

RELS 450.001 Seminar in Religious Studies  
 Religious Symbolism  
 Dr. June McDaniel  
 Spring, 2007

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Text: Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*  
 Carl Jung, *Man and His Symbols*  
 Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*  
 Mircea Eliade, *Man and His Symbols*  
 Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*  
 St John of Damascus, *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*  
 Swami Swahananda, *Mother Worship*

Grading: Grades will be based upon 3 tests, 1 presentation and 1 paper, each will be worth 1/5 of the total class grade. Test #3 will count as the final, and it will not be a comprehensive test. Class participation will count as half of your presentation grade.

The passing grade is D-, or 60. Grades are not curved. They range as:

A	94 and over
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
F	below 60

Attendance: There will be FIVE allowed absences. On the fourth absence, I shall note a warning on the attendance roster, that one more missed class will cause a student to be dropped. If you have any excused absences (illness, emergency), please let me know and I will cross them off. An additional point is given on the total grade for perfect attendance.

**Papers:** Papers should be based on ideas and approaches covered in class, and should be at least 12 full pages in length, typed (longer papers are fine, but shorter papers will have points deducted). Papers should have a title page with the title, name, class and date, and a bibliography of at least 3 books (internet and encyclopedia sources do not count for these, though they may be added as extra sources). I shall hand out a writing guide to help in the organization of the paper. You should discuss your topic with me about two weeks before the paper is due, and I will give you helpful suggestions. If the paper is late, 10 points will be deducted per class late.

Papers should deal with systems of religious symbolism in a particular religious ritual, or a sacred texts, or a tradition of religious artwork. Use three different interpretations of religious symbolism for your analyses, and discuss which one you consider to be the best one.

**Presentation** Students should divide into groups of three, and describe the religious symbolism involved a set of religious novels or films, or rituals at a religious locale, or in the life of a holy person. Make use of media, imagery, thick description. Let us know how the symbolism works in a particular time, place and culture.

## SYLLABUS

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Date	Topic	Assignment
1/8	Introduction	
1/10	Some Issues in Religious Symbolism	
1/12	Hermeneutics and Symbolism	
1/15	No class: MLK Day	
1/17	Totem and Taboo Freudian Theory	Freud, chap 1
1/19	Totem and Taboo Taboo and Danger	Freud, chap 2
1/22	Totem and Taboo, Animism	Freud, chap 3

1/24	Totem and Taboo, Totemism, childhood	Freud, chap 4
1/26	Jungian theory, Dreams and the unconscious	Jung, chap 1
1/29	Symbols, heroes, initiation	Jung, chap 2
1/31	Individuation, shadow, anima and animus	Jung, chap 3
2/2	Symbols in art and analysis	Jung, chaps 4 and 5
2/5	Symbols in Erikson, Maslow, Hillman	
2/7	TEST #1	
2/9	Eliadean theory, the center	Eliade, chap 1
2/12	India, time and eternity	Eliade, chap 2
2/14	Knots and Bondage	Eliade, chap 3
2/16	Water, shells, history	Eliade, chap 4 and 5
2/19	The holy and the numinous theory	Otto, chaps 1-3
2/21	Tremendum, mysterium, religious emotion	Otto, chaps 4-7
2/23	The holy and the numinous examples	Otto, chaps 8-12
2/26	Development and evolution	Otto, chaps 13-21
2/28	Turner and ritual symbolism	
3/2	Feuerbach, Marx, and the rise of secular theory	

SPRING BREAK

3/5	Break	
3/7	Break	
3/9	Break	
3/12	Symbolism in mystical Judaism	Scholem, chaps 1-2
3/14	Kabbalah and myth	Scholem, chap 3
3/16	Kabbalistic ritual	Scholem, chap 4-5
3/19	TEST #2	
3/21	The Iconoclastic controversy First argument	St John, 1 <sup>st</sup> treatise etc
3/23	Second argument	St. John, 2 <sup>nd</sup> treatise etc
3/26	Third argument	St John, 3 <sup>rd</sup> treatise etc
3/28	Hindu symbolism	Swahananda, God as Mother, the Way of the Mother, Symbolism in Religion
3/30	Symbol and Tantra	Swahananda, Hindu Symbology, Divine Forms
4/2	Durga and Chandi	Tantrik concept, Mother Durga, Candi
4/4	Presentation PAPERS DUE!	
4/6	Presentation	
4/9	Presentation	
4/11	Presentation	
4/13	Presentation	
4/16	Presentation	
4/18	Presentation	

4/20	Discussion of symbols, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism
4/23	Test #3

Academic Integrity and the Honor Code: There is a zero-tolerance policy toward plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty in this course. This means that anyone caught taking credit for work that is not his or her own, or cheating in any other way, will receive a failing grade for the entire course, which will show up on the transcript as an XF grade. Students are expected to abide by the Honor Code of the College.