

**College of Charleston
Department of Religious Studies
Spring 2022**

**RELS 101: APPROACHES TO RELIGION
*SEX, DRUGS, AND ROCK N' ROLL***

Tues & Thurs 9:25-10:40 and 10:50-12:05; Ed Center 103

Instructor: Dr. Elijah Siegler

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Office: 4 Glebe St. 2nd floor

Office Hours: Mon 10AM-1PM or by appointment (either in my office or by Zoom)

What does Religion have in common with Sex, Drugs and/or Rock N' Roll? All are possible way to achieve *transcendence* (lit: to climb beyond) or *ecstasy* (lit: to stand outside oneself). This class will consider the use of sex, drugs and rock n' roll (as well as their opposites- abstinence and silence) in specific religions including Christianity, Hinduism, and Indigenous traditions, as well as their religious function in contemporary society. This course will introduce students to the academic study of religion.

This course will fulfill the **General Education Student Learning Outcomes:**

Student Learn Outcome #1: Students analyze how ideas are represented, interpreted or valued in various expressions of human culture.

Student Learn Outcome #2: Students examine relevant primary source materials as understood by the discipline and interpret the material in writing assignments.

These two learning outcomes will be assessed by a writing assignment that will ask students to analyze primary sources in terms of their religious ideas.

Assignments: We will review and discuss each assignment before it is due. There may also be various opportunities to gain bonus marks by attending relevant lectures and writing short papers about them.

Course Requirements:

Participation and attendance in class including group work and in-class writing: **20%**

3-4 pp. personal reflection paper, due Feb 3: **10%**

3-4 pp. analytic paper about drugs, due March 29: **20%**

3-4 pp. analytic paper about sex, due April 25: **20%**

Midterm exam (short essay answers), written in class on Feb 24: **20%**

Quiz on key terms, written in class on April 21: **10%**

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. Students can find a complete version of the Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook, available online.

Grading Scale: A: 93-100; A-: 90-92; B+: 87-89; B: 83-86; B-: 80-82; C+: 77-79; C: 73-76; C-: 70-72; D+: 67-69; D: 63-66; D-: 61-62 F: 60 or below.

All required readings will be on OAKS unless otherwise noted. Please print these out and bring them to class if possible!

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

PART I: BEGINNINGS

Tues 1/11: Making the Strange Familiar And...

Read: Miner (Handout)

Thurs 1/13: The Academic Study of Religion

Read: Studyreligion.org and “C of C Religious Studies” (Websites); Laderman (Handout)

Tues 1/18: Of Peakers and Non-Peakers

Read: Maslow

Thurs 1/20: Varieties of Religious Experience

Read: William James

PART I: ROCK N’ ROLL

Tues 1/25: Music and/as Religion

Read: Laderman A

Thurs 1/27: From African Polyrhythm to Hip-Hop Culture

Read: Sylvan; Taylor

Tues 2/1: Electronica

Read: Amy King

Thurs 2/3: Christian Rock

Read: Sullivan

Personal reflection paper due

Tues 2/8: Silence

Read: Lin Li

PART II: DRUGS

Thurs 2/10: Good Medicine/ The Brain

Read: Laderman B; Sandoiu

Tues 2/15: The Secret Religious History of Rock n' Roll

Special Live Guest: Dr. John Modern

Tues 2/15 3:30: Extra Credit Event— A Panel Discussion on “The Religion and Science of the Brain Observed”

Thurs 2/17: The Ancient Religion of Psychedelics?

Watch: Harvard Divinity School Video

Tues 2/22: Midterm Review and Catch-Up Discussion

Thurs 2/24: MIDTERM EXAM

Tues 3/1: The Peyote Road

Read: OAKS #1

Thurs 3/3: Shamanism, Neo-Shamanism and White Shamanism

Read: OAKS #2

SPRING BREAK

Tues 3/15: The Doors of Perception

Read: OAKS #3

Thurs 3/17: The Marsh Chapel Experiment and the Harvard Psychedelic Club

Read: OAKS #4

Tues 3/22: Still Looking for Transcendence...

Read: OAKS #5

Thurs 3/24: Just Say No— Intoxicants as Obstacle

Read: OAKS #6

PART IV: SEX

Tues 3/29: Introducing Sexuality

Read: OAKS #7

Analytic paper about drugs due

Thurs 3/31: Hindu Tantra

Read: OAKS #8

Tues 4/5: Daoist Sexual Energy

Read: OAKS #9

Thurs 4/7: Neopaganism

Read: OAKS #10

Tues 4/12: Desire and Eroticism in the Monotheistic Religions

Read: OAKS #11

Thurs 4/14: Sex in American Evangelicalism

Read: OAKS #12

Tues 4/19: Celibacy

Read: OAKS #13

Thurs 4/21: Concluding Discussion (Last Day of Class)

In class quiz

Mon 4/25: Analytic paper about sex due

NOTES: 1) THIS CLASS IS (FOR NOW) IN PERSON ONLY. THERE IS NO ZOOM OR OTHER ONLINE OPTION. 2) DO NOT use laptops in class, unless you have a valid reason to do so, which you must discuss with me in advance.

The Center for Student Learning (CSL) will provide online academic support services in course content, writing skills, and study strategies. For more information regarding CSL, please visit the CSL website at <http://csl.cofc.edu> or call (843) 953-5635.

Students with documented **disabilities** who have been approved to receive accommodation through SNAP should feel free to discuss this during office hours. For more information, contact Disability Services at snap@cofc.edu.

Mental & Physical Wellbeing: “At the college, we take every students’ mental and physical wellbeing seriously. If you find yourself experiencing physical illnesses, please reach out to student health services (843.953.5520). And if you find yourself experiencing any mental health challenges (for example, anxiety, depression, stressful life events, sleep deprivation, and/or loneliness/homesickness) please consider contacting either the Counseling Center (professional counselors at <http://counseling.cofc.edu> or 843.953.5640 3rd Robert Scott Small Building) or the Students 4 Support (certified volunteers through texting "4support" to 839863, visit <http://counseling.cofc.edu/cct/index.php>, or meet with them in person 3rd Floor Stern Center). These services are there for you to help you cope with difficulties you may be experiencing and to maintain optimal physical and mental health.”