

Religious Studies 104
Seminar: Problems in the Study
of Religion
Winter Quarter, 1984

Instructor: Professor
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INSTRUCTIONS: Because Religious Studies 104 had been designed as a seminar that was being offered for religious studies majors, and, indeed, required for the major, the original intention was to base the final grade on (1) performance in seminar sessions as well as (2) performance on a written essay or term paper that was to be submitted before the end of the academic quarter. Because the enrollment is high, and there are a significant number of non-majors in the class, the original intention has been altered, as follows:

- (1) Students may elect to submit a term essay or take the final examination
- (2) Religious studies majors and non-majors will be graded in such fashion that they will not be in direct competition for grades
- (3) Students (religious studies majors and non-religious studies majors) who do not submit an essay will take the final examination on a take-home basis.

TAKE HOME EXAMINATION

Instructions: Answer three of the following questions, working no longer than three hours on the entire exam:

- (1) Select one theoretician who has made a distinctive contribution toward the study of religion, and discuss his/her contribution.
- (2) What, in your opinion, would qualify as "that without which religion would not be what it is?" How and where do you see that factor or quality exemplified? (Be specific and offer examples.) Why, in your opinion, is it fundamental to religion?
- (3) Though there are laws regarding the separation of church and state, religious studies is a viable academic enterprise within state universities. What is the purpose of such study? List some of the achievements. What are some of the continuing challenges?

- (4) Make the case either for or against the proposition that the academic study of religion (in the objective manner prescribed, for example, at UCSB) is compatible with personal interests in cultivating the religious life. Be specific.
- (5) Of all of the essays you encountered in the "READER" that was required for this course, which one did you find most compelling? What is its thesis? Why did you find it compelling? Explain and discuss.