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

Winter Quarter 2013
Monday 1:30–4:20PM
Marty Center Library

Christian K. Wedemeyer
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Office Hours W 1:30–2:30 and Th 1:00–2:00PM
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Course description:
This course will be devoted primarily to the close, critical reading and historical assessment of representative works of the most famous names associated with the History of Religions at the University of Chicago. The course will begin by considering some prior historiography of the “Chicago School” and the work of A. Eustace Haydon, before looking closely at the work of Joachim Wach, Mircea Eliade, Joseph M. Kitagawa, Charles H. Long, Jonathan Z. Smith, Wendy Doniger, and Bruce Lincoln. Students will develop and present a research paper over the course of the term, and are encouraged to consult the archived papers of Wach and Eliade, or other relevant documents in the university library system.

PQ: Classical Theories of Religion or equivalent background.

The following books are available for purchase at the Seminary Cooperative Bookstore:
- Eliade, *Myth of the Eternal Return*
- Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*
- Wedemeyer and Doniger, *Hermeneutics, Politics, and the History of Religions* (optional)

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 (7 January 2013): Introductory Session
Readings: none

Week Two (14 January 2013): 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”
- Kitagawa, “History of Religions in America”
- Haydon, “From Comparative Religion to History of Religions”
- Haydon, “History of Religions”
- Haydon, “Twenty-five Years of History of Religions”
- Haydon, “What Constitutes a Scientific Interpretation of Religion?”

Week Three (21 January 2013): Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (No class)

Week Four (28 January 2013): Wach I (Discipline)
Readings: Wach, *Introduction to the History of Religions*, pp. 1–142
- Wach, “The Concept of the ‘Classical’ in the Study of Religion”
- Wach, “Universals in Religion”
Reference: “Bibliography of Joachim Wach”

Week Five (4 February 2013): Wach II (Applications)
- Wach, “Sociology of 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 (11 February 2013): 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”
Eliade, The Myth of the Eternal Return (entire)
Eliade, “The ‘History of Religion’ as a Branch of Knowledge”
Reference: “Bibliography of Mircea Eliade”

Week Seven (18 February 2013): Eliade II (Applications)
Readings: Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, pp. 1–33, 367–465
Eliade, No Souvenirs, pp. 67–103
Eliade, “Homo Faber and Homo Religiosus”

Week Eight (25 February 2013): Joseph M. Kitagawa and Charles H. Long
Readings: Kitagawa, “Religious Studies and the History of Religions”
Kitagawa, “Convergence and Prejudice in the United States”
Kitagawa, “The Making of a Historian of Religions”
Kitagawa, “History of Religions: Then and Now”
Alles and Kitagawa, “Afterword: Dialectic of Parts and Whole”
Long, “Prolegomenon to a Religious Hermeneutic”
Long, “Archaism and Hermeneutics”
Long, “Interpretations of Black Religion in America”

Week Nine (4 March 2013): Jonathan Zittel Smith
Smith, “Acknowledgements” Parts I and II
Smith, To Take Place, pp. 1–23
Smith, “Adde Parvum Parvo Magnus Acervus Erit”
Smith, “Religion, Religions, Religious”
Smith, “Tillich[‘s] Remains”

Week Ten (11 March 2013): Wendy Doniger and Bruce Lincoln
O’Flaherty, Śiva, pp. 1–39
Doniger, The Implied Spider, pp. 1–25 and 137–158
Doniger, The Hindus, 1–49
Lincoln, “Two Notes on Modern Rituals”
Lincoln, “The Metaphors of Mr. Smart”
Smart, “History of Religions and its Conversation Partners”
Lincoln, “Theses on Method”
Lincoln (with Grottanelli), “Theses on Comparison”
Lincoln, Holy Terrors, pp. 1–18, 51–61
Lincoln, “The (Un)Discipline of Religious Studies”

Exam Week (TBA, 18 March 2013?): Presentation of Student Projects
Readings: none

**Final Papers due Wednesday 20 March 2013 in Swift 204 by 3:00PM**
Course Reading Bibliography


Lincoln, Bruce. “The Metaphors of Mr. Smart: A Response,” unpublished manuscript.


