**HREL 41100: Readings in the History of Religions: the “Chicago School”**

Spring Quarter 2006  
Monday 14:00-16:50  
Swift Hall 403  
Christian K. Wedemeyer  
Office Hours M/Tu 9:30–10:30  
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**Course description:**
This course will be devoted primarily to the close, critical reading of some representative works of the two most famous names associated with the History of Religions at the University of Chicago: Joachim Wach and Mircea Eliade. Close attention will be paid to Wach’s Habilitation thesis, entitled *Religionswissenschaft*, his *Sociology of Religion*, and several of his essays. We will also read and discuss programmatical essays of Eliade, his *Myth of the Eternal Return* and *Patterns in Comparative Religion*. A selection of critical and interpretative essays will supplement these core texts, as we attempt to unpack and contextualize their arguments. We will also look briefly at a few programmatic essays on the discipline by some subsequent representatives of this tradition, such as Joseph Kitagawa, Charles Long, and Jonathan Smith.

**PQ:** DVSC 30100 or equivalent background in Religion and the Human Sciences.

The following books are available for purchase at the Seminary Cooperative Bookstore:
- Eliade, *Myth of the Eternal Return*
- Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*

The remaining readings will be available through electronic reserve (where possible) or regular reserve. Copies of out of print books, such as Wach’s *Introduction*, may be obtained via Bookfinder.com.

**Schedule of Class Meetings:**

**Week One (31 March 2006): Introduction/Orientation/Visit to Special Collections**

**Week Two (7 April 2006): The Mythos of the “Chicago School” and its Prehistory**

**Readings:**
- Kitagawa, “History of Religions at Chicago”
- Long, “A Look at the Chicago Tradition in the History of Religions” (in *HR: RaP*)
- Kitagawa, “History of Religions in America” (in *HR: Essays in Methodology*)
- Haydon, “History of Religions”

**Week Three (14 April 2006): Wach I (Discipline): Allgemeine Religionswissenschaft**

**Readings:**
- Wach, *Introduction to the History of Religions*, pp. 1–142
- Wach, “The Meaning and Task of the History of Religions” (in *HR: EoPU*)

**Week Four (21 April 2006): Wach II (Theology): Sociology of Religion**

**Readings:**
- Wach, “Sociology of Religion”
- Wach, “The Problem of Truth in Religion”
- Wach, “The Self-Understanding of Modern Man”

**Week Five (28 April 2006): Wach III (Applications): Typology**

**Readings:**
- Wach, “The Concept of the ‘Classical’ in the Study of Religion”
- Wach, “Universals in Religion”
- Wach, “The Place of the History of Religions in the Study of Theology”
- Wach, “On Teaching History of Religions”
- Wach, *Comparative Religion*, pp. 2–58
Week Six (5 May 2006): Eliade I (Discipline)
Readings: Eliade, “The History of Religions and a New Humanism”
Eliade, “The History of Religions in Retrospect: 1912 and After”
Eliade, “Crisis and Renewal in the History of Religions”

Week Seven (12 May 2006): Eliade II (Theology): Cosmos and History
Readings: Eliade, The Myth of the Eternal Return (entire)
Eliade, No Souvenirs, pp. 67–103
Eliade, “Homo Faber and Homo Religiosus” (in HR: RaP)

Week Eight (19 May 2006): Eliade III (Applications): Morphology
Readings: Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, Foreword, Chapter One, and Conclusions
Eliade, “Foreword” to Shamanism
Smith, “Acknowledgements” (Parts One and Two)

Week Nine (26 May 2006): Later Chicagoans
Kitagawa, “Religious Studies and the History of Religions”
Kitagawa, “History of Religions: Then and Now” (in HR:RaP)
Smith, “A Twice-Told Tale: The History of the History of Religions’ History”

Week Ten (2 June 2006): Presentation of Student Projects
Readings: none

**Final Paper due Wednesday 7 June 2006 in Swift 201 by 3:00PM**

Course Reading Bibliography (n.b. newer editions may be available and/or used)


