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Academy 208
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Office hours:
Thursdays 12:30–2:00
or by appointment

Religion 210: Invitation to the Study of Religion: Asceticism

Mondays 7:00-10:00PM
BW 141

General Course Description:

The purpose of REL210 is twofold: to prepare majors and minors in the field of Religion for the rigors of the upper-level REL410 research seminar, and to open students to new perspectives on the possibilities for religious traditions of the world to enhance their practitioners' lives. Students in 210 will engage in systematic reflection around the common topic of asceticism, beginning with readings and open discussions and culminating in a research paper.

We will be defining asceticism as “practices which purposefully deny sensual pleasures to the body for the purposes of spiritual development.” We will be asking how different religious traditions incentivize and promise rewards for ascetic practice: how can ostensibly limiting one's physical comfort or pleasure actually enhance religious people's lives? We will investigate the ways that various religious traditions posit counter-worlds, and asking how ascetic practices can help advance practitioners toward those counter-worlds. We will also be inquiring the extent to which clear spiritual laws may be discernable across ascetic practices from various traditions we examine.

The course will attend closely to the processes of research and writing, and will involve extensive writing instruction and peer workshopping. Beyond enhancing students' technical abilities in inquiry and expression, this process will help students grow in their sense of self-awareness, self-criticism, and the discipline required to work deeply and repeatedly at a goal. In this way, the form of the class will in some measure draw students into deeper engagement with the self-forming work of ascetic practice.

Moreover, as the class coincides with Lent, students will be invited to undertake an ascetic practice of their own, and to reflect with their peers about the effects of purposefully limiting their own physical comfort and pleasure.

Required Texts:

The following text will be available for purchase at the Cobber Bookstore:

Elisa J. Sobo and Sandra Bell, eds. *Celibacy, Culture, and Society* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2001)

Any other texts for the semester will be available in electronic formats through Moodle. Students are expected to come to each class having read and reflected on the selected text in advance, and are requested to have the text with them in class to consult.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:
RELIGION 210 STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end Religion 210 course, students will demonstrate

I. content knowledge about the special topic of the semester

II. formal skills in research and writing

- a) an ability to identify appropriate sources, and to read those sources for both information and theoretical categories;
- b) an ability to produce an extended piece of formal academic writing, which will include:
 - i) clearly defined introduction, body, and conclusion
 - ii) coherent multi-paragraph sections
 - iii) correct use of Chicago-style citations
- c) an ability to blend information-presentation with theoretical analysis

III. capacity for meta-reflection on writing

- a) the ability to give constructive feedback to peers, and to meaningfully edit their own written work based on feedback from others
- b) the ability to recognize weaknesses in their writing process or written product on their own, and discuss strategies to intervene or improve
- c) the effort to envision the audience of their writing, and to adjust their presentation of information accordingly

ASSIGNMENTS, GRADING STRUCTURE, AND COURSE POLICIES:

FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT	100 points / 33%
WRITING PROCESS	100 points / 33%
Blogging (30 points)	
Submitting drafts for peer review (20 points)	
Peer review (50 points)	
CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE	100 points / 33%
Attendance (30 points)	
In-class participation (70 points)	
	<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 300 points / 100%

RESEARCH PROJECT AND PROCESS

- A timeline for the overall research process is provided below in the syllabus.
- More precise expectations for the final project (including length and format) will be circulated in a separate file.
- Blogging. Each student is expected to blog their research progress via the class blog on the Moodle site. Each student should file a blog post by the end of the day on Sunday of each week, and then each student should come to class on Monday having read their peers' posts.
 - Blog posts are expected to be informal in tone, but polished in their presentation. Please guard against typos, grammatical errors, etc.
 - The purpose of the blog is to publicly share our research goals and accomplishments of the week, commit to new goals for the coming week, and reflect on the research/writing process. This exercise will make the research/writing process social, accountable, and (on a limited basis) public.
- Peer review. An important part of the writing process will be providing feedback to each other as we develop drafts. We will work on specific writing concepts during class workshops, and then it will be your job to apply those different techniques of analysis to each other's drafts.
 - You will receive part of your points for peer review based on whether or not you submit substantive drafts for your reviewer in a timely manner. This includes uploading drafts of the body and the full paper on Moodle, and bringing printed drafts of the intro/conclusion to class. (4 drafts x 5 points / draft = 20 points)
 - You will receive the rest of your points for peer review based on the quality and timeliness of the comments you provide to your assigned author.

ATTENDANCE

- Since there are only fifteen class meetings during the semester, attendance is imperative.
- Absence policies:
 - Each student may miss one class with no penalty to their overall grade.
 - The second and third absences will each result in a 15-point deduction from the Attendance points.
 - If a student is absent for a fourth time (or more), they will automatically fail the course.
 - In the event that the student has a significant issue that interferes with their attendance, which is cleared by the faculty member, they will have an opportunity to make up their absence(s) through a 2-3 page essay, submitted by email, that explains everything that they missed during the class period in question.

IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION

- Since this is a seminar course, active in-class participation is important. Grades for in-class participation will be awarded based upon whether a student
 - actively listens and periodically contributes to discussions,
 - has done the assigned reading and has brought a copy to class
 - prepares anything the professor asks of them
 - listens and responds respectfully to other students
 - participates in in-class activities
 - is on time and alert, and does not fall victim to their cell phones or other electronics

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- This course will be bound by Concordia College's academic integrity policy. A link to the policy will be provided on Moodle.

LATE POLICIES

- Late work will be considered up until the relevant assessment process ends: either when your peer-reviewer needs to submit her/his work, or the professor files grades for the assignment.
- Extenuating circumstances must be presented to (and cleared by) the professor *at least 24 hours in advance* of a deadline in order to avoid penalties.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

Week 1: Introduction January 4	
Prior to class:	--
Bring to class:	--
In-class:	Review syllabus Discussion: Asceticism: What is it, and why are Americans allergic to it? Writing workshop: Good questions

Week 2 January 11		
Prior to class:	<u>Blog</u> : What tradition(s) are you considering researching for your paper, and how are you going to scout ideas? <u>Email</u> Dr. Mocko two essays you have submitted in previous semesters <u>Read</u> : Sobo Ch. 3 (Quirko), AND Freiberg, "Locating the Ascetic's Habitat" [M]	<u>Research Project</u> : Start scouting your topic
Bring to class:	A hardcopy of one essay/paper you are proud of	
In-class:	Discussion of readings Research discussion: how to read Writing discussion: martini theory of an argument	

Week 3 January 18		
Prior to class:	<u>Blog</u> : What topics have you discarded and why? What are you leaning toward now? <u>Read</u> : Babb, "The Great Choice" [M]	<u>Research Project</u> : Get serious about topic
Bring to class:	--	
In-class:	Discussion of reading Writing discussion: themes Library workshop & research time	

Week 4 January 25		
Prior to class:	<u>Blog</u> : What topic do you want to write about, and why? What sources are you seeing? <u>Read</u> : Sobo, Ch. 1 (Phillimore), AND Sobo, Ch. 8 (Khandelwal)	<u>Research Project</u> : Commit to topic; locate sources
Bring to class:	Brief written statement of your selected topic	
In-class:	Discussion of readings Research workshop: refining topics Writing workshop: claim/reason/evidence	

Week 5 February 1		
Prior to class:	<u>Blog</u> : What sources are you finding so far, and what specific challenges are you facing? <u>Read</u> : Sobo, Ch. 2 (Gutschow), AND Sobo, Ch. 7 (Kawanami)	<u>Research Project</u> : Prepare an annotated bibliography
Bring to class:	--	
In-class:	Discussion of readings Research discussion: taking effective notes Writing workshop: Index Positions	

Week 6 February 8		
Prior to class:	<u>Blog</u> : What sources are turning out well, and what aren't? How is your bibliography maturing? <u>Read</u> : Sobo, Ch. 6 (Duke), AND Schielke, "Being Good in Ramadan" [M]	<u>Research Project</u> : Read/take notes from sources from annotated bibliography; follow those sources to relevant new sources
Bring to class:	Annotated bibliography (hard copy)	
In-class:	Discussion of readings Research discussion: evaluating a bibliography Writing discussion: Index Positions for multi-paragraph sections	

Week 7 February 15		
Prior to class:	<u>Blog</u> : How is your reading going? In what ways are you surprised/challenged/needing to change direction? How much time do you think you will need to complete the draft of your paper's body, & how will you schedule that time? <u>Read</u> : Sobo, Ch 12 (Fleisher & Shaw)	<u>Research Project</u> : Read/take notes from sources off evolving bibliography
Bring to class:	--	
In-class:	Discussion of reading Research/writing discussion and workshop: Statement of Purpose	

*Midsemester Recess
No class Monday February 22*

Week 8 February 29		
Prior to class:	<u>Blog</u> : How much have you written so far? How will you break down the tasks you have left day by day?	<u>Research Project</u> : DRAFT OF BODY (upload by end of day on Saturday March 5)
Bring to class:	Statement of Purpose	
In-class:	Research discussion: Chicago footnotes Writing discussion: Warrants Writing workshop: Statements of Purpose	

Week 9 March 7		
Prior to class:	<u>Blog</u> : Did you get behind with writing? How proud were you of the product you uploaded?	<u>Research Project</u> : Peer review of body; start writing introduction
Bring to class:	--	
In-class:	Student presentation of research information Writing discussion: Introductions	

Week 10 March 14		
Prior to class:	<u>Upload</u> peer review comments <u>Blog</u> : What did you learn from the peer review process? How are you planning your writing time for the coming week?	<u>Research Project</u> : INTRODUCTION (draft for class, then edit after class)
Bring to class:	Introduction draft (hardcopy)	
In-class:	Student presentation of research information Writing workshop: Introductions	

Week 11 March 21		
Prior to class:	<u>Blog</u> : Which did you find easier, content-writing (the body) or argument-writing (the intro/conclusion), and why? How are you going to integrate the draft pieces together, and what edits do you plan to do over break?	<u>Research Project</u> : CONCLUSION (draft for class, then edit after class)
Bring to class:	Conclusion draft (hardcopy)	
In-class:	Student presentation of research information Writing discussion/workshop: conclusions	

Easter Recess
No class Monday March 28

Week 12 April 4		
Prior to class:	NO BLOG THIS WEEK <u>Upload</u> full draft of paper for peer review	<u>Research Project:</u> FULL DRAFT (upload by class time); peer review
Bring to class:	A paragraph from the body of your paper	
In-class:	Student presentation of research information Research discussion: Giving helpful feedback Writing workshop: Cores and core-violations	

Week 13 April 11		
Prior to class:	<u>Upload</u> peer review comments <u>Blog</u> : What have you learned about your own writing by doing peer review? What do you most need to work on this week?	<u>Research Project:</u> Edit
Bring to class:	A different paragraph from body of your paper	
In-class:	Student presentation of research information Writing workshop: Character	

Week 14 April 18		
Prior to class:	<u>Blog</u> : What changes have you made based on the peer review feedback? What writing concepts from the semester are proving most helpful to you as you edit?	<u>Research Project:</u> Edit and finalize
Bring to class:	A different paragraph from body of your paper	
In-class:	Student presentation of research information Research discussion: Accepting and responding to feedback Writing workshop: Nominalizations	

FINAL CLASS MEETING April 25		
Prior to class:	Print and prepare your final paper	
Bring to class:	THE FINAL PAPER (in hard copy)	
In-class:	Final discussion	