated the core of religion in religious practice, and more specifically in rituals involving direct exchange with postulated supernatural beings. Van der Haven was Riesebrodt’s PhD student; his chapter summarises and comments on Riesebrodt’s theory.

* *Function of the chapter in this course.* To introduce an approach that sees ritual exchange with postulated supernatural agents the core and *sine qua non* of religion.

* *What to look for when reading.* Two conceptual models are crucial: the distinction between religion, religious tradition, and religiosity as three levels of religion, and the distinction between interventive, behaviour-regulating and discursive practices. Especially the first may prove challenging, because the terminology may be counter-intuitive. Getting a grip of the three levels is crucial for following the rest of the argument. Overall, what does Riesebrodt argue about the origin, ontology, specificity, configuration, and effects of religious rituals?

Session 10 | 27 Nov | 10.15-13.00 | The Religious and the Social**PROGRAMME****A. Jeppe Sinding Jensen on Normative Cognition [1½ hours]**

* Normative cognition in religion, culture, and social formations (Jensen).

B. Christian Smith on Religion's Effects [1½ hours]

* The psychological and social effects of religion (Smith).

READINGS [62 pages]

* Jensen, Jeppe Sinding. 2013. "Normative Cognition in Culture and Religion." *Journal for the Cognitive Science of Religion* 1(1): 47-70. [24].

Context of chapter. Jeppe Sinding Jensen taught at the department for the study of religion in Aarhus when I studied there. Though I never followed a course with him, he is the one who influenced me the most. In this article, Jensen argues that 'normative cognition,' i.e. moral intuitions that may be innate as well as socially constructed patterns of normative cognition, are as crucial for understanding religion as other 'building-blocks' of religion, such as beliefs and rituals.

Function of article in this course. To provide a discussion of the cognitive foundation of the social and political effects of religion.

What to look for when reading. How does Jensen conceptualise normative cognition? Among the influential ideas discussed in the article is Jonathan Haidt's theory of moral intuitions. Think about how the aspects of normative cognition discussed by Jensen relate to theories we have discussed earlier in the course (such as those by Hogan, Rappaport, and Whitehouse).

* Smith, Christian. 2017. Part of Ch. 2 "What Causal Powers Does Religion Produce?" In *Religion: What It Is, How It Works, and Why It Matters*, 77-118 and 266-267. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Context of chapter. Christian Smith is an eminent American sociologist of religion whom we already encountered in the session on dynamics of belief. The book from which our excerpt is taken is seen by many as the culmination (so far) of a practice-focused tradition of theorising religion that also includes Melford Spiro, Roy Rappaport, and (most recently) Martin Riesebrodt. It is the tradition that I also belong to. For Smith, the distinctive core of religion consists of practices aimed at achieving good things and avoiding bad things, based on the premise that personal or impersonal superhuman powers exist. Around this core, religious traditions and communities form. How that works is the focus of our chapter.

Function of chapter in this course. To provide a conceptual model of how religious traditions are constituted that may serve as a 'research question generator' for our own research projects.

What to look for when reading. Try to reconstruct the model of religious traditions that Smith develops (and compare it to the model of religious traditions in Davidsen (2014) from session 6). Try to get a good grasp of some of the 18 different 'causal powers' that religion can produce. It is a long text, so it is okay if you read a bit selectively, focusing on the issues that interest you the most (perhaps identity more than social control and legitimacy, or the other way around).

4 Dec | No Class**8 Dec | Deadline Tools Assignment B**

Part 4: Modelling Religion

Session 11 | 11 Dec | 9.15-11.00 | Conceptual Modelling in the Study of Religion

PROGRAMME

A. Feedback on Tools Assignment B [½ hours]

B. Conceptual Modelling in the Study of Religion [1 hours]

* A catalogue of conceptual model types for the study of religion (Davidsen).

C. Toying with Theory [1 hour]

* To what extent does the literature on religious rituals, experiences, and normative cognition help answer

Stausberg's five questions, i.e. on the specificity, ontology, origin, configuration, and effects of religion?

* Can we build an integrated theory of religion from the theoretical building-blocks from our course?

D. Theory Paper [½ hours]

* Writing the Theory Paper.

READINGS [30]

(1) Davidsen, Markus Altena. Forthcoming 2026. "Conceptual Models and Image Schemas in the Study of Religion: Towards a Grammar of Theorizing." Leiden: Brill [30].

Session 12 | 11 or 14-16 Dec

Attend one of the following events:

1. Geloof in de politiek: Oude Tradities en Nieuwe Realiteiten. Tilburg University, Friday 11 December, 13-18.
2. Ancient Religions and the Materiality of Danger. Leiden University, Monday 14-Wednesday 16 December. One day attendance suffices.

Session 13 | 18 Dec | Workshop on Theory Papers

PROGRAMME

A. Reports from the Conferences

B. Pitches of Paper Ideas and Draft Conceptual Models

* Every student gives a 5 minute pitch.

C. Evaluation of the Course

15 January 2027 | Deadline Theory Paper

30 January 2027 | Deadline Resit

Suggested Further Reading

Two asterisks (**) indicates a top resource.

Session 1 | General Resources

A. My Top Four General Journals in The Study of Religion

- ** *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*. [Published by the North American Association for the Study of Religion, published in Leiden with Brill].
- ** *Religion*. [Published by Britain-based Taylor and Francis].
- * *Numen*. [The flagship journal of the International Association of the History of Religions (IAHR). Published in Leiden with Brill].
- * *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. [Published by the American Academy of Religion, the world's largest association for scholars of religion and religion teachers].

B. Handbooks, Textbooks, and Readers

- ** Stausberg, Michael & Steven Engler (eds.; 2016), *The Oxford Handbook of the Study of Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. [This is your first go-to resource, with lots of articles and further reading sections].
- ** Segal, Robert & Nickolas P. Roubekas (eds.; 2021), *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion*, second edition.
- ** Stausberg, Michael & Steven Engler (eds.; 2021), *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, second edition, London & New York: Routledge.
- ** Segal, Robert & Kocku von Stuckrad (2015), *Vocabulary for the Study of Religion*, 2 volumes, Leiden: Brill. [UB has an online version].
- * Stausberg, Michael (2026), *Theories of Religion (1966-2024): A Critical Primer*, Sheffield: Equinox.
- * King, Richard (ed.; 2017), *Religion, Theory, Critique: Classic and Contemporary Approaches and Methodologies*, New York: Columbia University Press. [King and most of the contributors are radically deconstructionist in their approach rather than analytical and theory-building (they self-identify as proponents of 'critical theory'. I find this approach unproductive and a danger to the discipline but do take a look for yourself].
- * Antes, Peter, Armin W. Geertz & Randi R. Warne (eds.; 2004), *New Approaches to the Study of Religion: Volume 1: Regional, Critical and Historical Approaches* and *Volume 2: Textual, Comparative, Sociological, and Cognitive Approaches*, Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter. [Though already slightly dated, this is still a good resource].
- ** Jensen, Jeppe Sinding (2019), *What Is Religion?*, second edition, London & New York: Routledge. First edition 2014. [One of the best books on the market for advanced students with a background outside the study of religion who want to move into this discipline].
- * Orsi, Robert A. (ed., 2012), *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press.
- ** Stausberg, Michael (ed.; 2009), *Contemporary Theories of Religion: A Critical Companion*, London & New York: Routledge.
- * James D. Wright (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd edition, vol. 20, Religious Studies, Amsterdam: Elsevier. [Online access LUB].
- * Chryssides, George D. & Army R. Whitehead (eds.; 2022), *Contested Concepts in the Study of Religion: A Critical Exploration*, London: Bloomsbury Academic.

C. Collections of Primary Sources

[This section is uneven as I have not yet systematically searched for source text collections in all relevant areas of the Study of Religion. This list is just to indicate that excellent sourcebooks exist. You can search yourself for additional collections].

- ** *The Norton Anthology of World Religions*, Jack Miles, general editor, New York & London: W. W. Norton. Includes the volumes Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Daoism, Judaism and Hinduism. [Invaluable compilations of primary texts in translation].
- ** Smart, Ninian & Richard D. Hecht (eds.; 2007), *Sacred Texts of the World: A Universal Anthology*, London: Quercus. [A balanced collection of texts about the various dimensions of religion identified by Smart].
- * Wilson, Andrew (ed.; 1995), *World Scriptures: A Comparative Anthology of Sacred Texts*, St. Paul, MN: Paragon House.
- ** eHRAF World Cultures. Database on various aspects (including c. 30 items in religion) of a representative sample (300+) of the world's culture. Founded in 1935 at Yale by George Peter Murdock. A standard resource in cross-cultural research. An example of a comparative study of religion (focused on the correlation of creation stories with subsistence technologies and related models of analogical thinking is Moor, Nienke, Wout Ultee & Ariana Need (2009). "Analogical Reasoning and the Content of Creation Stories", *Cross-Cultural Research* 43(2), 91-122.
- ** The Database of Religious History. <https://religiondatabase.org/landing/>
- * Leeming, David & Margaret Leeming (1994), *A Dictionary of Creation Myths*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ancient religions

- ** López-Ruiz, Carolina (ed.; 2017), *Gods, Heroes, and Monsters: A Sourcebook of Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern Myths in Translation*, second edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press. First edition 2014. [Very rich and useful collection. Consists of six sections in (i) cosmogonies and theogonies, (ii) mankind, created and destroyed, (iii) epic struggles .gods, heroes, and monsters, (iv) of cities and peoples, (v) eros and the labours of love, (vi) death and the afterlife journey. In each section, a collection of myths are given from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Israel, and the Greek and Roman worlds, easing comparison].
- * Beard, Mary John North & S. R. F. Price (1998b), *Religions of Rome, Vol. 2: A Sourcebook*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- * Dalley, Stephanie (1991), *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and others*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Christianity

- ** Attridge, Harold W. (2017), *The HarperCollins Study Bible*, new revised version, HarperCollins.
- ** Peters, F.E. 1990. *Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: The Classical Texts and Their Interpretation* 1–3. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Vol 1: From Covenant to Communities. Vol 2: The word and the law and the people of God. Vol 3: The works of the spirit.
- * Fokkelman, Jan P. & Wim Weren (red., 2003), *De Bijbel literair: Opbouw en gedachtegang van de bijbelse geschriften en hun onderlinge relaties*, Meinema: Zoetermeer.
- * Barker, Gregory A. & Stephen E. Gregg (eds.; 2010), *Jesus Beyond Christianity: The Classic Texts*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- * Ehrman, Bart & Zlatko Pleše (2011), *The Apocryphal Gospels: Texts and Translations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- * Ogden, Daniel (2013), *Dragons, Serpents, and Slayers in the Classical and Early Christian Worlds: A Sourcebook*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Islam

- ** Nasr, Seyyed Hossein (eds.; 2015), *The Study Quran*, New York: HarperOne.
- * Daschke, Dereck & W. Michael Ashcraft (eds.; 2005), *New Religious Movements: A Documentary Reader*, New York & London: New York University Press.

Hinduism

- * Jamison, Stephanie W. & Joel P. Brereton (2014), *The Rigveda: The Earliest Religious Poetry of India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Buddhism

- * Hinüber, Oskar von. 1996. *A Handbook of Pāli Literature*, in the series *Indian Philology and South Asian Studies* 2. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Contemporary religion and new religions

- * Albanese, Catherine L. (ed.; 2001), *American Spiritualities: A Reader*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- * Daschke, Dereck & W. Michael Ashcraft (eds.; 2005), *New Religious Movements: A Documentary Reader*, New York & London: New York University Press.
- Chryssides, George D. & Margaret Z. Wilkins (eds; 2006), *A Reader in New Religious Movements*, London & New York: Continuum.

D. Research History in the Study of Religion

- * Strenski, Ivan (2015), *Understanding Theories of Religion: An Introduction*, second edition, Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell.
- * Pals, Daniel (2021), *Ten Theories of Religion*, 4th ed., New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Doesn't go further than Clifford Geertz but gives a good overview of the research history until the 1960s; fourth edition added Mary Daly, a contemporary feminist theologian].
- * Stausberg, Michael (2007), "The Study of Religion(s) in Western Europe (I): Prehistory and History until World War II", *Religion* 37(4), 294-318.
- * Stausberg, Michael (2008), "The Study of Religion(s) in Western Europe (II): Institutional Developments After World War II", *Religion* 38(4), 305-318.
- * Stausberg, Michael (2009), "The Study of Religion(s) in Western Europe (III): Further Developments after World War II", *Religion* 39(3), 261-282.
- * Taves, Ann (2011), "2010 Presidential Address: "Religion" in the Humanities and the Humanities in the University", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 79(2), 287-314. [With an American focus].
- * Doležalová, Iva, Luther H. Martin & Dalibor Papoušek (eds.; 2001), *The Academic Study of Religion During the Cold War: East and West*, in the series *Toronto Studies in Religion* 27, Donald Wiebe, series editor, New York: Peter Lang.
- * Robertson, David G. (2021), *Gnosticism and the History of Religions*, in the series *Scientific Studies of Religion: Inquiry and Explanation*, London: Bloomsbury. [On the influence of Gnosticism, through figures such as Jung and Kripal, on the study of religion. There is also an article version of the argument: Robertson, David G. (2020), "A Gnostic History of Religions", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 32(1), 75-88.]
- * Fujiwara, Satoko, David Thurfjell & Steven Engler (eds.; 2021), *Global Phenomenologies of Religion: An Oral History in Interviews*, in the series *The Study of Religion in a Global Context*, Sheffield: Equinox. Includes my interview with Jan G. Platvoet on the Dutch case.

E. Study of Religion in the Netherlands

- * Platvoet, Jan G. (1998), "From Consonance to Autonomy: The Science of Religion in The Netherlands 1948-1995", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 10, 334-351.
- * Platvoet, Jan G. (2009), "Theologie als dubbelspel: over verscheidenheid en dynamiek van theologie en godsdienstwetenschap", *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 63(3), 221-236. [Important article. Covers the recent developments in the study of religion and theology in the Netherlands].
- * Molendijk, Arie (2017), "The Study of Religion in the Netherlands", *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift/Journal for Theology and the Study of Religion* 71, 5-19. ['The Study of Religion' for Molendijk also covers theology].

F. Later Responses to the NTT Debate on the Study of Religion in the Netherlands

All sides with my opponents.

- * Arfman, William, Sakina Loukili, Birgit Meyer, Jelle Wiering, Lieke Wijnia & Eric Venbrux (2020), "The Current Crisis in Dutch Study of Religion and the Role of the NGG", *NTT Journal for Theology and the Study of Religion* 74(4), 315-318.
- * Bakker, Justine M. (2023), "Charles H. Long's *Significations* (1986), or, Making Problems for the Study of Religion in the Netherlands", *NTT Journal for Theology and the Study of Religion* 77(1), 34-48.

- * Stepien, Rafal K. (2023), "Interdisciplinarity in Nondisciplines: Archive and Academe in the Study of Religion", *Numen* 70, 473-513.

G. Other Handy Resources

- * *The Religious Studies Project*, <http://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/podcast/>. [Website with a wealth of information, including podcasts with leading scholars of religion on a variety of subjects].
- * *Database of Religious History* (DBH), <http://religiondatabase.org/>. [Ongoing megalomaniac project aimed at mapping religious cultural history from prehistory through the early modern period. The interface allows one to see how particular beliefs and practices were distributed at various times in history, and hence to get a quick overview over processes of religious change].

H. Handbooks on Academic Research and Writing

- ** Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. FitzGerald (2016), *The Craft of Research*, fourth edition, Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press. First edition 1995. [Excellent book on writing academic papers and theses. Buy it!]
- ** Hartley, James (2008), *Academic Writing and Publishing: A Practical Handbook*, London & New York: Routledge. [Excellent guide for your first publications. If you think of doing a PhD after the master, consider getting your hands on this book].
- * Hayot, Eric (2014), *The Elements of Academic Style: Writing for the Humanities*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Sessions 1-2/5/11 | Metatheory in the Study of Religion

A. On Theorising in the Social and Cultural Sciences

- ** Swedberg, Richard (2014), Ch. 1 "From Theory to Theorizing", in Richard Swedberg (ed.), *Theorizing in Social Science: The Context of Discovery*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1-28. [I have used this chapter in earlier versions of the course to introduce Swedberg's ideas on theorizing as a practice].
- ** Swedberg, Richard (2016), "Before theory comes theorizing, or how to make social science more interesting", *The British Journal of Sociology* 67(1), 5-22 [18].
- ** Swedberg, Richard (2014), *The Art of Social Theory*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. [The longer monograph version of the argument discussed in our chapter. After publishing this book, Swedberg has produced a large number of articles that closer at different aspects of the theorising process].
- ** Jarvie, Ian C. & Jesús Zamora-Bonilla (2011; red.), *The SAGE Handbook of The Philosophy of Social Sciences*, Los Angeles: SAGE.
- * Swedberg, Richard (2012), "Theorizing in Sociology and Social Science: Turning to the Context of Discovery", *Theory and Society: Renewal and Critique in Social Theory* 41(1), 1-40.
- * Turner, Jonathan (1987), "Analytical Theorizing", in Anthony Giddens & Jonathan H. Turner (eds.), *Social Theory Today*, Cambridge & Oxford: Polity Press, 156-194.
- * Healy, Kieran (2017), "Fuck Nuance", *Sociological Theory* 35(2), 118-127.
- * Besbris, Max & Shamus Khan (2017), "Less Theory: More Description", *Sociological Theory* 35(2), 147-153.
- * Ultee, Wout (2015), "Problem Selection in the Social Sciences: Methodology", in James D. Wright (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd edition, Vol. 19. Oxford: Elsevier. 49-55. [On why it is important to know which problem one's theory aims to solve, and how that problem relates to other problems within a problem hierarchy].

B. On Theorising in the Study of Religion (general)

- ** Smith, Christian (2017), *Religion: What It Is, How It Works, and Why It Matters*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. [A very strong theory on religion in the tradition of Geertz, Spiro, Schilbrack, and Riesebrödt. This is the theoretical tradition to which I also belong and into which this course is inscribed. For students and young researchers, a particularly helpful aspect of this book is the appendix

- on 'research questions' that formulates a host of important problems for the study of religion. If I had known about this book when I wrote my article for the *NTT JTSR* theme issue, I would have referred to it].
- ** Engler, Steven & Michael Stausberg (2020), "Religion at 50: Pasts and Futures", thematic issue of the top journal *Religion* on the future of the discipline.
 - ** Strenski, Ivan (2003), "Why It Is Better To Know Some of the Questions Than All of the Answers", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 15(2), 169-186. [Excellent article on how fruitful research is focused on problems rather than concepts; identifies a number of important problems for the study of religion. I included this article with great success in earlier versions of the course. It is not included this year, because I make similar points my methodological articles discussed in session 1].
 - ** Jensen, Jeppe Sinding (2023), "The Typological Phenomenology of Religion – Resurrected: Managing a Legacy from Geo Widengren", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 35, 306-328.
 - * Engler, Steven and Mark Q. Gardiner (2021), "Theorizing and analysis", in Steven Engler & Michael Stausberg (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, second edition, London & New York: Routledge, 110-133.
 - * Engler, Steven (2019), "Theory-Building: Working the Theory-Data Spectrum", *Horizonte* 17(53), 569-588.
 - * Seiwert, Hubert (2020), "A Critical Realist Perspective on the Study of Religion as an Empirical Discipline", *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft* 28(2), 207-236. [The journal later devoted an entire issue to discussing this article].
 - * Stoddard, Brad (ed.; 2018), *Method Today: Redescribing Approaches to the Study of Religion*, in the series *NAASR Working Papers*, Brad Stoddard, series editor, Sheffield: Equinox. [Built up around four target articles on comparison, description, explanation, and interpretation in the study of religion, each with four responses and a reply. The idea is sound, but I find most of the discussion less relevant or useful. The book is good for gaining an overview of the theoretical debates as they are carried out within the religious studies community in the America].
 - * Braun, Willi & Russell T. McCutcheon (eds.; 2008), *Introducing Religion: Essays in Honor of Jonathan Z. Smith*, London & Oakville: Equinox.
 - * Hermann, Adrian (2018), "A Call for a Permissible Plurality Within Theory-Building in a Time of Excess", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 30(4-5), 487-497. [This article is a review essay of Aaron Hughes' book *Theory in a Time of Excess: Beyond Reflection and Explanation in Religious Studies Scholarship* (2017). Hermann develops a fourfold typology of theories that one can encounter in the study of religion. I have used this article as a core reading in an earlier version of this course].
 - * Stausberg, Michael & Steven Engler (2016), "Theories of Religion", in Michael Stausberg & Steven Engler (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Study of Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 52-72.
 - * Smith, Jonathan Z. (2001), "A Twice-told Tale: The History of the History of Religions' History", *Numen* 48, 131-146. [Plenary address to the 2000 IAHR conference. Develops the famous distinction between 'subject matter' and 'theoretical object'].
 - * Stausberg, Michael (2010), "Prospects in Theories of Religion", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 22(4), 223-238. [Part of theme issue on 'Theories in Religion'. Discusses the aversion to theory among many scholars of religion and the challenges we face theorising religion].
 - * Geertz, Armin W. (2000), "Analytical Theorizing in the Secular Study of Religion", in Tim Jensen & Michael Rothstein (eds.), *Secular Theories on Religion: Current Perspectives*, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 21-31.
 - ** Geertz, Armin W. (2010), "Brain, Body and Culture: A Biocultural Theory of Religion", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 22(4), 304-321. [Catalogues what a general theory or an integrated, theoretical paradigm for the study of religion should explain].
 - * McKinnon, Andrew & Marta Trzebiatowska (eds.; 2014), *Sociological Theory and the Question of Religion*, in the *Theology and Religion in Interdisciplinary Perspective Series*, Farnham: Ashgate.
 - * Krech, Volkhard (2020), "Relational Religion: Manifesto for a Synthesis in the Study of Religion", *Religion* 50(1), 97-105.
 - * Krüger, Oliver (2022), "From an Aristotelian *Ordo Essendi* to Relation: Shifting Paradigms in the Study of Religions in the Light of the Sociology of Knowledge", *Numen* 69(1), 61-96.

- * Stoddard, Brad & Craig Martin (eds.; 2017), *Stereotyping Religion: Critiquing Clichés*, in the series *Critiquing Religion: Discourse, Culture, Power*, Craig Martin, series editor, London: Bloomsbury. [A critique of clichés (assumptions) in earlier theories of religion.]

C. ASSUMPTIONS: Philosophical Assumptions in the Study of Religion (general)

- ** Schilbrack, Kevin (2014), *Philosophy and the Study of Religions: A Manifesto*, Chichester: Wiley Blackwell.
- * *Religion* 39(4), 2009, theme issue on 'Philosophy of Science in Religion'.
- * Taira, Teemu & Suzanne Owen (2020), "Twenty Years After – *The Ideology of Religious Studies*", Special Issue of *Implicit Religion* 22(3-4). Esp. Taira, Teemu (2020), "The Historicization of "Religion" and The Deviation of Study of Religion Departments: Siamese Twins of Contingent Acquaintances?", *Implicit Religion* 22(3-4), 291-308.
- * Wiebe, Donald (2021), "A Manifesto for the Scientific Study of Religion or Setting the Parameters for a Scientific Study of Religions In the Modern University", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 33(1), 73-76. [With responses].
- * Segal, Robert A. (2006), "All Generalizations Are Bad: Postmodernism on Theories", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 74(1), 157-171

Focus: The Critics/Caretaker Debate in the Study of Religion

- ** Blum, Jason N. (ed.; 2018), *The Question of Methodological Naturalism*, in the series *Supplements to Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 11, Leiden: Brill.
- * Martin, Craig (2018), "Incapacitating Scholarship: Or, Why Methodological Agnosticism Is Impossible", in Jason N. Blum (ed.), *The Question of Methodological Naturalism*, Leiden: Brill, 53-73.
- * McCutcheon, Russell T. (2006), "It's a Lie. There is no Truth in It! It's a Sin! On the Limits of the Humanistic Study of Religion and the Costs of Saving Others from Themselves", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 74, 720-750.
- ** Wiegers, Gerard (2005), "Afscheid van het methodologisch agnosticisme?", *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 45, 153-167. [The best discussion in Dutch on the concept 'methodological agnosticism' Wiegers clarifies what this term means (= we make no claims about the supernatural assumptions of religions), but also what it does not entail (= we don't become insiders, and we don't even engage in a 'dialogue' with those whom we study, but we describe and explain religion on the observer's terms, even when reconstructing the lived religion of a group)].
- * Lincoln, Bruce (2000), "Reflection on 'Theses on Method'", in Tim Jensen & Michael Rothstein (eds.), *Secular Theories on Religion: Current Perspectives*, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 117-121.
- * McCutcheon, Russell T. (2001), *Critics, not Caretakers: Redescribing the Public Study of Religion*, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- ** Davidsen, Markus Altena (2012), "What is Wrong with Pagan Studies?", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 24(2), 183-199. [With six responses in *The Pomegranate: The International Journal of Pagan Studies*; this is one of my most influential articles].
- * Berg, Herbert (2012), "The Essence of Essentializing: A Critical Discourse on "Critical Discourse in the Study of Islam"", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 24(4-5), 337-356.
- * Tolstaya, Katya & Frank Bestebreurtje (2021), "Furthering the Dialogue Between Religious Studies and Theology: An Apophatic Approach as a Heuristic Tool for Methodological Agnosticism", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 89(2), 469-505. [Critical of methodological naturalism].
- * Knibbe, Kim & André Droogers (2011), "Methodological Ludism and the Academic Study of Religion". *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 23(3-4), 283-303. [Critical of methodological naturalism].
- * Blum, Jason N. (2021), "Beyond Methodological Axioms", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 89(2), 437-468.

Focus: Should the Study of Religion be Activist?

- * Miller, Richard Brian (2021), *Why Study Religion?* New York: Oxford University Press.

- * Stausberg, Michael, Ingvild Sælid Gilhus, Christian Hervik Bull & Alexander van der Haven (2024), "A Normative Turn in the Study of Religions? Reflections on Richard Miller's *Why Study Religion?*", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 36(1), 43-57.
- * Miller, Richard B. (2024), "Critical Humanism and the Study of Religion: A Statement and Defense", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 36(2), 206-218.

D. CONCEPTUALISATION in the Study of Religion (Generally)

Study of religion (esp. on the social ontology of religion and on defining 'Religion')

- ** Schilbrack, Kevin (2017), "A Realist Social Ontology of Religion", *Religion* 47(2), 161-178. [Defends a substantive approach].
- * Stowers, Stanley K. (2008), "The Ontology of Religion", in Willi Braun & Russell T. McCutcheon (eds.), *Introducing Religion: Essays in Honor of Jonathan Z. Smith*, London & Oakville: Equinox, 434-449.
- * Rota, Andrea (2023), *Collective Intentionality and the Study of Religion: Social Ontology and Empirical Research*, Bloomsbury Academic.
- * Moberg, Marcus (2025), "The Discursive Study of Religion, Critical Realism, and the Social Reality of 'Religion'", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 37(4-5), 398-423.
- ** Smith, Jonathan Z. (1998): "Religion, religions, religious", in Mark Taylor (ed.), *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 269-284. [A classic text].
- * Schilbrack, Kevin (2013), "What Isn't Religion?", *The Journal of Religion* 93(3), 291-318. [Part of a 'skirmish' with Timothy Fitzgerald that I have sometimes read and discussed with students: Fitzgerald, Timothy (2000), Ch. 1 "Religion, Religions, and World Religions: Religious Studies – A Critique", in idem., *The Ideology of Religious Studies*, New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press; Schilbrack, Kevin (2010), "Religions: Are There Any?" *Journal for the American Academy of Religion* 78(4), 1112-1138; Fitzgerald, Timothy (2013), "A Response to Kevin Schilbrack", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 25(2), 101-106; Schilbrack, Kevin (2013), "After We Deconstruct 'Religion,' Then What? A Case for Critical Realism", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 25(2), 107-112.]
- * Geertz, Armin W. (1999), "Definition as Analytical Strategy in the Study of Religion", *Historical Reflections/Reflexions Historique* 25(3), 445-475. [On how good theorising begins with definitions].
- * Stausberg, Michael & Mark Q. Gardiner (2016), "Definition", in Michael Stausberg & Steven Engler (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Study of Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 9-32.
- * Casadio, Giovanni (2016), "Historicizing and Translating Religion", in Michael Stausberg & Steven Engler (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Study of Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 33-51.
- * Hanegraaff, Wouter J. (2016), "Reconstructing 'Religion' from the Bottom Up", *Numen* 63(5-6), 576-605.
- * Bruce, Steve (2011), "Defining religion: a practical response", *International Review of Sociology: Revue Internationale de Sociologie* 21(1), 107-120. [Defends a substantive approach].
- * Platvoet Jan G. (1990), "The Definers Defined: Traditions in the Definition of Religion", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 2(2), 180-212.
- ** Platvoet, Jan G. & Arie L. Molendijk (eds.; 1999), *The Pragmatics of Defining Religion: Contexts, Concepts and Contests*, Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill.
- * Saler, Benson (2000), *Conceptualizing Religion: Immanent Anthropologists, Transcendent Natives, and Unbounded Categories*, New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, first published 1993 by Brill, Leiden. [Defends a prototype-approach].
- * Kleine, Christoph & Monika Wolhrab-Sahr (2021), "Comparative Secularities: Tracing Social and Epistemic Structures beyond the Modern West", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 33(1), 43-72. [Seeks a middle-ground in the debate on whether 'religion' can/should be defined or not].
- * Taves, Ann (2015), "Reverse Engineering Complex Cultural Concepts", *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 15(5), 191-216. [Problematic article that confuses Frege's *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*].
- * Dubuisson, Daniel (2007), *The Western Construction of Religion: Myths, Knowledge, and Ideology*, translated by William Sayers, Johns Hopkins University Press. [Finds 'religion' too ideologically loaded and suggests we use the more neutral 'cosmographic formations' instead].

Study of Religion (esp. on 'meaning' as the basic concept for theorising religion)

- ** Geertz, Clifford (1966), "Religion as a Cultural System", in Michael Banton (ed.), *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, A.S. A. Monographs 3, London. Tavistock Publications, 1-46. [According to Geertz religion provides meaning in face of three human limitations: the analytical (science cannot explain everything), the physical (we eventually die), and the moral (we do not know what is right or wrong).]
- ** Berger, Peter L. (1969), *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. New York: Anchor Books [first Anchor Books ed. 1969; 1. US ed. 1967].
- * Jensen, Jeppe Sinding (2004), "Meaning and Religion: On Semantics in the Study of Religion", in Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz & Randi R. Warne (eds.), *New Approaches to the Study of Religion. Volume 1: Regional, Critical and Historical Approaches*, Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 219-252.
- * Engler, Steven & Mark Q. Gardiner (2017), "Semantics and the Sacred", *Religion* 47(4), 616-640.
- * Steven Engler and Mark Q. Gardiner (2010): "Ten Implications of Semantic Holism for Theories of Religion", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 22(4), 283-292.

Philosophy

- * Frege, Gottlob (1892), "Über Sinn und Bedeutung", *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik* 100, 25-50.

Cognitive Linguistics

- * Geeraerts, Dirk & Hubert Cuyckens (eds.; 2010), *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. [The first part of the book, "Basic Concepts", discusses such topics as metaphor, image schemas, force dynamics, and conceptual integration].
- * Laurence, Stephen & Eric Margolis (eds.; 1999), *Concepts: Core Readings*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. [A reader. Reprints two classical texts on prototypes: Eleanor Rosch: "Principles of Categorization" and George Lakoff: "Cognitive Models and Prototype Theory"]

Sociology: Ideal types and the reference of concepts

- * Weber, Max ([1904] 1949), "Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy", in Edward A. Shils & Henry A. Finch (ed.), *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, New York: The Free Press, 50-112.
- * Giddens, Anthony & Philip W. Sutton (2014), "Ideal Type", in *Essential Concepts in Sociology*, Cambridge & Malden, MA: Polity Press, 27-29 [3].
- * Hekman, S. J. ([1983] 2006), *Weber, the Ideal Type and Contemporary Social Theory*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

E. MODEL BUILDING

- * Jensen, Jeppe Sinding (2009), "Conceptual Models in the Study of Religion", in Peter Clark (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, Peter Clark (ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 245-262.

Image schemas

- * Johnson, Mark (2007), *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding*, Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press. [The classic text on image schemas].
- * Oakley, Todd (2010), "Image Schemas", in Dirk Geeraerts & Hubert Cuyckens (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 214-235.

Emic and etic

- ** Pike, Kenneth (1967), *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of Human Behavior*, The Hague: Mouton. [Introduces the distinction between etic and emic. Esp. Ch 2. "Etic and Emic Standpoints for the Description of Behavior", 37-42].
- ** Jardine, Nick (2004), "Etics and Emics (not to mention Anemic and Emetics) in the History of the Sciences", *History of Science* 42(4), 261-278. [Develops Pike's distinction between emic and etic].

F. COMPARISON in the Study of Religion

- ** Freiburger, Oliver (2019), *Considering Comparison: A Method for Religious Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ** Freidenreich, David M. (2004), "Comparisons Compared: A Methodological Survey of Comparisons of Religion from "A Magic Dwells" to A *Magic Still Dwells*", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 16(1), 80-101.
- ** Stausberg, Michael (2021), "Comparison", in Steven Engler & Michael Stausberg (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, second edition, London & New York: Routledge, 15-33.
- ** Antes, Peter, Armin W. Geertz & Mikael Rothstein (eds.; 2016), *Contemporary Views on Comparative Religion in Celebration of Tim Jensen's 65th Birthday*: Sheffield, UK & Bristol, CT: Equinox.
- ** Platvoet, Jan G. (1982), Ch. 2: "A Limitative Approach to the Comparative Study of Religions: Its Genesis and Tools", in *Comparing Religions: A Limitative Approach. An Analysis of Akan, Para-Creole, and IFO-Sananda Rites and Prayers*, The Hague, Paris & New York: Mouton, 21-35.
- * Lincoln, Bruce (2018), *Apples and Oranges: Explorations In, On, and With Comparison*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- * Schmidt-Leukel, Perry & Andreas Nehring (eds.; 2016), *Interreligious Comparisons in Religious Studies and Theology: Comparison Revisited*, London: Bloomsbury. In particular: Freiburger, Oliver (2016), "Modes of Comparison: Towards Creating a Methodological Framework for Comparative Studies", in Perry Schmidt-Leukel & Andreas Nehring (eds.), *Interreligious Comparisons in Religious Studies and Theology: Comparison Revisited*, London: Bloomsbury, 53-71.
- * Sharma, Arvind (2005), *Religious Studies and Comparative Methodology: The Case for Reciprocal Illumination*, Albany: State University of New York Press. [More concrete and more interesting than van der Veer's book].
- * Paden, William E. (2016), *New Patterns for Comparative Religion: Passages to an Evolutionary Perspective*, in the series *Scientific Studies of Religion: Inquiry and Explanation*, Donald Wiebe, Luther H. Martin & William W. McCorkle, series editors, London: Bloomsbury.
- * Benavides, Gustavo (2003), "There Is Data for Religion", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 71(4), 895-903.
- * Smith, Jonathan Z. (1990), *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity*, Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion XIV, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, London & Chicago: University of London Press/University of Chicago Press.
- * Smith, Jonathan Z. (1971), "Adde Parvum Parvo Magnus Acervus Erit", *History of Religions* 11(1), 67-90. [A classic].
- * Frankfurter, David (2012), "[Comparison and the Study of Religion in Late Antiquity](#)", in Claude Calame and Bruce Lincoln (eds.), *Comparer en histoire des religions antiques: Controverses et propositions*, Liège: Presses Universitaires de Liège, 83-98.
- * Jensen, Jeppe Sinding (2003), *The Study of Religion in a New Key: Theoretical and Philosophical Soundings in the Comparative and General Study of Religion*, in the series *Studies in Religion* 3, Lars Ahlin, Armin W. Geertz, Tim Jensen, Erik Reenberg Sand & Jørgen Podemann Sørensen, series editors. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.
- * Reeh, Niels (2020), "Inter-religious Relations as a New Foundation for Comparative Religion", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 32(1), 47-73.
- ** Weber, Ralph (2014), "Comparative Philosophy and the Tertium: Comparing What with What, and in What Respect?", *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 13(13), 151-171.
- * Mahoney, James (2004), "Comparative-historical Methodology", *Annual Review of Sociology* 30, 81-101.

Examples of Comparative Studies of Religion

- * Freiburger, Oliver (2009), *Der Askesediskurs in der Religionsgeschichte: Eine vergleichende Untersuchung brahmanischer und frühchristlicher Texte*, in the series *Studies in Oriental Religions* 57, Karl Hoheisel & Wassilios Klein, editors, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

- * Freiburger, Oliver (2010), "Locating the Ascetic's Habitat: Toward a Microcomparison of Religious Discourse", *History of Religions* 50(2), 162-192.
- * Shushan, Gregory (2009), *Conceptions of the Afterlife in Early Civilizations: Universalism, Constructivism, and Near-Death Experience*, London & New York: Continuum.
- * Shushan, Gregory (2018), *Near-death Experience in Indigenous Religions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

G. EXPLANATION (in the Study of Religion)

- ** Kincaid, Harold (eds.; 2012), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Social Science*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- * Asprem, Egil & Ann Taves (2018), "Explanation and the Study of Religion", in Brad Stoddard (ed.), *Method Today: Redescribing Approaches to the Study of Religion*, Sheffield: Equinox, 133-157. [I have used this as a core readings in earlier versions of the course].
- * Hedström, Peter & Richard Swedberg (1998), "Social Mechanisms: An Introductory Essay", in Peter Hedström & Richard Swedberg (eds.), *Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-31. [I have sometimes used this chapter in class].
- ** Taves, Ann & Egil Asprem (forthc.), *Explanation: A Critical Primer*, Sheffield: Equinox.
- * Jensen, Jeppe Sinding (2009), "Explanation and interpretation in the comparative study of religion", *Religion* 39(4), 331-339.
- ** Jensen, Jeppe Sinding (2011), "Epistemology", in Michael Stausberg & Steven Engler (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook on Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, London & New York: Routledge, 40-53. [I have listed this article here because it includes a useful typology of explanations; this article builds on and improves the article listed above].
- * Segal, Robert A. (2010), "Functionalism Since Hempel", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 22(4), 340-353. [Argues against functionalist explanations].
- * Franek, Juraj (2020), *Naturalism and Protectionism in the Study of Religions*, in the series *Scientific Studies of Religion: Inquiry and Explanation*, London: Bloomsbury.

H. The Concept of Culture

- ** Sahlin, Marshall (1999), "Two or Three Things that I know About Culture", *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 5(3), 399-421. [One of my favourite articles].
- * Sewell, Jr., William H., "The Concept(s) of Culture", in Victoria E. Bonnell & Lynn Hunt (eds.), *Beyond the Cultural Turn*, in the series *Studies on the History of Society and Culture* 34, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 35-61.

I. Theorising ancient religion

- ** Roubekas, Nickolas (2019; ed.), *Theorizing 'Religion' in Antiquity*, in the series *Studies in Ancient Religion and Culture*, Sheffield, UK & Bristol, CT: Equinox.
- * Stowers, Stanley (2024), *Christian Beginnings: A Study in Ancient Mediterranean Religion*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. [Introduction: on three modes of religion: religion of everyday exchange, civic religion, and religion of freelance literate experts.]

Sessions 3-4 | Narratology and Religious Narratives

A. The Nature of Religious Narratives/Sacred Texts/Myths

- ** Csapo, Eric (2005), *Theories of Mythology*, in the series *Ancient Cultures*, London: Blackwell. [The best and most recent overview of the history of the research on mythology].
- * Doty, William G. (2000), *Mythography: The Study of Myth and Rituals*, 2nd ed., Tuscaloosa & London: The University of Alabama Press. First edition 1986.

- ** Dundes, Alan (ed.; 1984), *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth*, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press. [Includes the classic articles by William Bascom on “The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives” and by Lauri Honko on “The Problem of Defining Myth”].
- * Segal, Robert (2004), *Myth: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- * Jensen, Jeppe Sinding (2009; ed.), *Myth and Mythology: A Reader*, London: Equinox.
- * Miles-Watson, Jonathan & Vivian Asimos (2019), *The Bloomsbury Reader in the Study of Myth*, London: Bloomsbury Academic.

B. Narratology (general)

- ** Jahn, Manfred (2021), *Narratology 2.3: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative*, English Department, University of Cologne. www.uni-koeln.de/~ame02/pppn.pdf. [Super handy and easy to navigate narratological toolbox].
- ** Genette, Gérard (1980), *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, translated from French by Jane E. Lewin from “Discours du récit”, in: *Figures III*, Paris: Editions due Seuil, 1972. [Probably the best narratologist to start with].
- ** Hühn, Peter, John Pier, Wolf Schmid & Jörg Schönert (eds.; 2014), *Handbook of Narratology*, second edition, in the series *Narratologia: Contributions to Narrative Theory* 19, Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter. [Available for download from UB].
- ** Jong, Irene J. F. de (2004), “Narratological Theory on Narrators, Narratees, and Narrative”, in Irene J.F. de Jong, René Nünlist, Angus Bowie (eds.), *Narrators, Narratees, and Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature*, Leiden: Brill, 1-10. [I often use this text as a core reading]
- ** Boven, Erica van & Gillis Dorleijn (2013), *Literair Mechaniek: Inleiding tot de analyse van verhalen en gedichten*, derde druk, Bussum: Coutinho. [In the BA programme Dutch (Nederlands), this book is used in the first-year course on literature.]
- * Bal, Mieke (2009), *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 3rd ed., Toronto, Buffalo & London: University of Toronto Press. First edition 1985, second edition 1997. [Mieke Bal is the most influential Dutch narratologists – and also worked, from a feminist theological perspective, with Biblical texts].
- * Herman, Luc & Bart Vervaeck (2005), *Handbook of Narrative Analysis*, in the series *Frontiers of Narrative*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. Originally published in Dutch as *Vertelduivels: Handboek verhaalanalyse*. [Good introduction in the Genette-Bal tradition].
- ** Fludernik, Monika (2009), *An Introduction to Narratology*, London: Routledge. First published in German as *Einführung in die Erzähltheorie*, 2006. [Combines the Genette-Bal tradition with German narratology. Includes a very useful glossary of narratological terms].
- ** Hogan, Patrick Colm (2003), *The Mind and Its Stories: Narrative Universals and Human Emotion*, in the series *Studies in Emotion and Social Interaction*, Keith Oatley & Antony S. R. Manstead, series editors, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Esp. Ch. 7 “The Structure of Stories” in which Hogan discusses prototypical modes of narration (which turn out to be particularly intense in religious narratives), and identifies three universal plot structures, which we also find in religious narratives].
- * Cohn, Dorrit (1999), *The Distinction of Fiction*, Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- * Ryan, Laure-Marie (1991), “Possible Worlds and Accessibility Relations: A Semantic Typology of Fiction”, *Poetics Today* 12(3), 553-576. [Includes a reflection on narratives that project a world with a ‘split ontology’, i.e. religious narratives].

C. Introductions to Narratology Aimed Specifically for the Study of Religion (and Related Fields)

- ** Jong, Irene J. F. (2014), *Narratology and Classics: A Practical Guide*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. [The book from which our short chapter by De Jong stems].
- ** Feldt, Laura (2013), “Myths and Narratology: Narrative Form, Meaning and Function in the Standard-Babylonian *Epic of Anzû*”, *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 42(4), 22-29 [I often use this text as core reading].
- * Fewell, Danna Nolan (ed.; 2016), *Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- * Finnern, Sönke (2013), “Kognitive Erzählforschung und religiöse Texte – narratologische Methoden im Überblick”, in Gabriela Brahier & Dirk Johannsen (eds.), *Konstruktionsgeschichten: Narrationsbezogene*

Ansätze in der Religionsforschung, Düsseldorf: Ergon Verlag, 19-35. [Finnern sketches an analytical model for the narratological study of religious texts].

- * Fokkelman, Jan P. 1995. *Vertelkunst in de bijbel: een handleiding bij literair lezen*. Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum. (Tweede editie 1997).
- * Fokkelman, Jan P. 2000. *Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide*, Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Publishing Company.
- * Fokkelman, Jan P. (2000b), *Dichtkunst in de Bijbel: Een handleiding bij literair lezen*, Zoetermeer: Meinema.
- * Fokkelman, Jan P. (2001), *Reading Biblical Poetry: An Introductory Guide*, Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox.

D. Application of Narratology to the Study of Religious Narratives: Focus on Structure/Story/Plot

- ** Culpepper, R. Alan (1984), *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Narrative Design*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- ** Rhoads, David, Joanne Dewey & Donald Michie (1999), *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, second edition, Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- ** Staat, Klazina (2023), "Emplotting total devotion: secrecy, fame, and imitation in late antique Lives of Christian ascetics", *Religion* 53(1), 135-160.
- * Conermann, Stephan & Jim Rheingans (eds.; 2014), *Narrative Pattern and Genre in Hagiographic Life Writing: Comparative Perspectives from Asia to Europe*, in the series *Narratio Aliena? Studien des Bonner Zentrums für Transkulturelle Narratologie* 7, Stephan Conermann, editor, Berlin: EB-Verlag. [Particularly interesting is the article by Jim Rheingans, "Narratology in Buddhist Studies: Dialogues about Meditation in a Tibetan Hagiography", 69-112.]
- * Davidsen, Markus Altena and Bas van Rijn (2020), "Studying Religions as Narrative Cultures: Angel Experience Narratives in the Netherlands and Some Ideas for a Narrative Research Program for the Study of Religion", in Dirk Johannsen, Anja Kirsch, and Jens Kreinath (eds.), *Narrative Cultures and the Aesthetics of Religion: Storytelling—Imagination—Efficacy*, in the series *Supplements to Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, Leiden: Brill, 91-122. [Other chapters in this book, especially Johannsen's, are good as well].
- ** Hogan, Patrick Colm (2009), *Understanding Nationalism: On Narrative, Cognitive Science, and Identity*, in the series *Theory and Interpretation of Narrative*, James Phelan & Peter J. Rabinowitz, series editors, Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press. [On how heroic and sacrificial narratives can bind together nations (and religious communities)].
- * Hogan, Patrick Colm (2016), "Jesus's Parables: Simulation, Stories, and Narrative Idiolect", *Narrative* 24(2), 113-133. [I have used this article in an earlier version of the course; Hogan here analyses how the plot structure of Jesus' parables function to hammer home the message].

E. Application of Narratology to the Study of Religious Narratives: Focus on Narration/Persuasion and the notion of Literary Affordances

- ** Davidsen, Markus Altena (2016; ed.), "Fiction and Religion", thematic issue of *Religion* 46(4). [Includes an introduction and five articles that all discuss the religious affordance of supernatural fiction and religious narratives. In 2018 the theme issue was published in book form as *Narrative and Belief: The Religious Affordance of Supernatural Fiction*. Esp. useful are (i) Davidsen, Markus Altena (2016), "The Religious Affordance of Fiction: A Semiotic Approach", *Religion* 46(4), 521-549 (which I often use as a core reading), (ii) Laura Feldt, "Contemporary Fantasy Fiction and Representations of Religion: Playing with Reality, Myth, and Magic in *His Dark Materials* and *Harry Potter*", *Religion* 46(4), 550-574, and (iii) Carole M. Cusack (2016), "Fiction into Religion: Imagination, Other Worlds, and Play in the Formation of Community", *Religion* 46(4), 575-590.]
- * Cave, Terence (2016), *Thinking with Literature: Towards a Cognitive Criticism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Esp. chapter 4 "Literary Affordances"].
- * Levine, Caroline (2015), *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network*, Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press. [On affordances of literary forms].

- ** Davidsen, Markus Altena (2023), “Religious Uses of Fantasy Fiction”, in Alison James, François Lavocat, and Akihiro Kubo (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Fiction and Belief*, London: Routledge.
- ** Kron, Colleen (2023), “How to Become Immortal and Ageless: Affording Belief in Epitaphs with Extraordinary Claims”, *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 24(1), 281-303. [Combines Davidsen and Johnston].
- * Johnston, Sarah Iles (2023), “The Religious Affordance of Supernatural Horror Fiction”, *Numen* 70, 113-137.
- ** Johnston, Sarah Iles (ed.; 2017), *Religion: Narrating Religion*, in the series *MacMillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks*, New York: Macmillan Reference USA. [The articles in this anthology are quite basic. You cannot do with them alone, but this is a good place to start, not the least Johnston’s own article “How Myths and Other Stories Help to Create and Sustain Beliefs”]
- * Johnston, Sarah Iles (2015), “Narrating Myths: Story and Belief in Ancient Greece”, *Arethusa* 48(2), 173-218.
- * Johnston, Sarah Iles (2018), *The Story of Myth*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- * Feldt, Laura (2011), “Religious Narrative and the Literary Fantastic: Ambiguity and Uncertainty in Ex. 1-18”, *Religion* 41(2), 251-283
- * Feldt, Laura (2012), *The Fantastic in Religious Narrative from Exodus to Elisha*, in the series *BibleWorld* 20, London: Equinox. [Based on Feldt’s PhD dissertation].
- * Jong, Irene J.F. de, René Nünlist, Angus Bowie (eds.; 2004), *Narrators, Narratees, and Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature*, in the series *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative* 1, Leiden: Brill.
- * Finnern, Sönke (2010), *Narratologie und biblische Exegese: Eine integrative Methode der Erzählanalyse und ihr Ertrag am Beispiel von Matthäus 28*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*, 2. Reihe 285, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- * Stern, David (1991), *Parables in Midrash: Narrative and Exegesis in Rabbinic Literature*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. [Especially the chapters on rhetoric and poetics provide analytical models that can be transferred to other cases].
- * Crossan, John Dominic (2012), *The Power of Parable: How Fiction by Jesus Became Fiction about Jesus*, New York: Harper One.
- * Hoffmann, Thomas (2007), *The Poetic Qur’ān: Studies in Qur’ānic Poeticity*, in the series *Diskurse der Arabistik*, Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag. [Based on PhD dissertation].

F. Other Studies off the Use of Religious Texts

- ** Malley, Brian E. (2004), *How the Bible Works: An Anthropological Study of Evangelical Biblicism*, in the *Cognitive Science of Religion Series*, Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- * Malley, Brian (2022), “Scripturalism: A Theory”, in Justin Barrett (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Cognitive Science of Religion*, New York: Oxford University Press, 167-190. [One year I used this chapter as a core reading].
- ** Ricoeur, Paul, “The “Sacred” Text and the Community”, in Wendi Doniger O’Flaherty (ed.), *The Critical Study of Sacred Texts*, Berkeley Religious Studies Series, 271-276 [6].
- * Davidsen, Markus Altena (2014), *The Spiritual Tolkien Milieu: A Study of Fiction-based Religion*, doctoral dissertation, Leiden University.
- * Cook, Michael (2014), *Ancient Religions, Modern Politics: The Islamic Case in Comparative Perspective*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. [Argues that the Quran affords a violent reading more easily than other sacred texts].
- * Cole, Juan (2018), *Muhammad – Prophet of Peace Amid the Clash of Empires*, New York: Nation Books. [Contra Cook, argues that the Quran was originally peaceful, and that the violent interpretation of the text came later].
- * Tumminia, Diana G. & R. George Kirkpatrick (2004), “The Mythic Dimensions of New Religious Movements: Function, Reality Construction, and Process”, in James R. Lewis (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of New Religious Movements*, New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 359-377.

G. Narrative Semiotics (the Greimasian tradition)

- * Greimas, Algirdas Julien (1987), "Elements of a Narrative Grammar", in *On Meaning: Selected Writings in Semiotic Theory*, transl. Paul J. Perron & Frank H. Collins, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 63-83. [In this condensed article, Greimas shows how his general narrative semiotics can be applied to the study of narratives.]
- * Bremond, Claude (1980), "The Logic of Narrative Possibilities", *New Literary History* 11(3), thematic issue 'On Narrative and Narratives: II', 387-411. [Besides Greimas, Bremond is the classic scholar of narrative 'surface grammar'. In this article, Bremond presents a way of analysing performance series or narrative programmes in narratives which is comparable to Greimas' canonical narrative schema].
- ** Greimas, Algirdas Julien & Joseph Courtés (1982), *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Translated from *Semiotique: Dictionnaire raisonné de la théorie du langage*, Paris, 1979. [On structural/narrative semiotics].
- ** Greimas, Algirdas Julien (1983), *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. Esp. Ch. 10 "Reflections on Actantial Models", 197-221.
- ** Martin, Bronwen & Felizitas Ringham (2006), *Key Terms in Semiotics*, London & New York: Continuum. [A very good handbook on semiotics in the Greimasian tradition; more accessible than Greimas & Courtés 1982].
- ** Hébert, Louis (2020), *An Introduction to Applied Semiotics: Tools for Text and Image Analysis*, London: Routledge. [Chapter 8 is on the "Canonical narrative schema". Chapter 18 summarises Genette's narratology].
- * Martin, Bronwen (1997), *Semiotics and Storytelling: An Introduction to Semiotic Analysis*, Dublin: Philomel Productions.

H. Narrative Semiotics Applied to Religious Narratives (the Greimasian tradition)

- ** Davidsen, Ole (1993), *The Narrative Jesus: A Semiotic Reading of Mark's Gospel*, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press. [Ch. 1 on "Narratology" summarises the Greimassian method which is introduced step-by-step in the above article, and includes a handy graphic overview of Davidsen's communication model. The book in general gives a full Greimassian analysis of Mark's gospel].
- ** Davidsen, Ole (1995), "Is There a Monkey in This Class", *Semeia: An Experimental Journal for Biblical Criticism* 71, 133-160. [Systematically presents the narratological aspect of Greimas' narrative semiotics (illustrated with a Danish children's song) and applies it to the ending of the Gospel of Mark. I have used this article in earlier versions of the course.].
- * Davidsen, Ole (2012), "Give and Take: Narrative Exchange in the New Testament", web publication. Available at <http://pure.au.dk/portal/en/teood@cas.au.dk>. English translation of "Geben und Nehmen: Narrativer Austausch im Neuen Testament", in *Geben und Nehmen, Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie* 27, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 121-150, published 2013.
- * Leone, Massimo (2004), *Religious Conversion and Identity: The Semiotic Analysis of Texts*, London: Routledge.
- * Leone, Massimo (2010), *Saints and Signs: A Semiotic Reading of Conversion in Early Modern Catholicism*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- * Leone, Massimo (2013), "Religious Conversion and Semiotic Analysis", in Lewis R. Rambo & Charles E. Farhadian (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion*, New York: Oxford University Press, 369-400.
- * Hobyane, Risimati Synod (2012), "A Greimassian Semiotic Analysis of Judith", PhD dissertation, North-West University (Potchefstroom), South Africa. Available at http://dspace.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/8197/Hobyane_RS.pdf?sequence=2.
- * Tolmie, Francois (2012), *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers. [150-page guide. Gives a sound introduction on how to apply narrative semiotics of the Greimassian sort to the study of religious text; is not a narratological study in itself].

I. The Historical-Critical Method

- * Collins, John J. 2016. "Historical-Critical Methods", in Stephen B. Chapman & Marvin A. Sweeney (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 129-146.
- * Barker, James W. (2016), "Historical-Critical Methods", in Patrick Gray (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the New Testament*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 348-368.

J. Other Structural or Critical Analyses of Religious Texts

- ** Lincoln, Bruce (1999), *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship*, Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press. [Ground-breaking study on the critical analysis of myth].
- ** Roubekas, Nickolas & Thomas Ryba (eds.; 2020), *Explanation, Interpretation, and Theorizing Religion and Myth: Contributions in Honor of Robert A. Segal*, Leiden & Boston, MA: Brill. [The sections on myth].
- ** Kunin, Seth D. (2004), *We Whink What We Eat: Neo-structuralist analysis of Israelite food rules and other cultural and textual practices*, London & New York: T&T Clark International.
- * Lincoln, Bruce (2006), "How to Read a Religious Text: Reflections on Some Passages of the Chândogya Upaniṣad", *History of Religions* 46(2), 127-139.
- * Chatterjea, Ipsita (2013), "Bruce Lincoln's "How to Read a Religious Text": An Experiment of Application", *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 42(2), 13-19 [7; UB].
- * Cole, Alan (2005), *Text as Father: Paternal Seductions in Early Mahāyāna Buddhist Literature*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- * McClintock, Sara L. (2011), "Compassionate Trickster: The Buddha as a Literary Character in the Narratives of Early Indian Buddhism", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 79(1), 90-112.
- * Patte, Daniel (1988), "Speech Act Theory and Biblical Exegesis", *Semeia* 41, 85-102.
- * Patte, Daniel (1998; ed.), *Thinking in Signs: Semiotics and Biblical Studies...Thirty Years After*, *Semeia* 81, Atlanta: SBL.

Session 4 | Intertextuality

A. Intertextuality/Transtextuality

- ** Genette, Gérard (1997), *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, translated from French by Channa Newman & Claude Doubinsky, Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press. First published in French by Éditions du Seuil 1982. [Classic work on various forms of transtextuality (= Genette's umbrella term for forms of intertextuality). Very useful is the introduction, in which Genette develops a typology of various forms of transtextuality].
- ** Allen, Graham (2011), *Intertextuality*, in the series *The New Critical Idiom*, second edition, London: Routledge. First edition 2000. [Strong overview of contemporary position in the field of intertextuality. I have earlier used the paragraph on Genette from this book to introduce the topic of intertextuality].
- * Kristeva, Julia (1980), *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, New York: Columbia University Press. [The study in which the very term 'intertextuality' was introduced].
- * Kristeva, Julia (1984), *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Trans. Margaret Waller, New York: Columbia University Press. [The core text on Kristeva's position].
- * Hebel, Udo J. (1989), *Intertextuality, Allusion, and Quotation: An International Bibliography of Critical Studies*, in the series *Bibliographies and Indexes in World Literature* 18, New York: Greenwood Press. [Classic overview of scholarship on intertextuality before 1990].

B. Paratextuality

- * Genette, Gérard (1997), *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, translated from the French by Jane E. Lewin, foreword by Richard Macksey, in the series *Literature, Culture, Theory* 20, Richard Macksey and Michael Sprinker, general editors, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. First published in French by Éditions du Seuil 1987.

- * Sedlmeier, Florian (2018), "The Paratext and Literary Narration: Authorship, Institutions, Historiographies", *Narrative* 26(1), 63-80.

C. Case Studies of Intertextuality and the Study of Religion

- ** Mattison, Kevin (2022), "Hypertextuality Theory and Interpretation in and of the Pentateuch", *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 135(1), 2-15.
- ** Luz, Ulrich (2004), "Intertexts in the Gospel of Matthew", *Harvard Theological Review* 97, 119-137 [I often use this article as a core text].
- ** Lanzillotta, Lautaro Roig (2021), "Ancient Religious Texts and Intertextuality: Plato's and Plutarch's Myth of the Afterlife", in Peter Berger, Marjo Buitelaar & Kim Knibbe (eds.), *Religion as Relation: Studying Religion in Context*, Sheffield: Equinox, 134-149. [Case study of hypertextuality].
- * Sinai, Nicolai (2017), Ch. 6 "Intertextuality", in *The Qur'an: A Historical-Critical Introduction*, in *The New Edinburgh Islamic Surveys* series, Carole Hillenbrand, series editor, 138-157. [Interesting material, but no use of analytical vocabulary].
- * Bruin, Tom de (2024), *Fan Fiction and Early Christian Writings: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Canon*, in the series *Scriptural Traces: Critical Perspectives on the Reception and Influence of the Bible*, London: T&T Clark.
- * Draisma, Sipke (ed.; 1989), *Intertextuality in Biblical Writings: Essays in Honour of Bas van Iersel*, Kampen: J.H. Kok.
- * Barnard, Marcel & Gerda van der Haar (red.; 2009), *De Bijbel cultureel: De Bijbel in de kunsten van de twintigste eeuw*, Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Meinema / Kapellen: Uitgeverij Pelckmans. [Traces the use of Biblical motifs in music, theater and film. Can be used to identify cases material for a proper intertextual analysis].
- * Reinbold, Wolfgang (2022), *Koran und Bibel: Ein synoptisches Textbuch für die Praxis*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. [Not a study of intertextuality, but a great tool to find links between Koran and Bible that can be studied from an intertextual approach].
- * Heil, Uta (ed.; 2023), "Intertextuality as a Phenomenon in the History of Religion and Culture", thematic issue of *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum / Journal of Ancient Christianity* 27(1).
- * Corley, Jeremy & Goeffrey David Miller (eds.; 2019): *Intertextual Explorations in Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature*, in the series *Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature* 31, Berlin: De Gruyter.
- * Swindell, Anthony (2023), *Going to Extremes in Biblical Rewritings: Radical Literary Retellings of Biblical Tropes*, in the series *Studies of the Bible and Its Reception* 22, Berlin: De Gruyter.
- * Austermühl, Frank (2014), *The Great American Scaffold: Intertextuality and Identity in American Presidential Discourse*, in the series *Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture* 53, Amsterdam: John Benjamins. [Ch. 5: "In the words of" – Sacred texts, *lieux de mémoire*, and presidential allusions"]
- * Tichaenzana Manyawu, Andrew (2016), "Intertextuality as Textual Practice in Zimbabwean Religious Discourses: A Textual Analysis of the Founding Text of the African Apostolic Church", *South African Journal of African Languages*, 36(1), 33-41.
- * Schleicher, Marianne (2007), *Intertextuality in the Tales of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav: A Close Reading of Sippurey Ma'asiyot*, in the *Numen Book Series* 116, Leiden: Brill.
- * Uhlenbuch, Frauke & Sonja Ammann (eds.), Theme issue on "Fan Fiction and Ancient Scribal Cultures", *Transformative Works and Cultures* 31. <https://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/issue/view/58> [Uses Larsen's framework. Esp. article by Rosland.]
- * Ziolkowski, Eric (ed.; 2017), *The Bible in Folklore Worldwide: A Handbook of Biblical Reception in Jewish, European Christian, and Islamic Folklores*, Berlin: De Gruyter.
- * Ziolkowski, Eric (ed.; 2023), *The Bible in Folklore Worldwide: A Handbook of Biblical Reception in Folklores of Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas*, Berlin: De Gruyter.
- * Ziolkowski, Eric (2019), *Religion and Literature: History and Method*, in the series *Brill Research Perspectives*, Leiden: Brill.

- * Carr, David McLain (2020), *The Formation of Genesis 1-11: Biblical and Other Precursors*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- * Petersen, Anders Klostergaard (2012), "The Riverrun of Rewriting Scripture: From Textual Cannibalism to Scriptural Completion", *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 43, 475-496.

Session 4* | Discourse Analysis

Earlier, when the main focus of this course was to operationalise theories as analytical instruments, the course often included half a session on (critical) discourse analysis. This session never worked well, however, because there is a large discrepancy between how scholars describe the method and how they use it in practice. Furthermore, as the focus of the course is now more on theorising whereas discourse analysis is a method, discourse analysis is no longer included. I offer you the literature here.

A. Core readings

- * Hjelm, Titus (2014a), "Religion, Discourse and Power: A Contribution towards a Critical Sociology of Religion", *Critical Sociology* 40(6), 855-872 [18].
- * Hjelm, Titus (2014b), "National Piety: Religious Equality, Freedom of Religion and National Identity in Finnish Political Discourse", *Religion* 44(1), 28-45 [18].

B. Critical Discourse Analysis

- * Dijk, Teun A. van (1993), "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis", *Discourse and Society* 4(2), 249-283.
- * Dijk, Teun A. van (2014), *Discourse and Knowledge: A Sociocognitive Approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Van Dijk is the Dutch champion of critical discourse analysis. His works are not so easy to use as a method as are Fairclough's].
- * Fairclough, Norman (1992), *Discourse and Social Change*: Cambridge: Polity Press. [The Fairclough classic. Most references to Fairclough in Hjelm's articles are to this book].
- * Fairclough, Norman (2003), *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*, London & New York: Routledge. [Written as a handbook in CDA].
- ** Jørgensen, Marianne & Louise Phillips (2002), *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, London: SAGE. [Esp. Ch. 3 on "Critical discourse analysis" which gives a good introduction to Fairclough's method. The other chapters cover related methods].
- * Locke, Terry (2004), *Critical Discourse Analysis*, in the series *Continuum Research Methods*, London: Continuum. [A 100-page guide to CDA].
- * Richardson, John E. (2007), *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*, Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. [Applies Fairclough's CDA to newspapers. Richardson is editor of the journal *Critical Discourse Studies*].
- * Reisigl, Martin & Ruth Wodak (2010), "The Discourse-Historical Approach," in Ruth Wodak & Michael Meyer (eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, 2nd ed, London: SAGE, 87-121.

C. Theoretical Reflections on Critical Discourse Analysis and Religion

- * Hjelm, Titus (2020), "Mapping the Discursive Study of Religion", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 88(4), 1002-1025.
- * Hjelm, Titus (2011), "Discourse Analysis", in Steven Engler and Michael Stausberg (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, London: Routledge, 134-150.
- * Kippenberg, Hans G. (1983), „Diskursive Religionswissenschaft: Gedanken zu einer Religionswissenschaft, die weder auf einer allgemeinen gültigen Definition von Religion noch auf einer Überlegenheit von Wissenschaft basiert“, in Burkhard Gladigow & Hans G. Kippenberg (eds.), *Neue Ansätze in der Religionswissenschaft*, München: Kösel-Verlag, 9-28
- * Moberg, Marcus (2013), "First-, second-, and third-level discourse analytic approaches in the study of religion: moving from meta-theoretical reflection to implementation in practice", *Religion* 43(1), 4-25.

- * Stuckrad, Kocku von (2013), “Discursive Study of Religion: Approaches, Definitions, Implications”, *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 25(1), 5-25. [Outlines how historical-critical discourse analysis à la Reisigl & Wodak can be applied to the study of religion. Von Stuckrad has written more articles about discourse analysis in the study of religion, but this is by far the best].
- * Wijsen, Frans (2013), “‘There are Radical Muslims and Normal Muslims’: An Analysis of the Discourse on Islamic Extremism”, *Religion* 43(1), 70-88. [Like Hjelm 2014a, this article aims to introduce a Fairclough-type DA to the study of religion. In my opinion, Wijsen does not succeed. His outline of the DA method is thinner, and contrary to Hjelm, Wijsen argues that DA should *not* be critical, nor be interested in social structures outside the discourse].

D. Content Analysis

- * Krippendorff, Klaus (2004), *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*, 2. ed., Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: SAGE Publications.
- * Hijmans, Ellen (1996), “Review Essay: The Logic of Qualitative Media Content Analysis”, *Communications* 21(1), 93-108.
- * Karsdorp, Folger, Mike Kestemont & Allen Riddell (2021), *Humanities Data Analysis: Case Studies with Python*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

E. Actual Analyses of Religious Discourses using CA, CDA, and Related Methods

- * Diez-Bosch, Miriam & Pere Franch (2017), “In God We Trust, with God We Fight: Religion in U.S. Presidential War Rhetoric: From Johnson to Obama”, *Journal of Media and Religion* 16(1), 1-14. [I used this article as a second example on how to use content analysis on discourse on religion in an earlier version of the course, but I found this article less strong than the one I retained].
- * Bellah, Robert N. (1967), “Civil Religion in America”, *Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 96(1), 1-21. [In this classic article Bellah does not use CDA per se, as it hadn’t been developed yet, but his analysis of discourse on American civil religion (speeches, hymns, etc.), can be taken as a model for our own analyses even so].
- * Heather, Noel (2000), *Religious Language and Critical Discourse Analysis: Ideology and Identity in Christian Discourse Today*, in the series *Religions and Discourse* 5, James M.M. Francis, general editor, Oxford: Peter Lang.
- * Hjelm, Titus (ed.; 2011), *Religion and Social Problems*, New York & London: Routledge. [Studies how social problems are discursively constructed as such].
- * Kurth, Laura & Pieter Glasbergen (2017), “The Influence of Populism on Tolerance: A Thematic Content Analysis of the Dutch Islam Debate”, *Culture and Religion: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 18(3), 212-231. [I have used this article in an earlier version of the course].
- * Richardson, John E. (2004), *(Mis)Representing Islam: The Racism and Rhetoric of British Broadsheet Newspapers*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- * Johnston, Jay & Kocku von Stuckrad (eds.; 2021), *Discourse Research and Religion: Disciplinary Use and Interdisciplinary Dialogues*, Berlin: De Gruyter.
- * Taira, Teemu (2010), “Religion as a Discursive Technique: The Politics of Classifying Wicca”, *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 25(3), 379-394. [Analyses why Wicca was unsuccessful in obtaining recognition as a religion in Finland. Not a CDA analysis per se, but a social constructionist analysis of the power relations concerning the legal category ‘religion’].
- * Vellenga, Sipco (2015), “Ritual Slaughter, Animal Welfare and the Freedom of Religion: A Critical Discourse Analysis of a Fierce Debate in the Dutch Lower House”, *Journal of Religion in Europe* 8(2), 210-234. [I have used this article for an earlier version of this course].
- * Wijsen, Frans (2013), *Religious Discourse, Social Cohesion and Conflict: Studying Muslim-Christian Relations*, in the series *Religions and Discourse* 55, James M.M. Francis, series editor, Oxford: Peter Lang.
- * Wijsen, Frans & Kocku von Stuckrad (eds.; 2016), *Making Religion: Theory and Practice in the Discursive Study of Religion*, in the series *Supplements to Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 4, Aaron W. Hughes, Russell McCutcheon, and Kocku von Stuckrad, series editors, Leiden: Brill.

- ** Wooffitt, Robin (2006), *The Language of Mediums and Psychics: The Social Organization of Everyday Miracles*, Aldershot, UK: Ashgate. [Conversation analysis of how mediums and psychics co-construct meaning with their clients].
- * Wooffitt, Robin and Allistone, Simon (2005), "Towards a Discursive Parapsychology: Language and the Laboratory Study of Anomalous Communication", *Theory and Psychology* 15(3), 325-355.
- * Andreassen, Bengt-Ove & James R. Lewis (eds.; 2014), *Textbook Gods: Genre, Text and Teaching Religious Studies*, London: Equinox.
- * Moberg, Marcus (2020), "Studying Change in Religious Organizations: A Discourse-Centered Framework", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 32, 89-114.

F. Rhetorics and Argumentation Analysis

- * Black, Edwin (1970), "The Second Persona", *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56(2), 109-119.
- * Burke, Kenneth (1992), *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. First published in 1961 by Beacon Press, Boston. [Burke is one of the main figures in modern rhetoric, together with Toulmin and Perelman. In this book he applies his own method to the study of religion].
- * Lunsford, Andrea A., Kirt H. Wilson & Rosa A. Eberly (eds.; 2009), *The SAGE Handbook of Rhetorical Studies*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. [Esp. the following three chapters: 6. Frans H. van Eemeren: "The Study of Argumentation"; 7. Margaret D. Zulick: "Rhetoric of Religion: A Map of the Territory"; and 30. James Darsey & Joshua R. Ritter: "Religious Voices in American Public Discourse"].
- * Perelman, Chaïm & Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969), *The New Rhetoric: Treatise on Argumentation*, translated from French *La nouvelle rhétorique: traité de l'argumentation*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- * Toulmin, Stephen E. (2003), *The Uses of Argument*, updated edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. First edition 1958.

G. Speech Act Theory

- * Austin, John Langshaw (1975), *How To Do Things With Words*, second edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press. First edition 1962.
- * Searle, John Rogers (1969), *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

H. Analyses of Religious Discourse using Speech Act Theory

- * Heeren, John W. & Marylee Mason (1984), "Seeing and Believing: A Study of Contemporary Spiritual Readers", *Semiotica* 50(3-4), 191-212. [A study of how psychic mediums construct meaning and authority].
- * Woltersdorff, Nicholas (1995), *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim that God Speaks*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sessions 6-7 | Religious Belief: CSR Approaches

In this section I only list CSR-theories focused on belief in supernatural agents. The various theories shed light on different aspects of belief but overlap. The main strands are (a) theories on the cognitive foundations of belief or the 'naturalness' of religious thinking (intuitive ontology; minimally counter-intuitive representations; promiscuous teleology); (b) theories about dynamics of religious thinking (theological correctness; dual-process cognition); (c) theories about the patterned spread of religious and cultural ideas (relevance theory; epidemiology of representations); and (d) theories about transmission of religious ideas through particular ritual systems tailored to certain memory systems (ritual form theory; modes theory). There are also other strands within CSR that look at the evolutionary roots of religion and cognitive/emotional processes during rituals that are not tied to the transmission of ideas. The overview here includes no

references to these strands of theory, but you can find references in the CSR-overview books/articles listed below.

A. Overview monographs/articles/anthologies on the Cognitive Science of Religion (CSR)

- ** White, Claire (2021), *An Introduction to the Cognitive Science of Religion: Connecting Evolution, Brain, Cognition, and Culture*, London & New York: Routledge.
- ** Barrett, Justin (ed.; 2022), *The Oxford Handbook of the Cognitive Science of Religion*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- ** Martin, Luther H. & Donald Wiebe (2017; eds.), *Religion Explained? The Cognitive Science of Religion after Twenty-five Years*, in the series *Scientific Studies of Religion: Inquiry and Explanation*, Donald Wiebe, Luther H. Martin & William W. McCorkle, series editors, London: Bloomsbury.
- ** Pyysiäinen, Ilkka (2013), "Cognitive Science of Religion: State-of-the-Art", *Journal for the Cognitive Science of Religion* 1(1), 5-28. [Good place to start].
- ** Geertz, Armin W. (2016), "Cognitive Science", in Michael Stausberg & Steven Engler (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Study of Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 97-111. [Focuses on new directions and applications after Boyer and Whitehouse].
- ** Geertz, Armin W. (ed.; 2022), *Studying the Religious Mind: Methodology in the Cognitive Science of Religion*, in the series *Advances in the Cognitive Science of Religion*, Sheffield: Equinox. [Reprints of articles on CSR that exemplify different methodological approaches].
- ** Barrett, Justin L. (2013), "Exploring Religion's Basement: The Cognitive Science of Religion", in Raymond F. Paloutzian & Crystal L. Park (eds.), *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, second edition, New York & London: The Guilford Press, 234-255.
- ** Barrett, Justin L. (2007), "Cognitive Science of Religion: What Is It and Why Is It?" *Religion Compass* 1(6), 768-786.
- * Barrett, Justin L. (2004), "The Naturalness of Religious Concepts", in Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz & Randi R. Warne (eds.), *New Approaches to the Study of Religion. Volume 2: Textual, Comparative, Sociological, and Cognitive Approaches*, Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 401-418.
- ** Henrich, Joseph, Steven J. Heine & Ara Norenzayan (2010), "The Weirdest People in the World?" *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 33, 61-135. [Challenges cognitive science (and by implication CSR) for claiming to have found 'universal' cognitive dispositions, when in fact they have only studied the cognitive behaviour of WEIRD people – Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, Democratic people].
- * Cohen, Emma, Jonathan A. Lanman, Harvey Whitehouse & Robert N. McCauley (2008), "Common Criticisms of the Cognitive Science of Religion – Answered", *CSSR Bulletin* 37(4), 112-115

B. Theories about the Naturalness of Religious Belief

- ** Boyer, Pascal (2001), *Religion Explained: The Human Instincts that Fashion Gods, Spirits and Ancestors*, London: Heinemann. [On minimally counterintuitive representations as the basis for religion. In earlier versions of the course, I used a longer portion of the book].
- ** Purzycki, Benjamin Grant & Aiyana K. Willard (2016), "MCI Theory: A Critical Discussion", *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 6(3), 207-248.
- * Jensen, Jeppe Sinding & John Teehan (2025), "Religion as the unintended product of brain functions in the 'standard cognitive science of religion model': On Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained* (2001) and *The Fracture of an Illusion* (2010)", in Michael Stausberg (ed.), *21st Century Theories of Religion*, London: Routledge, 66-86.
- * Dubuissou, Daniel (2020), "A Critical Examination of Pascal Boyer's *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought*", in *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 32(3), 267-275. [As the title says, a critical reading of the above].
- * Barrett, Justin L. (2004), *Why Would Anyone Believe in God?*, in the *Cognitive Science of Religion Series*, Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- * Barrett, Justin (2008), "Coding and Quantifying Counterintuitiveness in Religious Concepts", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 20(4), 308-338. [On how to operationalise Boyer's ideas of minimally counterintuitiveness for empirical research].

- * Bering, Jesse M. (2006), "The Folk Psychology of Souls", *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 29(5), 453-462.
- ** Pyysiäinen, Ilkka (2009), *Supernatural Agents: Why We Believe in Souls, Gods, and Buddhas*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- * Tremlin, Todd (2006), *Minds and Gods: The Cognitive Foundations of Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ** Bering, Jesse (2011), *The Belief Instinct: The Psychology of Souls, Destiny, and the Meaning of Life*, W. W. Norton and Company.

C. Theories on Modes of Religious Thinking: Fast/Slow or Theologically Incorrect/Correct

- ** Barrett, Justin L. (1999), "Theological Correctness: Cognitive Constraint and the Study of Religion", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 11, 325-339.
- * Baumard, Nicolas & Pascal Boyer (2013), "Religious Beliefs as Reflective Elaborations on Intuitions: A Modified Dual-process Model", *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 22(4), 295-300.
- * Oviedo, Lluís (2015), "Religious Cognition as a Dual-Process: Developing the Model", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 27(1), 31-58.
- ** Kahneman, Daniel (2012), *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, London: Penguin. [Best general introduction to dual-processing or two-systems thinking].

D. Cognitive Theories of the Transmission of Religious Beliefs

- * Sperber, Dan (1996), *Explaining Culture: A Naturalistic Approach*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- * Boyer, Pascal (2005), "A Reductionistic Model of Distinct Modes of Religious Transmission", in Harvey Whitehouse & Robert N. McCauley (eds.), *Mind and Religion: Psychological and Cognitive Foundations of Religiosity*, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 3-29.
- * McCauley, Robert N. & E. Thomas Lawson (2002), *Bringing Ritual to Mind: Psychological Foundations of Cultural Forms*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ** Whitehouse, Harvey (2004), *Modes of Religiosity: A Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission*, in the *Cognitive Science of Religion Series*, Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- * Whitehouse, Harvey (2002), "Modes of Religiosity: Towards a Cognitive Explanation of the Sociopolitical Dynamics of Religion", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 14, 293-315. [Article-length version of 2004-book].
- * Whitehouse, Harvey & Luther H. Martin (eds.; 2004), *Theorizing Religions Past: Anthropology, History, and Cognition*, *Cognitive Science of Religion Series*, Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- * Whitehouse, Harvey & Robert McCauley (eds.; 2005), *Mind and Religion: Psychological and Cognitive Foundations of Religion*, in the *Cognitive Science of Religion Series*, Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- * Whitehouse, Harvey & James Laidlaw (eds.; 2004), *Ritual and Memory. Toward a Comparative Anthropology of Religion*, in the *Cognitive Science of Religion Series*, Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- * Biró, Tamas & István Czachesz (eds.; 2011), *Changing Minds: Religion and Cognition Through the Ages*, in the series *Groningen Studies in Cultural Change* 42, Leuven: Peeters.
- * Sjöblom, Tom (2005), "Storytelling: Narratives of the Mind and Modes of Religiosity", *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historique* 31(2), 235-254. [Connects Whitehouse's theory of religious transmission to Fauconnier & Turner's theory on conceptual blending and narrative thinking. Sjöblom suggests the existence of a third 'mode': the narrative mode].

E. Applications of CSR to the History (or Anthropology) of Religion

- * Davidsen, Markus Altena & Egil Asprem (eds.; 2017), "Cognitive Science of Religion and Western Esotericism", theme issue of *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism* 17(1).
- * Nakissa, Aria (2020), "The Cognitive Science of Religion and Islamic Theology: An Analysis Based on the Works of al-Ghazālī", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 88(4), 1087-1120.
- * Czachesz, István (2017), *Cognitive Science and the New Testament: A New Approach to Early Christian Research*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- * Czachesz, István (2011), "Explaining Magic: Earliest Christianity as a Test Case", in Jesper Sørensen & Luther Martin (eds.), *Past Minds: Studies in Cognitive Historiography*, London: Equinox, 141-165.

- * Czachesz, István (2008), "The Promise of the Cognitive Science of Religion for Biblical Studies", *CSSR Bulletin* 37(4), 102-105. [I have used this article in an earlier version of the course]. https://www.academia.edu/4040829/The_Promise_of_the_Cognitive_Science_of_Religion_for_Biblical_Studies.
- ** Czachesz, István (2007), "Early Christian Views on Jesus' Resurrection: Towards a Cognitive Psychological Interpretation", *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 51, 47-59. [I often use this article as an instructive case study of application of Boyer-type CSR to historical material].
- * Uro, Risto (2017), "Cognitive Science in the Study of Early Christianity: Why It Is Helpful – and How?", *New Testament Studies* 63, 516-533.
- * Nikolsky, Ronit, István Czachesz, Frederick S. Tappenden, Tamás Biró (eds.; 2019), *Language, Cognition, and Biblical Exegesis: Interpreting Minds*, in the series *Scientific Studies of Religion: Inquiry and Explanation*, London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- * Cohen, Emma (2007), *The Mind Possessed: The Cognition of Spirit Possession in an Afro-Brazilian Religious Tradition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- * Sørensen, Jesper & Luther Martin (eds.; 2011), *Past Minds: Studies in Cognitive Historiography*, London: Equinox, in the series *Narrative, Cognition and Culture*. [Esp. the concluding article "Past Minds: Present Historiography and Cognitive Science" by Sørensen].
- * Beck, Roger (2006), *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire: Mysteries of the Unconquered Sun*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- * Martin, Luther H. (2014), *The Mind of Mithraists: Historical and Cognitive Studies in the Roman Cult of Mithras*, in the series *Scientific Studies of Religion: Inquiry and Explanation*, London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- * Panagiotidou, Olympia & Roger Beck (2019), *The Roman Mithras Cult: A Cognitive Approach*, in the series *Scientific Studies of Religion: Inquiry and Explanation*, London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- * Larson, Jennifer (2016), *Understanding Greek Religion: A Cognitive Approach*, London: Routledge 2016.
- * Baumard, Nicolas & Pascal Boyer (2013b), "Explaining Moral Religions", *Trends in Cognitive Science* 17(6), 272-280.
- ** Johannsen, Dirk (2011), "No Time to Philosophize? Norwegian Oral Tradition and the Cognitive Economics of Belief", in Jesper Sørensen & Luther Martin (eds.), *Past Minds: Studies in Cognitive Historiography*, London: Equinox, 77-87. [Johannsen draws on Boyer and cognitive narratology to analyse how Norwegian folktales work. I have used this article in an earlier version of the course].

F. Other Resources on Cognitive Historiography

- * *Journal of Cognitive Historiography*.
- * Martin, Luther H. (2013), "The Ecology of Threat Detection and Precautionary Response from the Perspectives of Evolutionary Psychology, Cognitive Science and Historiography: The Case of the Roman Cults of Mithras", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 25(4-5), 431-450.

G. Personal (and Developmental) Psychology and Religious Beliefs

- * Aarnio, Kia & Marjaana Lindeman (2007), "Religious People and Paranormal Believers: Alike or Different", *Journal of Individual Differences* 28(1), 1-9.
- * Lindeman, Marjaana & Kia Aarnio (2007), "Superstitious, Magical, and Paranormal Beliefs: An Integrative Model", *Journal of Research in Personality* 41(4), 731-744.
- * Farias, Miguel (2014), "Inside the Spiritual Mind: Cognitive Implications of Spiritual *versus* Religious Engagement", in Elisabeth Hense, Frans Jespers, and Peter Nissen (eds.), *Present-Day Spiritualities: Contrasts and Overlaps*, Leiden & Boston: Brill, 181-196.
- ** Farias, Miguel and Pehr Granqvist (2007), "The Psychology of the New Age", in Daren Kemp and James R. Lewis (eds.), *Handbook of New Age*, Leiden & Boston: Brill, 123-150.
- * Duriez, Bart, Jessie Dezutter, Bart Neyrinck & Dirk Hutsebaut (2007), "An introduction to the Post-Critical Belief Scale: Internal structure and external relationships", *Psyke & Logos* 28, 767-793.
- * Willard, Aiyana K. & Ara Norenzayan (2013), "Cognitive Biases Explain Religious Belief, Paranormal Belief, and Belief in Life's Purpose", *Cognition* 129(2), 379-391.

H. On Magic, Ritual, and Religious Thinking

- * Nemeroff, Carol & Paul Rozin (2000), "The Makings of the Magical Mind: The Nature and Function of Sympathetic Magical Thinking", in Karl S. Rosengren, Carl N. Johnson & Paul L. Harris (eds.), *Imagining the Impossible: Magical, Scientific, and Religious Thinking in Children*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-34.
- * Rozin, Paul & Carol Nemeroff (2002), "Sympathetic Magical Thinking: The Contagion and Similarity 'Heuristics'", in Thomas Gilovich, Dale Griffin & Daniel Kahneman (eds.), *Heuristics and Biases: The Psychology of Intuitive Judgment*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 201-216.

I. On the Very Categories 'Belief' and 'Religious Belief'

- ** Blum, Jason (2018), "Belief: Problems and Pseudo-Problems", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 86(3), 642-664. [Against scholars who have criticized the notion of 'belief' to be so tainted by Christocentric prejudices that it has become entirely unsuitable as an analytical category, Blum argues that 'religious belief' can be freed from the problematic biases and can and should continue to be used as a core concept in the study of religion. Implicitly, Blum defends a conceptualisation of religion that takes its point of departure in religious belief: It is the presence of religious beliefs (in the sense of assumptions about supernatural powers) that mark the border between religion and non-religion. I agree].
- ** Clack, Brian (2016), "Belief(s)", in Robert A. Segal & Kocku von Stuckrad (eds.), *Vocabulary for the Study of Religion*, Leiden: Brill. Online.
- * Campbell, Colin (1996), "Half-Belief and the Paradox of Ritual Instrumental Activism: A Theory of Modern Superstition", *British Journal of Sociology* 47(1), 151-166.

J. Cognition a Foundation for Culture and Society

- ** Boyer, Pascal (2018), *Minds Make Societies: How Cognition Explains the World Humans Create*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Session 7 | Dynamics of Religious Beliefs

A. Theories on the Consolidation of Assumptions ('Belief') into Conscious Commitments ('Faith')

- ** Luhrmann, Tanya M. (2020), *How God Becomes Real: Kindling the Presence of Invisible Others*, Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press. [In an earlier version of this course, I used an article by Luhrmann: Luhrmann, Tanya M. (2018), "The Faith Frame: Or, Belief is Easy, Faith is Hard", *Contemporary Pragmatism* 15, 302-318. This article was developed in the first chapter of *How God Becomes Real*].
- * Sørensen, Jesper (2004), "Religion, Evolution, and an Immunology of Cultural Systems", *Evolution and Cognition* 10, 61-73.
- * Gervais, Will M., Aiyana K. Willard, Ara Norenzayan and Joseph Henrich (2011), "The Cultural Transmission of Faith: Why innate intuitions are necessary, but insufficient, to explain religious belief", *Religion* 41(3), 389-410
- * Sørensen, Jesper (2023), *Why Cultures Persist: Toward a Cultural Immunology*, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.
- * Hermann, Adrian (2023), "Bad and Good Beliefs? On the Role of Conviction in Religion", in Anke Finger & Manuela Wagner (eds.), *Bias, Belief, and Conviction in an Age of Fake News*, the *Routledge Research in Cultural and Media Studies*, Oxon: Routledge, 99-116. [I have used this chapter as a core reading in an earlier version of this course].

B. Theories on the Nature of Religious Belief (as Opposed to Other Forms of Belief)

- * Ingrid Malm Lindberg (2021), "The multifaceted role of imagination in science and religion. A critical examination of its epistemic, creative and meaning-making functions", PhD dissertation, Uppsala, in

the series *Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis / Uppsala Studies in Philosophy of Religion* 7.
<https://philpapers.org/archive/LINTMR-6.pdf>

- * Veyne, Paul (1983), *Did the Greeks Believe in their Myths? An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination*, Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, translated from French by Paula Wissing. Originally published as *Les Grecs ont-ils cru à leurs mythes?*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1983.
- * Gellner, Ernest (1974), *The Legitimation of Belief*, London: Cambridge University Press.
- ** Luhrmann, Tanya M. (1989), *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- ** Davidsen, Markus Altena (2013), "Fiction-based Religion: Conceptualising a New Category against History-based Religion and Fandom", *Culture and Religion: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 14(4), 378-395.
- * Versnel, Henk (1990), *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion* 1, *Ter Unus: Isis, Dionysos, Hermes: Three Studies in Henotheism*, in the series *Studies in Greek and Roman Religion* 6(II), Henk S. Versnel, series editor Brill: Leiden.

C. Theories on the Interaction of Different Forms of Beliefs within a Religious Tradition

(See also the typology of forms of justifications in Luhrmann's *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft*).

- ** Davidsen, Markus Altena (2014), Ch. 5 "Dynamics of belief in religious traditions", in *The Spiritual Tolkien Milieu: A Study of Fiction-based Religion*, doct. diss., Leiden University, 120-146.
- ** Rijn, Bas van & Sarah van Rijn (2024), "Understanding Reality Shifting as a New Online-based Spiritual Practice", *Correspondences* 12(2), 205-253. [Applies and further develops my model on belief dynamics in a thorough case study of reality shifting].
- * Davidsen, Markus Altena (2015), "In de Ban van Tolkien: Geloof en Geloven in Tolkien-spiritualiteit", *Religie & Samenleving* 10(3), 213-234. [Builds on the chapter from my dissertation above].
- ** Lewis, James R. (2003), *Legitimizing New Religions*, New Brunswick, New Jersey & London: Rutgers University Press. [The different legitimisation strategies discussed are equally relevant for 'old religions'.].

D. Weber-inspired Work on Change ("Rationalisation") in Religious Traditions

- * Campbell, Colin (2007), *The Easternization of the West: A Thematic Account of Cultural Change in the Modern Era*, Boulder & London: Paradigm Publishers.
- * Campbell, Colin (2010), "The Easternisation of the West: Or, How the West was Lost", *Asian Journal of Social Science* 38, 738-757.
- * Goldstein, Warren S. (2009), "Patterns of Secularization and Religious Rationalization in Emile Durkheim and Max Weber", *Implicit Religion* 12(2), 135-163.

Session 7* | Cognitive Semiotic Approaches to Religious Texts and Thinking

*Earlier years I have included half-sessions on two cognitive semiotic approaches to (religious) thinking: conceptual metaphor theory (George Lakoff & Mark Johnson) and conceptual blending theory (Gilles Fauconnier & Mark Turner). Both approaches have been employed with considerable results to the study of religious texts and thinking and are well worth pursuing. However, I have found that a single session on these technical approaches cannot give students a sufficient knowledge base for them to go on to use these approaches successfully in their own thesis projects. If you're bold enough to try anyways, check out the **-marked entries first.*

A. Semiotics: General (especially the tradition from C.S. Peirce)

- ** Chandler, Daniel (2007), *Semiotics: The Basics*, second edition, London: Routledge. [Very good general introduction to semiotics, with good examples. You can also use the first edition from 2002 which is the only one in the library. I used parts of chapter 4 "Challenging the literal" on metaphors and metonymies in an earlier version of this course].

- ** Hogan, Patrick Colm (ed.; 2011), *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Language Sciences*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- * Burks, Arthur W. (1949), "Icon, Index, and Symbol", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 9(4), 673-689. [On C.S. Peirce's semiotics].
- * Johansen, Jørgen Dines & Svend Erik Larsen (2002), *Signs in Use: An Introduction to Semiotics*, London & New York: Routledge. [Good general introduction to semiotics, but perhaps less accessible than Chandler].

B. Cognitive Semiotics/Semantics (general)

- ** Lakoff, George & Srinivas Narayanan (2025), *The Neural Mind: How Brains Think*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- ** Evans, Vyvyan & Melanie Green (2006), *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. [General, very good introduction to cognitive linguistics. For us, part II on cognitive semantics is interesting, esp. chapters 9 on metaphor and metonymy, 11 on meaning construction and mental spaces, and 12 on conceptual blending].
- * Kövecses, Zoltán (2010), *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Very good general introduction to cognitive linguistics/semiotics, covering metaphors, metonymies, and conceptual integration].
- ** Lakoff, George & Mark Johnson (1980), *Metaphors We Live By*, Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press. [On cognitive metaphor theory].
- * Lakoff, George (1993), "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor", in Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought*, 2nd ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 202-251. [Article-length recapitulation of the argument in Lakoff & Johnson 1980].
- * Turner, Mark (1996), *The Literary Mind: The Origins of Thought and Language*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ** Fauconnier, Gilles & Mark Turner (2002), *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*, New York: Basic Books. [On conceptual blending theory. F&T's analysis of Death: The Grim Reaper – which we discussed in class – is given on pp. 291-295].
- * Dancygier, Barbara (2006), "What can blending do for you?", *Language and Literature* 15(1), 5-15. [Introduces conceptual blending theory to scholars of literature].

C. Cognitive Semiotic Analyses of Religious Texts and Practices

- ** DeConick, April (2017), "Soul Flights: Cognitive Ratcheting and the Problem of Comparison", *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism* 17(1), 81-118. [Uses image schemata theory].
- * Rijn, Bastiaan van (2026), "Animal Magnetism's Conceptualization of Healing Energies: Comparing the Metaphors of Franz Anton Mesmer and Contemporary Practitioners", in Julian Strube, Marleen Thaler & Dominic Zoehrer (eds.), *Subtle Energies in Therapy, Spirituality, Arts, and Politics: 1800–Present*, Leiden: Brill, 101-119.
- * Apostel, Lilith & Volkhard Krech (2024), "Determining the Realm of the Dead through Metaphors: The Case of *Gilgamesh*, *Enkidu*, and the *Netherworld*", *Numen* 71(5-6), 455-499.
- * Sterken, Arjan (2019), "Gnostic Souls in an Alien Body: Motif H43 "One Creates the Body, Another the Soul" and Its Cognitive Mechanisms in Gnostic Mythologies", *Aliter* 11, 60-87. [Draws on DeConick 2017; also includes a structuralist analysis of the corpus].
- * DesCamp, Mary Therese and Eve E. Sweetser (2005), "Metaphors for God: Why and How Do Our Choices Matter for Humans? The Application of Contemporary Cognitive Linguistics Research to the Debate on God and Metaphor", *Pastoral Psychology* 53(3), 207-238.
- * Howe, Bonnie & Joel B. Green (eds.; 2014), *Cognitive Linguistic Explorations in Biblical Studies*, Berlin: De Gruyter.
- * Kopytowska, Monika and Paul Chilton (eds.; fc. 2016), *Religious Language, Metaphor and the Mind*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- * Kövecses, Zoltán (2011), "The Biblical Story Retold: Symbols in Action", in Mario Brdar, Stefan Th. Gries & Milena Zic Fuchs (eds.), *Cognitive Linguistics: Convergence and Expansion*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 325-354
- * Luomanen, Petri, Ilkka Pyysiäinen & Risto Uro (eds.; 2007), *Explaining Christian Origins and Early Judaism: Contributions from Cognitive and Social Science*, in the *Biblical Interpretation Series* 89, Leiden: Brill.
- * Lundhaug, Hugo (2007), "Conceptual Blending in the Exegesis on the Soul", in Petri Luomanen, Ilkka Pyysiäinen & Risto Uro (eds.), *Explaining Christian Origins and Early Judaism: Contributions from Cognitive and Social Science*, Leiden: Brill, 141-160. [Uses Fauconnier & Turner's conceptual blending theory].
- * Lundhaug, Hugo (2010), *Images of Rebirth: Cognitive Poetics and Transformational Soteriology in the Gospel of Philip and the Exegesis on the Soul*, in the series *Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies* 73, Johannes van Oort and Einar Thomassen, series editors, Leiden & Boston: Brill. [Uses Fauconnier & Turner's conceptual blending theory].
- ** Lundhaug, Hugo (2010), "Canon and Interpretation: A Cognitive Perspective", in Einar Thomassen, (ed.), *Canon and Canonicity: The Formation and Use of Scripture*, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 67-90. [I have used this chapter as a core reading for this course].
- * Slingerland, Edward (2003), *Effortless Action: Wu-wei as Conceptual Metaphor and Spiritual Ideal in Early China*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- * Slingerland, Edward (2004), "Conceptual Metaphor Theory as Methodology for Comparative Religion", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 72(1), 1-31. [Introduces cognitive metaphor theory to the study of religion].
- * Slingerland, Edward (2011), "Metaphor and Meaning in Early China", *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 10(1), 1-30. [Gives a great overview of (the development) of cognitive semiotics, covering both cognitive metaphor theory and conceptual blending theory, before using conceptual blending theory to analyse an early Chinese text. Better than Slingerland 2004].
- * Sørensen, Jesper (2007), *A Cognitive Theory of Magic*, Lanham/New York/Toronto/Plymouth, UK: AltaMira Press, in the *Cognitive Science of Religion Series*, Harvey Whitehouse & Luther H. Martin, series editors. [Uses conceptual blending theory to create a new theory of magic/ritual].
- ** Sørensen, Jesper (2000), "Theosophy: Metaphors of the Subject", *Temenos* 35-36 (1999-2000), 225-248. [I have used this article, which is actually based on an MA thesis (!), as a core reading for this course].
- * Yelle, Robert A. (2001), "Rhetorics of Law and Ritual: A Semiotic Comparison of the Law of Talion and Sympathetic Magic", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 69, 627-647.
- * Yelle, Robert A. (2013), *Semiotics of Religion: Signs of the Sacred in History*, in the series *Bloomsbury Advances in Semiotics*, London & New York: Bloomsbury. [Review symposium in *Religion* 44(1), 2014].

Session 7* | Cognitive Dissonance Theory

In earlier versions of the course, I included a half of whole session on cognitive dissonance theory. It is interesting, and students find it easy and useful to operationalise.

A. Cognitive Dissonances Theory

- * Festinger, Leon (1957), *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- * Festinger, Leon, Henry W. Riecken & Stanley Schachter (1956), *When Prophecy Fails: A Social and Psychological Study of a Modern Group that Predicted the Destruction of the World*, University of Minnesota Press. This edition 2008 by Pinter & Martin, London. [The authors used this case study of an UFO cult to develop a general theory of cognitive dissonance reduction as a driver for religious change].
- * Cooper, Joel (2007), *Cognitive Dissonance: Fifty Years of a Classic Theory*, Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

B. Applications of CDT to the Study of New Religions

- ** Tumminia, Diana (1998), "How Prophecy Never Fails: Interpretive Reason in a Flying-Saucer Group", *Sociology of Religion*, 59(2), 157-170. [I have often used this article as a core reading. The analytical use of CDT is not strong, but the empirical case presented is extremely interesting].
- ** Zygmunt, Joseph F. (1972), "When Prophecies Fail: A Theoretical Perspective on the Comparative Evidence", *The American Behavioral Scientist* 16(2), 245-268. [In some versions of the course, I have used this article in combination with Tumminia. This may be the strongest theoretical overview of CDT].
- * Melton, J. Gordon (1985), "Spiritualization and Reaffirmation: What Really Happens When Prophecy Fails", *American Studies* 26(2), 17-29. [In some versions of the course, I have used this article in combination with Tumminia. Tumminia prefers Merton above Zygmunt, but I find this article less strong].
- * Dawson, Lorne L. (1999), "When Prophecy Fails and Faith Persists: A Theoretical Overview", *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 3(1), 60-82.
- * Stone, Jon R. (2009), "Prophecy and Dissonance: A Reassessment of Research Testing the Festinger Theory", *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 12(4), 72-90.
- ** Tumminia, Diana G. (2005), *When Prophecy Never Fails: Myth and Reality in a Flying-Saucer Group*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Uses and criticizes Festinger's theory].
- * Tumminia, Diana G. & William H. Swatos, Jr. (eds.; 2011), *How Prophecy Lives*, in the series *Religion and the Social Order* 21, William H. Swatos, Jr., general editor, Leiden & Boston: Brill.
- * Tully, Caroline (2011), "Researching the Past is a Foreign Country: Cognitive Dissonance as a Response by Practitioner Pagans to Academic Research on the History of Pagan Religions", *The Pomegranate: International Journal of Pagan Studies* 13(1), 98-105.
- * Jansma, Lammert Gosse (2017), "De Wachter van de Nacht en het eindtijdsdenken", *Religie & Samenleving* 12(1), 52-73. [A Dutch case study].
- * Thematic issue of *Nova Religio* 28(2) on 'Failed Prophecy and Trump' (2024). [Focused on New Apostolic Reformation, a network of self-described prophets and apostles, that supported Trump.]

C. Applications of CDT to Bible Studies

- ** Bermejo-Rubio, Fernando (2017), "The Process of Jesus' Deification and Cognitive Dissonance Theory", *Numen* 64(2-3), 119-152. [I have used this article as core reading in earlier versions of the course.]
- ** Aune, David E. (2013), "Christian Beginnings and Cognitive Dissonance Theory", in David E. Aune (ed.), *Jesus, Gospel Tradition, and Paul in the Context of Jewish and Greco-Roman Antiquity: Collected Essays II*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 149-181. Originally published 2007 in Anselm C. Hagedorn, Zeba A. Crook, and Eric Clark Stewart (ed.), *In Other Words: Essays on Social Science Methods and the New Testament in Honor of Jerome H. Neyrey*, Sheffield Phoenix Press
- * Carroll, Robert P. (1979), *When Prophecy Failed: Cognitive Dissonance in the Prophetic Traditions of the Old Testament*, London: SCM Press.

Session 8A | Extraordinary Experiences

A. The Social-Constructionist Approach to Extraordinary Experiences

One cannot study religious 'experience' in itself, and people may not even have religious experience even if they claim that. The only things we can study are narratives that people construct about their alleged experiences, and which they themselves may come to see as true representations of an original 'experience', and the practices through which they learn to have extraordinary experiences.

- * Sharf, Robert H. (1998), "Religious Experience", in Mark C. Taylor (ed.), *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 94-116. [Formerly used as core reading].
- * Clancy, Susan A. (2005), *Abducted: How People Come to Believe They Were Kidnapped by Aliens*, Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard University Press.
- ** Luhrmann, Tanya M. (2012), *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God*, New York: Vintage Books. [Arguably one of the most important books in the study of religion to come out that year. On how people must *learn* to experience God talking to them].

- * Luhrmann, Tanya M. (2004), "Metakinesis: How God Becomes Intimate in Contemporary U.S. Christianity", *American Anthropologist* 106(3), 518-528.
- * Cassaniti, Julia & Tanya M. Luhrmann (2014), "The Cultural Kindling of Spiritual Experiences", *Current Anthropology* 55(10), 333-343.
- * Klaassen, Frank (2012), "Subjective Experience and the Practice of Medieval Ritual Magic", *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 7(1), 19-51.
- * Proudfoot, Wayne (1985), *Religious Experience*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. [A classic text in American religious studies].
- ** Taves, Ann (2009), *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things*, Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press. [One of the most important recent books on religious experience. Ultimately, however, Taves is more interested in processes of 'deeming', i.e. in processes of attributing meaning and the label 'religious' to experiences, than in special experience themselves. Review symposium in *Religion* 40 (2010)].
- * Taves, Ann (2012), "Special things as building blocks of religions", in Robert Orsi (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 58-83. [Article length discussion of the main points in Taves 2009].
- * Yamane, David (2000), "Narrative and Religious Experience", *Sociology of Religion* 61, 171-189.
- * Westerink, Herman (2010), "Participation and Giving Ultimate Meaning: Exploring the Entanglement of Psychology of Religion and Phenomenology of Religion in the Netherlands", *Numen* 57(1), 186-211.

B. The Physical-Cognitive Approach to Extraordinary Experiences

Religious experiences are grounded in real physical phenomena. Our brains, bodies, and sensory environment are such that we sometime have weird experiences that may be attributed to some supernatural source. We can't say for sure whether such a supernatural source really exists or not, but in our theorising we would rather err on the side of caution so we assume that religious experiences have only natural causes. As you may have guessed, I go with this approach to religious experience.

- * Andersen, Mark, Uffe Schjødt, Kristoffer L. Nielbo & Jesper Sørensen (2014), "Mystical Experience in the Lab", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 26, 217-245.
- * Hufford, David J. (1982), *The Terror that Comes in the Night: An Experience-Centered Study of Supernatural Assault Traditions*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- * McClenon, James (1994), *Wondrous Events: Foundations of Religious Belief*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- ** Shushan, Gregory (2009), *Conceptions of the Afterlife in Early Civilizations: Universalism, Constructivism, and Near-Death Experience*, London & New York: Continuum.
- * Swatos, Jr., William H. (2003), "Differentiating Experiences: The Virtue of Substantive Definitions", in Arthur L. Greil and David R. Bromley (eds.), *Defining Religion: Investigating the Boundaries Between Sacred and Secular*, 39-53.
- * Walker, Barbara (1995; ed.), *Out of the Ordinary: Folklore and the Supernatural*, Logan: Utah State University Press.
- * Asprem, Egil (2017), "Explaining the Esoteric Imagination: Towards a Theory of Kataphatic Practice", *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism* 17(1), 17-50.
- * Taves, Ann & Egil Asprem (2017), "Experience as Event: Event Cognition and the Study of (Religious) Experiences", *Religion, Brain, and Behavior* 7(1), 43-62.
- ** Leeuwen, Niel van & Michiel van Elk (2019), "Seeking the supernatural: The Interactive Religious Experience Model", *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 9(3), 221-251.

C. The Religionist Approach to Extraordinary Experiences

People have religious experience because spirits, afterlife, and other supernatural stuff is real.

- * Bowie, Fiona (2013), "Building Bridges, Dissolving Boundaries: Toward a Methodology for the Ethnographic Study of the Afterlife, Mediumship, and Spiritual Beings", *Journal of the American*

Academy of Religion 81(3), 698-733. [I have used this as a core reading to exemplify the religionist / radical empiricist position].

- * Blum, Jason (2012), "Retrieving Phenomenology of Religion as a Method for Religious Studies", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80(4), 1025-1048. [With response by Robert Segal in *JAAR* 82(2) and rejoinder by Blum].
- * Blum, Jason N. (2014), "The Science of Consciousness and Mystical Experience: An Argument for Radical Empiricism", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 82(1), 150-173.
- * Blum, Jason B. (2015), "Integrating Phenomenology of Religion and Radical Empiricism", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 27(4-5), 423-446.
- * Gaffin, Dennis (2012), *Running with the Fairies: Towards a Transpersonal Anthropology of Religion*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- * Hunter, Jack (ed.; 2012), *Paranthropology: Anthropological Approaches to the Paranormal*, Bristol, UK: Paranthropology.
- * Hunter, Jack (2015), "'Spirits are the Problem': Anthropology and Conceptualising Spiritual Beings", in *Journal for the Study of Religious Experience* 1(1), 76-86.
- * Kripal, Jeffrey J., with Ata Anzali, Andrea R. Jain & Erin Prophet (2014), *Comparing Religions: Coming to Terms*, Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell. [Ch. 8, "The Religious Imagination and Its Paranormal Powers: Angels, Aliens, and Anomalies" and Ch. 9 "The Final Questions of Soul, Salvation, and the End of All Things: The Human as Two". I used pp. 239-253, 261-265 as core reading once].
- * Lommel, Pim von (2010), *Consciousness Beyond Life: The Science of the Near-Death Experience*, New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- * Porpora, Douglas V. (2006), "Methodological Atheism, Methodological Agnosticism and Religious Experience", *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 36(1), 57-75.
- * Stevenson, Ian (2001), *Children who Remember Previous Lives: A Question of Reincarnation*, rev. ed., Jefferson, NC & London, UK: McFarland and Co.
- * Turner, Edith (1992), "The Reality of Spirits", *ReVision* 15(1), 28-32.

E. Overview Articles/Books

- * Paloutzian, Raymond F. & Crystal L. Park (2013), *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, second edition, New York & London: The Guilford Press. [Articles on 'The Neuropsychology of Religious Experience' (McNamara & Butler) and 'Mystical, Spiritual, and Religious Experiences' (Hood & Chen)].
- * Martin, Craig & Russell T. McCutcheon, with Leslie Dorrough Smith (eds; 2012), *Religious Experience: A Reader*, Durham: Acumen.

F. A Single Reference on Cutting-Edge Brain Research Relevant for Understanding Experience

- ** Clark, Andy (2013), "Whatever Next? Predictive Brains, Situated Agents, and the Future of Cognitive Science", *Behavioral and Brain Science* 36, 181-253.

G. Background on the 'Reductionism' Debate

(= the debate on whether it is 'reductionist' to assume, methodologically, that religious experiences have no supernatural, ontological correlate)

- * Martin, Luther H. & Donald Wiebe (2012), "Religious Studies as a Scientific Discipline: The Persistence of a Delusion", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80(3), 587-597.
- * Segal, Robert A. (1983), "In Defense of Reductionism", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 51(1), 97-124.
- * Slingerland, Edward G. (2008), "Who's Afraid of Reductionism? The Study of Religion in the Age of Cognitive Science", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76(2), 375-411. [With the reply 'Reductionism: Be Afraid, be Very Afraid' by Francisca Cho & Richard K. Squier; with two additional responses by each side].
- * Slingerland, Edward G. (2008), *What Science Offers the Humanities: Integrating Body and Culture*, Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press.

Session 8B | Existential Experiences

A. Humans Experience Contingency; Religion Provides Meaning to Cope

Also Riesebrodt (see session 9).

- ** Borg, Meerten ter (1991), *Een uitgewaaierde eeuwigheid: Het menselijk tekort in de moderne cultuur*, Ten Have/Baan. [Religion is a response to existential insecurity; its function is to provide meaning. Ter Borg was my predecessor as sociology of religion at Leiden University].
- * Stringer, Martin (2008), *Contemporary Western Ethnography and the Definition of Religion*, London: Continuum Books. [In the secular West, most religion is of the situational, coping kind].
- ** Norris, Pippa & Ronald Inglehart (2004), *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*, in the series *Cambridge Studies in Social Theory, Religion, and Politics*, series editors David C. Leege & Kenneth D. Wald, New York: Cambridge University Press. [Demonstrates a correlation between religion and economic welfare and economic equality].
- * Inglehart, Ronald F. (2021), *Religion's Sudden Decline: What's Causing It, and What Comes Next?* New York: Oxford University Press. [Explains secularisation as a result of increased affluence].

B. Humans Experience Amazement and Connectedness; Religion Helps Interpret These Positive Experiences

The literature is much richer, but I am not familiar with it.

- ** Rosa, Hartmut (2020), *The Uncontrollability of the World*, Cambridge: Polity Press. Orig. *Unverfügbarkeit*, 2018.
- * Bollemaat, Jan, Markus Altena Davidsen, Jacomijn van der Kooij, Jan Marten Praamsma & Laurens Snoek (2025), "Het zinperspectief: Existentiële vragen en bronnen van zin", in Markus Altena Davidsen (red.), *Nieuwe werelden openen: Perspectieven op Levensbeschouwing en Religie*, Zwolle: Ten Brink, 50–73.
- * Løgstrup, K.E. (2020), *The Ethical Demand*, trans. Bjørn Rabjerg & Robert Stern, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Orig. 1956 Danish.

Session 9 | Religious Rituals

For Martin Riesebrodt, see section on Religious Traditions.

A. The Big Three in Ritual Studies: Ronald Grimes, Roy Rappaport, and Catherine Bell

- ** Rappaport, Roy A. (1999), *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ** Rappaport, Roy A. (1979), *Ecology, Meaning, and Religion*, Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books. [In an earlier version of this class I used Ch. 6, "The Obvious Aspects of Ritual", in which Rappaport outlines his integrated theory of ritual and religion which he later developed into the above monograph. The chapter is theoretically excellent, but so conceptually dense and broad in scope that it is too difficult to overview and apply].
- ** Grimes, Ronald (2014), *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ** Bell, Catherine (2009), *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 2nd edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press. First edition 1997. [Esp. chapter 4 "Basic Genres of Ritual Action" and chapter 5 "Characteristics of Ritual-like Activities"].
- * Cassell, Paul (2014), "Rappaport, Revisited", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 26(4-5), 417-438.
- * Bell, Catherine (1992), *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- * Grimes, Ronald (2000), *Deeply into the Bone: Re-inventing Rites of Passage*, Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.

B. Other Great Tools for Analysing Rituals

- ** Davidsen, Markus Altena (2026), “Religieuze rituelen: Theorie voor docenten”, in Markus Altena Davidsen & Michaël van der Meer, *Religieuze teksten en rituelen onderzoeken in de klas: Een religiewetenschappelijke vakmethodiek*, Leiden: Leiden University Press.
- ** Honko, Lauri (1979) “Theories Concerning the Ritual Process: An Orientation.” In *Science of Religion: Studies in Methodology: Proceedings of the Study Conference of the International Association for the History of Religions, held in Turku, Finland, August 27-31, 1973*, edited by Lauri Honko, Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 369-390.
- ** Kreinath, Jens, Jan A.M. Snoek & Michael Stausberg (eds.; 2006), *Theorizing Rituals*. Vol. I: *Issues, Topics, Approaches, Concepts*, in the *Numen Book Series* 116, Steven Engler, Kim Knott, P. Pratap Kumar & Kocku von Stuckrad, general editors, Leiden & Boston: Brill. [Especially the articles on ‘Semiotics’ (Kreinath), ‘Rhetorics’ (Fernandez), ‘Efficacy’ (Podemann Sørensen), and ‘Structure, Process, Form’ (T.S. Turner)].
- ** Xygalatas, Dimitris (2022), *Ritual: How Seemingly Senseless Acts Make Life Worth Living*, New York: Little Brown Spark. [Very good introduction to ritual; focuses on the form of the ritual act, not on the meaning that ritual practices may convey; in this, Xygalatas contrasts with for example Riesebrodt].
- * Turner, Terence S. (1977), “Transformation, Hierarchy, and Transcendence: A Reformulation of van Gennep’s Model of the Structure of Rites of Passage”, in Sally Falk Moore & Barbara G. Meyerhoff (eds.), *Secular Ritual*, Assen: Van Gorcum, 53-70.
- * Turner, Terence S. (2006), “Structure, Process, Form”, in Jens Kreinath, Jan A.M. Snoek & Michael Stausberg (eds.), *Theorizing Rituals*. Vol. I: *Issues, Topics, Approaches, Concepts*, Leiden & Boston: Brill, 207-246.
- * Yelle, Robert A. (2011), “Semiotics”, in Michael Stausberg & Steven Engler (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, London & New York: Routledge, 355-365. [Despite the name of the article, this is really about the efficacy of ritual. I have tried to use this article in an earlier version of the course, but it is too dense. A better place to start it Yelle’s book *Semiotics of Religion*].
- * Ray, Benjamin C. (1973), “‘Performative Utterances’ in African Rituals”, *History of Religions* 13(1), 16-35. [Uses Austin’s speech act theory].
- * Hoffman, John P. (ed.; 2012), *Understanding Religious Ritual: Theoretical Approaches and Innovations*, in the series *Routledge Advances in Sociology*, London & New York: Routledge.
- * Hüskens, Ute & Frank Neubert (eds.; 2012), *Negotiating Rites*, New York: Oxford University Press.

C. Some Interesting Case Studies (mainly of religious efficacy, i.e. how ‘rituals work’)

- ** Hashimoto, Serena Dawn (2018), “Prophetic performatives: The New Age’s pending efficacy through self-prophecy”, *Culture and Religion* 19(2), 217-234.
- * Meyer, Birgit (2011), “Mediation and immediacy: Sensational forms, semiotic ideologies and the question of the medium”, *Social Anthropology* 19(1), 23-39.
- * Meyer, Birgit (2020), “Religion as Mediation”, *Entangled Religions* 11(3).
- * Inbody, Joel (2015), “Sensing God: Bodily Manifestations and Their Interpretation in Pentecostal Rituals and Everyday Life”, *Sociology of Religion* 76(3), 337-355.
- * Homewood, Nathanael J. (2022). “Zoompartation: Benny Hinn’s touch in Zoom healing”, *Religion* 52(2), 250-264. [Case study on ritual efficacy in online rituals].

D. Approaches to Analysing Visual Culture in Religion

- * Peterson, Jeanette Favrot (2021), “Reading images”, in Steven Engler & Michael Stausberg (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, second edition, London & New York: Routledge, 413-433.
- * Meyer, Birgit (2015), “Picturing the Invisible: Visual Culture and the Study of Religion”, *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 27(4-5), 333-360.
- * Morgan, David (2005), *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

- * Uehlinger, Christoph (2015), "Approaches to Visual Culture and Religion: Disciplinary Trajectories, Interdisciplinary Connections, and Some Suggestions for Further Progress", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 27(4-5), 384-422.

E. Iconography

- ** Straten, Rudolph van (1985/2002), *Inleiding in de iconografie: Enige theoretische en praktische kennis*, Bussum: Coutinho.
- * Ivanic, Suzanna. (2022). *Catholica: The Visual Culture of Catholicism*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- * Shatanawi, Mirjam & Hansje Galesloot (2009), *Islam in beeld: kunst en cultuur van moslims wereldwijd*. Amsterdam: SUN.
- * Velde, Paul van der (2019), *De huid van de goden: over uiterlijk, texturen, praktijken en verhalen in Azië*. Eindhoven: Uitgeverij Damon.
- * Molendijk, Arie L. 2003. *Materieel christendom: Religie en materiële cultuur in West-Europa*. Hilversum: Verloren.

Session 9* | Lived Religion

Earlier versions of this course have sometimes included half a session on how to study lived religion, i.e. the religious practice and self-understanding of ordinary believers as opposed to institutions, elites, and virtuosos. The last years, I have mostly not included this half-session, however, because the literature does not provide any concrete analytical tools. I give you here the literature anyway.

A. The Lived Religion Paradigm

- ** McGuire, Meredith (2008), *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life*, Oxford: Oxford UP. [This book was not the first to make the argument that we should study 'lived religion' rather than (just) 'official religion', but it has been the most influential piece of writing for this new paradigm. I found much of the book disappointing because McGuire in my opinion goes too far. For example, she lets it be up to her informants what counts as religion. If someone says, 'gardening is my religion', then that is so. Such an approach doesn't make for a strong analysis. Luckily, McGuire takes up a more analytical approach in other parts of the book, especially in chapter 8 (which I have used in some iterations of this course). That chapter focuses on how we can study lived religion and religious traditions in a way that recognises that religion is muddled – people engage in bricolage and traditions change all the time.]
- ** Knibbe, Kim & Helena Kupari (ed.; 2020), theme issue on "Theorizing lived religion", *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 35(2). One of the best articles in the issue is this one (on ritual framing): Utriainen, Terhi (2020), "Lived religion meets secular life: the dynamics of framing and the subjunctive power of ritual", *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 35(2), 195-212. [In 2022, I used the introduction article from this theme issue as a core reading.]
- * Sanford, A. Whitney (2007), "Pinned on Karma Rock: Whitewater Kayaking as Religious Experience", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75(4), 875-895. [This article, which I have often used as a core reading, illustrates well the methodological shortcomings of much literature belonging to the lived religion approach].
- * Ammerman, Nancy T. (ed.; 2007), *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives*, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.
- * Ammerman, Nancy T. (2014), *Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes: Finding Religion in Everyday Life*, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.
- * Bender, Courtney (2010), *The New Metaphysicals: Spirituality and the American Religious Imagination*, Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.
- * Dessing, Nathal M., Nadia Jeldtoft, Jørgen S. Nielsen, and Linda Woodhead (eds.; 2013); *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe*, Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- * Hall, David D. (ed.; 1997), *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- * Jeldtoft, Nadia (2011), "Lived Islam: Religious Identity with 'Nonorganized' Muslim Minorities", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34(7), 1134-1151.
- * Orsi, Robert A. (2005), *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- * Orsi, Robert A. (2003), "Is the Study of Lived Religion Irrelevant to the World We Live In? Special Presidential Plenary Address, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Salt Lake City, November 2, 2002", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42(2), 169-174
- * Tweed, Thomas A. (2015), "After the Quotidian Turn: Interpretive Categories and Scholarly Trajectories in the Study of Religion since the 1960s", *The Journal of Religion* 95(3), 361-385.

B. Criticism of the Lived Religion Paradigm

- ** Ramey, Steven (2015), "When Acceptance Reflects Disrespect: The Methodological Contradictions of Accepting Participant Statements", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 27(1), 59-81. [A complete dismantling of Sanford's argument. I have used this in earlier versions of the course].

C. On the Insider/Outsider Problem

- ** Jensen, Jeppe Sinding (2011), "Revisiting the Insider-Outsider Debate: Dismantling a Pseudo-problem in the Study of Religion", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 23, 29-47.
- * McCutcheon, Russell T. (ed.; 1999), *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion: A Reader*, in the series *Controversies in the Study of Religion*, series editor Russell T. McCutcheon, London & New York: Cassell.
- * Chryssides, George D. & Stephen E. Gregg (eds.; 2019), *The Insider/Outsider Debate: New Perspectives in the Study of Religion*, Sheffield & Bristol, CT: Equinox.

D. Other Social-Scientific Approaches to Religious Individuals

- * Wuthnow, Robert J. (2011), "Taking Talk Seriously: Religious Discourse as Social Practice", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 50(1), 1-21. [On a general level, the article argues for the use qualitative methods above the use of surveys in the study of religion, because that enables us to study processes rather than just correlations. Specifically, the article argues for the importance of studying religious talk. Not many studies have been carried out on religious talk, but the article includes a number of references to best-practice studies of non-religious talk].
- * Batson, C. Daniel, Patricia Schoenrade & W. Larry Ventis (1993), *Religion and the Individual: A Social-Psychological Perspective*, 2. ed., New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- * Martí, Gerardo (2015), "Editor's Note: Religious Reflexivity: The Effect of Continual Novelty and Diversity on Individual Religiosity", *Sociology of Religion* 76(1), 1-13.
- * Storm, Ingrid (2009), "Halfway to heaven: Four types of fuzzy fidelity in Europe", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 48(4), 702-718.

E. Lived Religion in Antiquity

The study of lived religion in antiquity does not suffer from the object/subject confusions (cf. Ramey 2015) of the Lived Religion paradigm in the sociology of religion, but it comes with its own challenges, as it is not easy to reconstruct the religion of ordinary individuals in antiquity given the sources at our disposal.

- * Rüpke, Jörg (2021), *Religion and its History: A Critical Inquiry*, London: Routledge.
- * Rüpke, Jörg (2015), "Religious agency, identity, and communication: reflections on history and theory of religion", *Religion* 45(3), 344-366. [Rüpke is the leader of a massive research programme on lived religion in Antiquity, based in Erfurt. This article sets out the theoretical framework for the project. The article is so theory-heavy and 'German' in style that it is almost unreadable, but it is very valuable for its list of references].
- * Rüpke, Jörg (2013), *Religion: Antiquity and its Legacy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- * Rüpke, Jörg (ed.; 2013), *The Individual in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Session 10A | Religion and Moral Intuitions

A. Normative Cognition, Moral Intuitions (and Religion)

- * Jensen, Jeppe Sinding (2010), "Doing it the Other Way Round: Religion as a Basic Case of 'Normative Cognition'", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 22(4), 322-329.
- ** Haidt, Jonathan (2012), *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*, London: Allen Lane.
- ** Haidt, Jonathan and Jesse Graham (2007), "When Morality Opposes Justice: Conservatives have Moral Intuitions that Liberals may not Recognize", *Social Justice Research* 20(1), 98-116. [This article provides a good overview of Haidt's theory on moral intuitions. I used it as one of two core readings on religion and moral intuitions in 2024 and would do so again].
- * Graham, Jesse & Jonathan Haidt (2010), "Beyond Beliefs: Religions Bind Individuals into Moral Communities", *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 14(1), 140-150. [In this article, the authors attempt to apply the theory of moral intuitions to religion. Unfortunately, this is not very successful. I used it as one of two core readings on religion and moral intuitions in 2024 but would not do so again].
- * Haidt, Jonathan (2009), "Moral Psychology and the Misunderstanding of Religion", in Jeffrey Schloss & Michael J. Murray (eds.), *The Believing Primate: Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Reflections on the Origin of Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 278-291.

Session 10B | Religious Traditions

*In earlier versions of the course, I have included a session on how to analyse religious traditions. I have found, however, that the literature is either too impressionistic or too detailed. Perhaps the question 'which components make up religious traditions and how do those components work together?' is just too big to be answered in one go. More work is clearly needed here. As I see it, there are three core problems about religious traditions that a systematic science of religion ought to take up, but which we are yet very far from solving: (1) what are the building-blocks of religious traditions (e.g., rituals, beliefs, experiences, institutions) and how do these building-blocks 'hang together' (i.e. which building-blocks are most fundamental?; how do various building-blocks reinforce each other?); (2) how do religious traditions emerge (i.e. which cognitive and social processes play a role?); and (3) through which processes (exogenous and endogenous) do religious traditions change? One attempt at an integrated theory that tackles all these questions is Christian Smith's *Religion: What It Is, How It Works, and Why It Matters* (2017) (though ultimately it succeeds only in putting a bunch of ingredients on the table for such a theory).*

A. Phenomenological Models of Religious Traditions

- ** Smart, Ninian (1996), *Dimensions of the Sacred: An Anatomy of the World's Beliefs*, London: Harper Collins. [Smart is phenomenological is a purely descriptive way that brackets both judgment (which is good and helped distance religious studies from theology) and explanatory ambition (which is a missed chance). Smart's dimensions model of religious traditions has been immensely influential in religious education in Britain and in the Netherlands, too].
- * Paden, William E. (1994), *Religious Worlds: The Comparative Study of Religion*, 2. ed., Boston: Beacon Press, 1. ed. 1988. [Paden's phenomenology is much like Smart's; for him, it is very much a tool for comparison].

B. Theories of the Constitution of Religious Traditions based on Semantics (Myth; Symbols)

- * Rue, Loyal (2006), *Religion is Not About God: How Spiritual Traditions Nurture our Biological Nature and What to Expect When They Fail*, New Brunswick, NJ & London: Rutgers University Press. [Loyal Rue is a philosopher who has become interested in the sociobiological foundations of religion. I don't buy the sociobiological part of the book, but it includes a very interesting conceptual model of religious traditions as consisting of a core myth and various ancillary strategies. He presents this model in Ch. 4. In earlier versions of this course, I have discussed Rue's model of religious traditions].

- * Granholm, Kennet (2013), "Esoteric currents as discursive complexes", *Religion* 43(1), 46-69. [Discusses religious traditions as currents or discursive complexes. Using esoteric currents as examples (neopaganism, new age, Left-Hand Path), Granholm analyses how currents relate to each other (i.e. can converge, can have sub-currents) and how they are comprised of sets of discourses which define them].
- ** Geertz, Clifford (1966), "Religion as a Cultural System", in Michael Banton (ed.), *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, A.S. A. Monographs 3, London: Tavistock Publications, 1-46.
- * Steven Engler and Mark Q. Gardiner (2010), "Ten Implications of Semantic Holism for Theories of Religion", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 22(4), 283-292.
- * Prothero, Stepen (2010), *God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World – and Why Their Differences Matter*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

C. Theories of the Constitution of Religious Traditions based on Rituals (or Liturgies)

- ** Riesebrodt, Martin (2010), *The Promise of Salvation*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Translated from German, *Cultus und Heilsversprechen: Eine Theorie der Religion*. [This book is one of the best theoretical statements on how religious traditions hang together. Theme issue on the book in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 51(3), 2012].
- ** Riesebrodt, Martin (2008), "Theses on a theory of religion", *International Political Anthropology* 1(1), 25-41 [I have often used this summary of Riesebrodt's theory in class. This year I opted for Van der Haven's summary instead].
- ** Smith, Christian (2017), *Religion: What It Is, How It Works, and Why It Matters*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. [For Smith, the distinctive core of religion consists of practices aimed at achieving good things and avoiding bad things, based on the premise that personal or impersonal superhuman powers exist. Around this core, religious traditions and communities form. I have used chapter 2 from this book in an earlier version of this course. A strength of the book is the appendix on religious questions].
- * Konieczny, Mary Ellen, Loren D. Lybarger & Kelly H. Chong (2012), "Theory as a Tool in the Social Scientific Study of Religion and Martin Riesebrodt's *The Promise of Salvation*", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 51(3), 397-411.
- ** Rappaport, Roy A. (1999), *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

D. Theories of the Constitution of Religious Traditions based on Religious Value-driven Action

- * Sharot, Stephen (2001), *A Comparative Sociology of World Religions: Virtuosos, Priests, and Popular Religion*, New York & London: New York University Press. [In the Weberian tradition].
- * Cho, Francisca & Richard King Squier (2013), "Religion as a Complex and Dynamic System", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 81(2), 357-398. [Draws on Niklas Luhmann's systems theory to analyse Buddhism as a system].
- * Stanford, Mark & Harvey Whitehouse (2021), "Why do great and little traditions coexist in the world's doctrinal religions?", *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 11(3), 312-334.

E. Theories of Culture as Semantic Systems

- ** Shils, Edward Albert (1981), *Tradition*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- * Barth, Fredrik (2002), "An Anthropology of Knowledge: Sidney W. Mintz Lecture for 2000", *Current Anthropology* 43(1), 1-18.
- * Barth, Fredrik (1987), *Cosmologies in the Making: A Generative Approach to Cultural Variation in Inner New Guinea*, in the series *Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ** Sahlins, Marshall (1999), "Two or Three Things that I know About Culture", *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 5(3), 399-421. [One of my favourite articles].

F. Religious Change as Result of Contact between Traditions

- ** Krech, Volkhard (2012), "Religious Contacts in Past and Present Times: Aspects of a Research Programme", *Religion* 42(2), 191-213. [Among other things, outlines a very handy typology of ways in which contact between religious traditions can lead to religious change].
- * Krech, Volkhard & Marion Steinicke (eds.; 2012), *Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe: Encounters, Notions, and Comparative Perspectives*, in the series *Dynamics in the History of Religions* 1, Leiden: Brill.

G. Syncretism

- * Martin, Luther H. & Anita Maria Leopold (2004), "New Approaches to the Study of Syncretism", in Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz & Randi R. Warne (eds.), *New Approaches to the Study of Religion. Volume 2: Textual, Comparative, Sociological, and Cognitive Approaches*, Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 93-107.
- * Leopold, Anita Maria & Jeppe Sinding Jensen (eds.) (2004), *Syncretism in Religion: A Reader*, London: Equinox.

Session 10* | Religious Identity

Since many students are interested in questions of religious identity, I tried to include half a session on religious identity in the 2017-version of the course. Unfortunately, I have found it difficult to find identity theory that easily lets itself be turned into a research method. If I were to try including a session on identity again, I would probably build it up around Roger Brubaker.

A. Self-Identity in Modernity (General)

- * Giddens, Anthony (1991), *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- * Taylor, Charles (1992), *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, first published in 1989.
- * Cerulo, Karen A. (1997), "Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions", *Annual Review of Sociology* 23, 385-409.
- ** Somers, Margaret R. (1994), "The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach", *Theory and Society* 23, 605-649.

B. Social Identity Theory (General)

- ** Brubaker, Roger & Frederick Cooper (2000), "Beyond "Identity"", *Theory and Society* 29(1), 1-47.
- ** Brubaker, Roger (2015), *Grounds for Difference*, Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.
- * Anderson, Benedict (1991), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed., London & New York: Verso. First edition 1983.
- * Brekhus, Wayne H. (2008), "Trends in the Qualitative Study of Social Identities", *Sociology Compass* 2(3), 1059-1078.
- * Jenkins, Richard (2008), *Social Identity*, 3rd ed., London & New York: Routledge.
- * Brewer, Marilynn B. (1991), "The Social Self: On Being the Same and Different at the Same Time", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 17, 475-482. [On optimal distinctiveness].
- * Tajfel, Henri & John C. Turner (1986), "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior", S. Worchel and W.G. Austin (eds.), *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 7-24.
- Fine, Gary Alan (2010), "Group culture and subcultures", in John R. Hall, Laura Grindstaff & Ming-Cheng Lo (eds.), *Handbook of Cultural Sociology*, in the series *Routledge International Handbooks*, London & New York: Routledge, 213-222. [Groups have idiocultures; networks have subcultures].

C. Religious/Spiritual Identity

- ** Baumann, Gerd (1999), *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities*, New York & London: Routledge. [Esp. Ch. 6 "Religion: Baggage or Sextant? Not Immutable Heritage, but Positioning in Context" and Ch. 7 "Culture: Having, Making, or Both? From an Essentialist through a Processual to a Discursive Understanding"]
- * Reimer, Kevin S. & Alvin C. Dueck (2012), "Spiritual identity: Narratives for faith and spiritual living", *Religions* 3(2), 251-265.
- * Kirmani, Mubina Hassanali & Sanaullah Kirmani (2009), "Recognition of seven spiritual identities and its implications on children", *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* 14(4), 369-383. [Develops a useful typology of seven spiritual identities that can be found across traditions (senso-centric, socio-centric, eco-centric, cosmo-centric, geneo-centric, chrono-centric and transo-centric)].
- * Ammerman, Nancy T. (2003), "Religious Identities and Religious Institutions", in Michele Dillon (ed.), *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 207-224. [In the 2017 version of this course, I used this article as a core reading. If you are interested in theory about religious identities this is a good entry into the field, as this article provided a long list of strong references. But the article does not provide a handy method that can be used to study religious identity and identity-formation].
- * Greil, Arthur L. & Lynn Davidman (2007), "Religion and Identity", in James Beckford & N. J. Demerath III (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, Los Angeles/London/New Delhi/Singapore: SAGE Publications, 549-565.
- * Ammerman, Nancy (2013), "Spiritual But Not Religious? Beyond Binary Choices in the Study of Religion", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 52(2), 258-278.
- ** Berger, Helen A. & Douglas Ezzy (2009), "Mass Media and Religious Identity: A Case Study of Young Witches", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48(3), 501-514.
- * Clark, Lynn Schofield (2003), *From Angels to Aliens: Teens, the Media and Beliefs in the Supernatural*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- * Day, Abby (2011), *Believing in Belonging: Belief and Social Identity in the Modern World*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- * Day, Abby (ed.; 2008), *Religion and the Individual: Belief, Practice, Identity*, in the series *Theology and Religion in Interdisciplinary Perspective Series in Association with the BAS Sociology of Religion Study Group*, series editors Douglas Davies and Richard Fenn, Aldershot, UK & Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- * Marranci, Gabriele (2009), *Understanding Muslim Identity: Rethinking Fundamentalism*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Session 10* | Religious Organisations

In an earlier year, the course included half a session on how to study individual religious organisations, including congregations and religious non-profits. I give you the literature here.

A. Religious Organisations: Overviews

- * N.J. Demerath III, Peter Dobkin Hall, Terry Schmitt & Rhys H. Williams (eds.; 1998), *Sacred Companies: Organizational Aspects of Religion and Religious Aspects of Organizations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Esp. articles by Paul DiMaggio, "The Relevance of Organization Theory to the Study of Religion", and Thomas H. Jeavons, "Identifying Characteristics of "Religious" Organizations: An Exploratory Proposal"]].
- * Tracey, Paul, Nelson Phillips & Michael Lounsbury (eds.; 2014), *Religion and Organization Theory*, in the series *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, Michael Lounsbury, series editor, Bingley, West Yorkshire: Emerald Group Publishing.
- * Harris, Margaret (1998), "A Special Case of Voluntary Associations? Towards a Theory of Congregational Organization", *British Journal of Sociology* 49, 602-618.

- * Chaves, Mark (1993), "Denominations as Dual Structures: An Organizational Analysis", *Sociology of Religion* 54, 147-169.
- * Chaves, Mark (2002), "Religious Organizations: Data Resources and Research Opportunities", *American Behavioral Scientist* 45, 1523-1549.
- * Miller, Kent D. (2002), "Competitive Strategies of Religious Organizations", *Strategic Management Journal* 23, 435-546.

B. On Applying Organisation Theory to the Study of Individual Congregations

- * Ammerman, Nancy T., Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley & William McKinney (eds.; 1998), *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- * Cameron, Helen, Philip Richter, Douglas Davies and Frances Ward, (eds.; 2005), *Studying Local Churches: A Handbook*, London: SCM Press.

C. Studies of Congregations

- * Ammerman, Nancy T. (2009), "Congregations: Local, Social, and Religious", in Peter Clarke (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 562-580.
- * Ammerman, Nancy T. (1997), "Organized Religion in a Voluntaristic Society: 1996 Presidential Address", *Sociology of Religion* 58(3), 203-215.
- ** Ammerman, Nancy (1997), *Congregation and Community*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- * Warner, Stephen (2005), *A Church of Our Own: Disestablishment and Diversity in American Religion*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- * Wind, James P. & James W. Lewis (eds.; 1994), *American Congregations, Volume 1: Portraits of 12 Religious Communities*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- * Chaves, Mark (2004), *Congregations in America*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- * Zuckerman, Phil (1997), "Gender Regulation as a Source of Religious Schism", *Sociology of Religion* 58(4), 353-373. [On an American Jewish congregation].

D. Studies of Religious Charity Organizations

- * Cnaan, Ram A., Stephanie C. Boddie, Femida Handy, Gaynor I. Yancey & Richard Schneider (2002), *The Invisible Caring Hand: American Congregations and the Provision of Welfare*, New York: New York University Press.
- * Scheitle, Christopher P. (2010), *Beyond the Congregation: The World of Christian Nonprofits*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Session 10* | Religious Fields

Usually, this course includes a half-session on religious fields. This year I have cut that out because it is difficult for student to apply the theory effectively in small-scale projects.

A. Field Analysis (General)

- * Savage, Mike & Elizabeth B. Silva (2013), "Field Analysis in Cultural Sociology", *Cultural Sociology* 7(2), 111-126. [Introduction to a theme issue with articles applying field analysis. While none of these articles focus on religion, two focus on the Netherlands].
- * Martin, John L. (2003), "What Is Field Theory?" *American Journal of Sociology* 109(1), 1-49. [On field theory in general, including both 'fields of organized striving' (Bourdieu's level) and other levels].

B. Organisational Ecology (and Change in Religious Organisational Fields)

- ** Scheitle, Christopher P. & Kevin D. Dougherty (2008), "The Sociology of Religious Organizations", *Sociology Compass* 2(3), 981-999. [Very good overview of organisational ecology, resource dependence

theory, and new institutionalism applied to the study of religious organisations. I have often used this overview article in earlier versions of this course].

- * Form, William & Joshua Dubrow (2005), "Downtown Metropolitan Churches: Ecological Situation and Response", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44, 271-290.
- * Reimer, Sam, Mark Chapman, Rich Janzen, James Watson & Michael Wilkinson (2016), "Christian Churches and Immigrant Support in Canada: An Organizational Ecology Perspective", *Review of Religious Research* 58, 495-513.
- * Eisland, Nancy L. (1999), *A Particular Place: Urban Restructuring in a Southern Exurb*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- * Hannan, Michael T. & Glenn R. Carroll (1992), *Dynamics of Organizational Populations: Density, Legitimation, and Competition*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- * Hannan, Michael T., László Pólos, and Glenn R. Carroll (2007), *Logics of Organization Theory: Audiences, Codes, and Ecologies*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- * Baum, J.A.C. (1996), "Organizational Ecology", in Stewart R. Clegg, Cynthia Hardy, and W.R. Nord (eds.), *Handbook of Organization Studies*, London: Sage, 77-104.
- * Carroll, Glenn R. (1984), "Organizational Ecology", *Annual Review of Sociology* 20, 71-93.
- * Turner, Jonathan H. (2015) "Organizational Ecology: Darwinian and Non-Darwinian Dynamics", in Jonathan H. Turner, Richard Machalek, and Alexandra Maryanski (eds.), *Handbook of Evolution and Society: Toward an Evolutionary Social Science*, Boulder, CO: Paradigm Press, 333-348.
- * Wilson, David Sloan, Yasha Hartberg, Ian MacDonald, Jonathan A. Lanman & Harvey Whitehouse (2017), "The Nature of Religious Diversity: A Cultural Ecosystem Approach", *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 7(2), 134-153. [Target article].

C. New Institutionalism and Change in Religious Organisational Fields

- * Scott, W. Richard (2008), *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas and Interests*, 3rd ed., Los Angeles, London, New Delhi & Singapore: SAGE. First edition published in 1995.
- ** DiMaggio, Paul J. & Walter W. Powell (1983), "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields", *American Sociological Review* 48(2), 147-160.
- * Chaves, Mark (1997), *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organizations*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- ** Chaves, Mark (1996), "Ordaining Women: The Diffusion of an Organizational Innovation", *American Journal of Sociology* 101(4), 840-873. [Article length version of the 1997-book].
- ** Berger, Helen A. (1995), "Routinization of Spontaneity", *Sociology of Religion* 56(1), 49-62. [Berger uses new institutionalism to analyse processes of routinisation in the American neo-pagan movement. I have used this article in an earlier version of the course].

D. Bourdieu on Religious Fields

- * Bourdieu, Pierre (1991), "Genesis and structure of the religious field", *Comparative Social Research* 13, 1-44. [According to Kühle (2004) the English translation includes a number of serious mistakes. Those who read French can try Bourdieu, Pierre (1971), "Genèse et structure du champ religieux", *Revue française de sociologie* 12(2), 295-334].
- * Bourdieu, Pierre & Loïc Wacquant (1992), *An Invitation to Reflective Sociology*, Cambridge & Oxford: Polity Press. [Esp. pp. 94-115 on "The Logic of Fields"].
- * Dianteill, Erwan (2003), "Pierre Bourdieu and the Sociology of Religion: A Central and Peripheral Concern", *Theory and Society* 32(5-6), 529-549.
- * Rey, Terry (2007), Bourdieu on Religion: Imposing Faith and Legitimacy, in the series *Key Thinkers in the Study of Religion*, London: Equinox. [Especially Ch. 2. "Theory of Practice: Field, Habitus, Capital"].
- ** Schultheis, Franz (2007), "Salvation Goods and Domination: Pierre Bourdieu's Sociology of the Religious Field", in Jörg Stolz (ed.), *Salvation Goods and Religious Markets: Theory and Applications*, Bern: Peter Lang, 31-50. [Strong introduction to Bourdieu's theory of religious field; includes a discussion of how Bourdieu builds on Max Weber].

- * Swartz, David (1997), *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.

E. Applications of Bourdieu's Theory in the Study of Religious Fields

- ** Kühle, Lene (2012), "Bourdieu, Religion, and Pluralistic Societies", *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 41(1), 8-14. [Core reading most years].
- ** Reddig, Melanie (2011), "Power Struggle in the Religious Field of Islam: Modernization, Globalization and the Rise of Salafism", in Tugrul Keskin (ed.), *The Sociology of Islam: Secularism, Economy and Politics*, Reading: Ithaca, 153-176. [Core reading some years].
- * McKinnon, Andrew M., Marta Trzebiatowska & Christopher Craig Brittain (2011), "Bourdieu, Capital, and Conflict in a Religious Field: The Case of the 'Homosexuality' Conflict in the Anglican Communion", *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 26(3), 355-370. [I have sometimes used this article as a case study].
- * Kühle, Lene (2004), *Out of Many, One: A Theoretical and Empirical Study of Religious Pluralism in Denmark from a Perspective of Power*, PhD diss., Aarhus University.
- * Kühle, Lene van der Aa (2008), "Globalization, Bourdieu and New Religions", in Armin W. Geertz and Margit Warburg (eds.), *New Religions and Globalization*, in the series *RENNER Studies on New Religions* 8, series editor Armin W. Geertz, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 95-108.
- * Quack, Johannes (2014), "Outline of a Relational Approach to 'Nonreligion'", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 26(4-5), 439-469.
- ** Verter, Bradford (2003), "Spiritual Capital: Theorizing Religion with Bourdieu Against Bourdieu", *Sociological Theory* 21(2), 150-174. [Sometimes used as core reading].
- * Wood, Matthew and Christopher Bunn (2009), "Strategy in a religious network: a Bourdieuan critique of the sociology of spirituality", *Sociology* 43(2), 286-303.
- * Berlinerblau, Jacques (2001), "Towards a Sociology of Heresy, Orthodoxy & Doxa", *History of Religions* 40(4), 327-351.
- * Reeh, Niels (2013), "The Field of Religions in Norwegian Pluralist Society", in Giuseppe Giordan and William H. Swatos, Jr. (eds.), *Testing Pluralism: Globalizing Belief, Localizing Gods*, Leiden: Brill, 175-192. [Draws on Norbert Elias besides Bourdieu].
- * Reeh, Niels (2022), "Dancing with Religion: Organized Atheism and Humanism in the Field of Religions in Denmark", *Numen* 69, 542-568.

F. Rational Choice Theory of Religion: Religious Fields as Markets

[The Rational Choice Theory of Religion (or Supply Side Theory) is an economics-inspired paradigm that analyses religious fields as markets in which actors (both believers and religious 'firms', i.e. churches and congregations) behave rationally].

- ** Rodney Stark & Roger Finke 2000: *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*. Berkeley: Uni of Cali Press. [In earlier years I have used different parts of this book in class, as well as Maren Freudenberg's discussion of it in *21st century theory of religion*].
- ** Stolz, Jörg (ed.; 2007), *Salvation Goods and Religious Markets: Theory and Applications*, Bern: Peter Lang. [Seeks to synthesise the Weber-Bourdieu tradition with rational choice theory].
- * Iannaccone, Larry (1988), "Why Strict Churches are Strong", *American Journal of Sociology* 99, 1180-1211.
- * Young, Lawrence A. (ed.; 1997), *Rational Choice Theory and Religion: Summary and Assessment*, London & New York: Routledge, 25-45.
- * Hamilton, Malcolm (2009), "Rational Choice Theory: A Critique", in Peter Clarke (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 116-133.
- * Voas, David, Alasdair Crockett & Daniel V. Olson (2002), "Religious Pluralism and Participation: Why Previous Research is Wrong", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 67(2), 212-230.
- * Sengers, Erik (2003), *"Al zijn wij katholiek, wij zijn Nederlanders": Opkomst en verval van de katholieke kerk in Nederland sinds 1795 vanuit rational-choice perspectief*, Delft: Eburon.
- * Klein, Thoralf & Christian Meyer (eds.; 2011), Theme Issue on "Beyond the Market: Exploring the Religious Field in Modern China", *Religion* 41(4). [The articles in this theme issue tackle various aspects of the

constitution and transformation of the modern Chinese religious field. The articles draw critically on supply side-theory (rational choice theory of religion)].

- * Finke, Roger & Rodney Stark (1992), *The Churching of America, 1776-1990*, Rutgers University Press.
- * Stark, Rodney (1997), *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*, Harper San Francisco.

G. Other Theories of Religious Markets and Fields

- * Usunier, Jean-Claude & Jörg Stolz (eds.; 2013), *Religions as Brands: New Perspectives on the Marketization of Religion and Spirituality*, in the Ashgate AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Series, Linda Woodhead and Rebecca Catto, series editors, Farnham: Ashgate.
- * Gauthier, François & Tuomas Martikainen (eds.; 2013), *Religion in Consumer Society: Brands, Consumers and Markets*, in the Ashgate AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Series, Linda Woodhead and Rebecca Catto, series editors, Farnham: Ashgate.
- * Einstein, Mara (2008), *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in a Commercial Age*, New York: Routledge.
- * Redden, Guy (2005), "The New Age: Towards a Market Model", *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 20(2), 231-246.
- * Sengers, Erik (2006), *Aantrekkelijk kerk: Nieuwe bewegingen in kerkelijk Nederland op de religieuze markt*, Delft: Eburon.
- * Sengers, Erik (2010), "Marketing in Dutch Mainline Congregations: What Religious Organizations Offer and How They Do It", *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 25(1), 21-35. [Article-length version of 2006-book].
- * Lindsay, D. Michael (2006), "Elite Power: Social Networks within American Evangelicalism", *Sociology of Religion* 67, 207-227
- * Chaves, Mark (2006), "All Creatures Great and Small: Megachurches in Context", *Review of Religious Research* 47(4), 329-346.
- * Hero, Markus (2010): *Die Neuen Formen des religiösen Lebens: Eine institutionentheoretische Analyse neuer Religiosität*, *Religion in der Gesellschaft* 28, Würzburg: Ergon.
- * Vellenga, Sipco J. (2008), "Hope for Healing: The Mobilization of Interest in Three Types of Religious Healing in the Netherlands since 1850", *Social Compass* 55(3), 330-350.

H. Other Theories of Religious/Social Organisation: Milieus and Networks

- ** Campbell, Colin (1972), "The Cult, the Cultic Milieu and Secularization", in Hill, Michael (ed.), *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain* 5, London: SCM Press, 119-136.
- * Ruth Prince & David Riches (2000): *The New Age in Glastonbury: The Construction of Religious Movements*, New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- * Possamai, Adam (2007), "Producing and Consuming New Age Spirituality: The Cultic Milieu and the Network Paradigm", in Daren Kemp and James R. Lewis (eds.), *Handbook of New Age*, Leiden & Boston: Brill, 151-165.
- * DiMaggio, Paul (2011), "Cultural Networks", in John Scott and Peter J. Carrington (ed.), *The Sage Handbook of Social Network Analysis*, London: Sage Publications, 286-301.
- * Wittel, Andreas (2001), "Toward a Network Sociality", *Theory, Culture & Society* 18(6), 51-76.
- * Campbell, Heidi A. (2012), "Understanding the Relationship between Religion Online and Offline in a Networked Society", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80(1), 64-93.
- * Streib, Heinz & Ralph W. Hood (2013), "Modeling the Religious Field: Religion, Spirituality, Mysticism, and Related World Views", *Implicit Religion* 16(2), 137-155.

Session 11* | Historiography and the Study of Religion

In 2016 I included a session on various new historical methods. It didn't work so well, but here are some readings. Some of the literature here is important for answering the sixth core question, that Stausberg does include in his overview but which I believe a full theory of religion should be able to tackle, namely how does religion develop and evolve?

A. Core Readings 2016

- * Hall, John R. (2007), "History, Methodologies, and the Study of Religion", in James Beckford & N. J. Demerath III (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, Los Angeles/London/New Delhi/Singapore: SAGE Publications, 167-188.
- * Hall, John R. (2000), *The Apocalypse at Jonestown*, in John R. Hall, with Philip D. Schuyler & Sylvanie Trinh, *Apocalypse Observed: Religious Movements and Violence in North America, Europe and Japan*, London: Routledge, 15-43. [Cultural history].
- * Bergunder, Michael (2014), "Experiments with Theosophical Truth: Gandhi, Esotericism, and Global Religious History", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 82(2), 398-426. [Global history].
- * Bowman, Marion I. (2004), "Ancient Avalon, New Jerusalem, Heart Chakra of Planet Earth: The Local and the Global in Glastonbury", *Numen* 52(2), 157-190. [Local history].
- * Hölscher, Lucian (2015), "Contradictory Concepts: An Essay on the Semantic Structure of Religious Discourses", *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 10(1), 69-88. [Conceptual history].

B. Intended Core Readings 2017

- * Kindt, Julia (2016), *Revisiting Delphi: Religion and Storytelling in Ancient Greece*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Ch. 1 "Introduction: Revisiting Delphi" as core reading].
- * Hanegraaff, Wouter J. (2016), "Religion and the Historical Imagination: Esoteric Tradition as Poetic Invention", in Christoph Boechinger & Jörg Rüpke (eds.), *Dynamics of Religion: Past and Present*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 131-153.

C. On Using Historical Sources (including digital ones)

- * Williams, Robert C. (2012), *The Historian's Toolbox: A Student's Guide to the Theory and Craft of History*, third edition, Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe. [This book is used for the basic methods course at the history department at UL].
- * Burke, Peter (2001), *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*, London: Reaktion Books. [Used in the Religious Studies BA-course on Source Criticism].
- * Howell, Martha C. & Walter Prevenier (2001), *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press. [Used in the Religious Studies BA-course on Source Criticism].
- * Plaisance, Christopher (2016), "Methods of Web Philology: Computer Metadata and Web Archiving in the Primary Source Documents of Contemporary Esotericism", *International Journal for the Study of New Religions* 7(1), 43-68.

D. Historiography as an Academic Discipline

- * Tosh, John (2015), *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Religion*, 6th edition, London and New York: Routledge.
- * Burke, Peter (ed.; 1992), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, Cambridge: Polity Press. [Important book on new approaches to history, including microhistory, oral history, and history of reading].
- * Clark, Elizabeth A. (2004), *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn*, Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press. [Interesting in part because Clark is a specialist in early Christian history].
- * Iggers, George G. (1997), *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*, with a new epilogue by the author, Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press. First published in German as *Geschichtswissenschaft im 20. Jahrhundert: Ein kritischer Überblick im*

internationalen Vergleich, Göttingen, 1993. [Elegant little book on the history of History as an academic discipline. Includes a strong overview of new approaches].

- * Hall, John R. (1997), *Cultures of Inquiry: From Epistemology to Discourse in Sociohistorical Research*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Book-length version of Hall (2007)].
- * Munslow, Alun (2006), *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies*, second edition, London & New York: Routledge. First edition 2000.
- * Burke, Peter (2005), *History and Social Theory*, second edition, Cambridge & Malden, MA.
- * Sewell, William H., Jr. (2005), *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- * Maza, Sarah (2017), *Thinking about History*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.

E. On History of Religion as a Discipline and on the Importance of History in the Study of Religion

- ** Brand, Mattias (2022c), “Cross-Cultural Generalisation in Three Research Practices: Historicising, Comparing, and Theorising in the Study of Religion’s”, *Journal of Religious History* 46(4), 653-674.
- * Wiegers, Gerard (2022), “History and the Study of Religion: Prophecy, Imagination and Religion in the Granadan Lead Books, the Works of Jacobus Palaeologus and of Nicholas of Cusa”, *Journal of Religious History* 46(4), 675-690.
- * Roubekas, Nickolas P. (2022), “Asking Old Questions Anew: On the “History” of “Religions””, *Journal of Religious History* 46(4), 632-641.
- * Rüpke, Jörg (2011), “History”, in Michael Stausberg & Steven Engler (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, London & New York: Routledge, 285-309.
- * Rüpke, Jörg (2007), *Historische Religionswissenschaft: Eine Einführung*, in the series *Religionswissenschaft heute* 5, Christopher Bochinger & Jörg Rüpke, series editors, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

F. Examples of (Socio)-Historical Studies of Religion

- * Hall, John (1987), *Gone from the Promised Land: Jonestown in American Cultural History*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction. [Specific history].
- * Eisenstadt, Shmuel Noah (1999), *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism, and Revolution: The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Configurational history].
- * Kaelber, Lutz (1998), *Schools of Asceticism: Ideology and Organization in Medieval Religious Communities*, University Park: Penn State University Press. [Configurational history].
- * Riesebrodt, Martin (1993), *Pious Passion*, Berkeley: University of California Press. [Analytical generalization].
- * Wuthnow, Robert (1989), *Communities of Discourse*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press. [Analytical generalization].
- * Finke, Roger & Rodney Stark (1992), *The Churching of America, 1776-1990*, Rutgers University Press. [Theory application].
- * Stark, Rodney (1997), *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*, Harper San Francisco. [Theory application].
- * Otto, Bernd-Christian, Susanne Rau & Jörg Rüpke (eds.; 2015), *History and Religion: Narrating a Religious Past*, in the series *Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten*, Berlin: De Gruyter.
- * Sørensen, Jesper (2011), “Past Minds: Present Historiography and Cognitive Science”, in Jesper Sørensen & Luther Martin (eds.), *Past Minds: Studies in Cognitive Historiography*, London: Equinox, 179-196.

G. Microhistory, Local History, and the Study of Religion

- * Ginzburg, Carlo (1980), *Cheese and Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Millar*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. [Most famous work of micro-history].
- * Kippenberg, Hans G. & Brigitte Luchesi (eds.; 1995), *Lokale Religionsgeschichte*, Marburg: diagonal-Verlag.

H. Global (and Regional) History and Global Analysis of the Religion System

- ** Werner, Michael & Bénédicte Zimmermann (2006), "Beyond Comparison: *Historie Croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity", *History and Theory* 45(1), 30-50.
- * Maltese, Giovanni & Julian Strube (2021), "Global Religious History", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 33(3-4), 229-257.
- * Bergunder, Michael (2021), "Global Religious History in Theory and Practice", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 33(3-4), 441-462.
- * Moyn, Samuel & Andrew Sartori (2013): "Approaches to Global Intellectual History", in Samuel Moyn & Andrew Sartori (ed.), *Global Intellectual History*, Columbia University Press, 3-30.
- * Conrad, Sebastian (2016), *What Is Global History?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. [If you're interested in global history, begin here, esp. with Ch. 4]
- * Crossley, Pamela Kyle (2007), *What is Global History?* Cambridge: Polity.
- * Bayly, Christopher A. (2004), *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons*, Oxford: Blackwell. [Develops a global history approach to the modern world. Includes a chapter on 'Empires of Religion'].
- * Osterhammel, Jürgen (2009), *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, in the series *Historische Bibliothek der Gerda Henkel Stiftung*, München: Beck. [Translated into English as *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, but the UB only has the German version. Includes a chapter on religion in the 19th century].
- * Skocpol, Theda and Margaret Somers (1980), "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22(2), 174-197.
- * Beyer, Peter (2006), *Religions in Global Society*, London & New York: Routledge. [Uses Niklas Luhmann's systems theory to theorise the global religion system].
- * Beyer, Peter (2007), "Globalization and Glocalization", in James Beckford & N.J. Demerath III (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, Los Angeles/London/New Delhi/Singapore: SAGE Publications, 98-117. [Article length version of Beyer (2006)].
- * Kippenberg, Hans G., Jörg Rüpke and Kocku von Stuckrad (eds.; 2009), *Europäische Religionsgeschichte: Ein mehrfacher Pluralismus*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (UTB), 2 Vols. [Takes a regional, rather than a global, national, or tradition-focused take on religious history].
- * Ascione, Gennaro & Iain Chambers (2016), "Global Historical Sociology: Theoretical and Methodological Issues – an Introduction", *Cultural Sociology* 10(2), 301-316.
- * Sedgwick, Mark (2023), *Traditionalism: The Radical Project for Restoring Sacred Order*, London & New York: Penguin.
- * Borup, Jørn (2004), "Zen and the Art of Inverting Orientalism: Buddhism, Religious Studies and Interrelated Networks", in Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz & Randi R. Warne (eds.), *New Approaches to the Study of Religion. Volume 1: Regional, Critical and Historical Approaches*, Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 451-487.
- * Borup, Jørn & Marianne Qvortrup Fibiger (eds.; 2017), *Eastspirit: Transnational Spirituality and Religious Circulation in East and West*, in the series *International Studies in Religion and Society* 29, Lori G. Beaman and Peter Beyer, series editors, Leiden: Brill.

I. Conceptual History (on the Concept 'Religion')

- * Hampsher-Monk, Iain, Karin Tilmans, and Frank van Vree (eds.; 1998), *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- * Richter, Melvin (1995), *The History of Political and Social Concepts: A Critical Introduction*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- * Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich (2006), *Dimension und Grenzen der Begriffsgeschichte*, Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink Verlag.
- * Masuzawa, Tomoko (2005), *The Invention of World Religions, Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*, Chicago: Chicago University Press. [Famous book on how the notion of 'religion' was exported from Europe to the rest of the world].

- * Nongbri, Brent (2013), *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- * Peng-Keller, Simon (2019), “Genealogies of spirituality: An historical analysis of a travelling term”, *Journal for the Study of Spirituality* 9: 86–98.

J. Cultural History (and Religion)

- * Burke, Peter (2008), *What is Cultural History?* second edition, Cambridge: Polity.
- * Huizinga, Johan (1955), *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, Boston: The Beacon Press. First published in Dutch as *Homo Ludens: Proeve eener bepaling van het spel-element der cultuur*, Haarlem H. D. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon N. V, 1940. [Of the classic sources of inspiration for cultural history].
- * Hervieu-Léger, Danièle (2000), *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, Cambridge: Polity Press, translated by Simon Lee from French: *La Religion pour Mémoire*, Paris: Éditions du Cerf 1993.
- * Assman, Jan (2006), *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies*, in the series *Cultural Memory in the Present*, Mieke Bal and Hent de Vries, editors, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Translated by Rodney Livingstone from *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis*, 2000.

K. History of Mentalities applied to Religion

- * Versnel, Henk S. (ed.; 1981), *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World*, in the series *Studies in Greek and Roman Religion* 2, H.S. Versnel, series editor, Leiden: E.J. Brill. [Henk Versnel’s own article on prayer is particularly good].
- * Veyne, Paul (1988), *Did the Greeks believe in their myths? An essay on the constitutive imagination*, Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, translated from French by Paula Wissing. Originally published as *Les Grecs ont-ils cru à leurs mythes?*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1983.

L. Cultural Evolution of Religion

- ** Bellah, Robert N. (2011), *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age*, Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press (Belknap). [Covers the evolution of religion from the first *homo sapiens* to the so-called Axial Age].
- ** Strathern, Alan (2019), *Unearthly Powers: Religious and Political Change in World History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Covers the global history/evolution of history from the Axial Age to the present].
- * Bellah, Robert (1964), “Religious Evolution”, *American Sociological Review* 29(3), 358-374.
- * Baumard, Nicolas & Pascal Boyer (2013b), “Explaining Moral Religions”, *Trends in Cognitive Science* 17(6), 272-280.
- * Donald, Merlin (2001), *A Mind So Rare: The Evolution of Human Consciousness*, New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company.
- * Norenzayan, Ara (2013), *Big Gods: How Religion Transformed Cooperation and Conflict*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. [Theoretically ambitious but written by a psychologist without much knowledge of the history of religion].
- * Norenzayan, Ara and Will M. Gervais (2012), “The Cultural Evolution of Religion”, in Edward Slingerland & Mark Collard (eds.), *Creating Consilience: Integrating the Sciences and the Humanities*, New York: Oxford UP, 243-265.
- * Descola, Philippe (2013), *Beyond Nature and Culture*, translated by Janet Lloyd, Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press. Originally published in French 2005. [Discusses four different ‘ontologies’ that (religious) worldviews can have – animism, totemism, analogism, and naturalism – which can be roughly placed on a historical-evolutionary trajectory].