

Description of Course:

This course is the third section of a three-part sequence which surveys the history of religious thought in the western world from the time of its origin to the present day. Its general purpose is the examination of significant developments in western religious thought in the "modern era." Hence, its preoccupation is the development and background of religious thought in the west during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Instead of surveying that body of material in the light of its chief movements or figures, however, the lecturer has chosen to focus upon two dominant contemporary themes. The themes isolated--and to which the men and the movements will be related--are the following: 1) the relation of life to death; and 2) the current quest for a meaningful transcendence. These themes constitute the fundamental preoccupations of the course, and will serve as focal points to which historical, philosophical, theological, and literary material will be referred.

The specific purpose of the course, therefore, is the exploration of these two dominant themes both in terms of their historical background and their typical contemporary formulations and expressions. The lecturer hopes that an academic term's worth of corporate attention to these problematic issues will result in significant clarification as well as insight into some of the directions one might expect western religious thought to take in the future.

Outline of Course:

Week of:

Reading Assignment

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| 1. October 3: Introduction of Course & Its Issues | 1. Peter De Vries, <u>The Blood of the Lamb</u> (Signet Book) |
| 2. October 10: The Alternation between Life and Death | 2. Hans Jonas, "Life, Death, and the Body in the Theory of Being," in <u>Review of Metaphysics</u> , Vol. XIX, No. 1, 1965, pp. 2-23, esp. p. 3-8. A portion of this will be distributed in class. |
| 3. October 17: Cultural Transformations | 3. John S. Dunne, <u>The City of the Gods</u> (New York: Macmillan, 1965), chap. 10, pp. 217-231. Supplemental reading: Harvey Cox, <u>The Secular City</u> (New York: Macmillan, 1965), esp. Intro. pp. 1-13. |
| 4. October 24: Is Death God? | 4. John S. Dunne, review of Thomas J. J. Altizer and William Hamilton, <u>Radical Theology and the Death of God</u> (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965) in <u>The National Catholic Reporter</u> , Vol. 2, No. 30, May 25, 1965, pp. 5, 7. (To be distributed in class.) For comparative purposes, see the <u>Letter of St. Ignatius to the Romans</u> (to be distributed in class). |

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5. October 31: Hallowing and Depicting Transcendence
6. November 7: The Relation of Logic to Religious Interest
7. November 14: Atheism and the Theistic Scheme
8. November 21: The Relation between Holiness and Otherness
9. November 29: Temporal Transcendence
10. December 5: Summary of Course and Concluding Reflections
5. Martin Buber, The Eclipse of God (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1952). *specific paper to be announced*
6. John Wisdom, "Gods," in Philosophy and Psycho-Analysis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), pp. 149-159; or in A.N.D. Flew, Logic and Language (Oxford: Blackwell, 1951); or in Langford & Abernethy, Philosophy of Religion: A Book of Readings (New York: Macmillan, 1962), pp. 340-349. (All on reserve.)
7. Paul L. Holmer, "Atheism and Theism: A Comment on an Academic Prejudice," in Lutheran World. Vol XIII, No. 1, 1966, pp. 14-25.
8. Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory (New York: Viking Press, 1940).
9. Teilhard de Chardin, Building the Earth (New York, Dimension Book), available from Cross-Currents; and Teilhard de Chardin, "The Heart of the Problem," from The Future of Man (New York: Harper, 1964, pp. 260-269. (to be distributed in class).
- ask about preference*

Course Assignment:

1. Preparation of two relatively short papers (1500-2500 words each) dealing with subjects pertinent to the course outline. Preferably, one of the papers should be primarily expository in character (e.g. "Harvey Cox' Interpretation of Secularity," or "The Distinction between I-Thou and I-It in Buber," or "The Religious Significance of Evolution in Teilhard," or "A Biologist's Look at Life," etc. And, preferably, one of the papers should be primarily problematic in intention (that is, it should attempt to clarify, come to terms with, or isolate the main ingredients of a particular dilemma, question, or unresolved issue--e.g. "Does the Intellect have Limits in the Religious Domain?", "Is traditional faith accessible today?" or "Are Immortality and transcendence two forms of the same interest?" etc.).
- a. The first paper is due by class time, October 25.
- b. The second paper is due by class time, November 17. Note: papers not turned in on time will be discounted in proportion to their lateness, regardless of quality.
2. Final examination on lecture and reading materials: The grade on the final examination will constitute three-fifths of the grade for the course:
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| Paper A | 20% |
| Paper B | 20% |
| Final | 60% |
| | <hr/> |
| | 100% |

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Supplement for those taking Religious Studies 31 for upper-division credit:

The only significant alteration of the course as previously outlined and described occurs in the area of assignment. Though the same three efforts are required--i.e. the two papers and the final examination--greater latitude is allowed in the choice as well as in the execution of the assigned papers. In addition, the final examination will be upgraded so that the upper-division student can utilize a greater degree of his background training.

1. The final exam will include a question on:
 - a) the relation between the concerns (purposes, interests, objectives, etc.) of religion and the concerns of any one or more of the following disciplines: philosophy, literature, and theology.

or

- b) the chief characteristics, or positive features, of religion (as illustrated in a significant portion of the materials pertinent to this course).
2. The final exam will also test the upper-division student's ability with respect to an expanded reading list to include at least three of the following:
 - a) Hans Jonas' article in its entirety (op. cit.); or, Hans Jonas, The Phenomenon of Life (New York: Harper, 1966).
 - b) Hans W. Frei's survey of nineteenth and early-twentieth century developments in western religious thought in Faith and Ethics, ed. Paul Ramsey (New York: Harper, 1957), pp. 9-116.
 - c) Commentaries on John Wisdom's "Gods" by Flew, Hare, Mitchell, and Crombie, New Essays in Philosophical Theology (London: SCM Press, 1955), for example, or John Hick, The Existence of God (New York: Macmillan, 1964), etc.
 - d) Teilhard de Chardin, The Phenomenon of Man (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1961); or Karl Rahner, Hominization: The Evolutionary Origin of Man as a Theological Problem (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965).
 - e) William F. Lynch, "The Imagination and the Finite," in Thought, Vol. XXXIII, No. 129, 1958, pp. 205-228. (Call Number: Ref. AP, 1, T 48, v. 33).
 - f) S.G.F. Brandon, "The Origin of Death in Some Ancient Near Eastern Religions," in Religious Studies, Vol. I, No. 2, 1966, pp. 217-228. Or Brandon, History, Time, and Deity (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1965).
 - g) William T. Jones, The Romantic Syndrome: Toward A New Method in Cultural Anthropology and History of Ideas (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961).

* In consultation with the instructor, the student is free to substitute one title of his own interest for one of the three required readings--if it is clear that the substitution is related to the course material.