**Final Paper Project**

**Rel. St. 110W**

Due to class time by the date mentioned though you can turn in early as well for your ease.

Includes:

1. proposal (due by Session 5a) 20pts

2. draft essay and bibliography (due by Week 7b) 40pts

3. final revised essay and bibliography incorporating feedback (due by Week 11b) 60pts

4. Short class presentation 20pts

Final papers for this course should be clear thesis-based essays based on the course readings. The paper should assert a thesis, support that thesis using course sources, and anticipate various aspects of a particular issue related to religious studies theories and methods, including anticipating alternative issue. They should not be primarily “research” papers. The goal is to show that you have read the assigned texts carefully, understood them, and thought about the issues that they raise. The goal is not to spend a great deal of time finding out what others have written and to report what they think.

You are welcome to submit the writing assignments listed below before the official deadlines. Please send me an email if you do so as I may miss the Canvas notification. If you expect to have a great deal of work to do for other classes towards the end of the quarter, you could relieve some of the time pressure by submitting work for this class before the due date.

**1. By Week 5a: Proposal (1.5-2 pages single spaced; 20pts)**

The proposal should include (a) a tentative thesis, (b) two or three substantial paragraphs explaining some of the issues you plan to address, (c) a simple bullet point list of course sources that illuminate those issues (no formatting needed at this point), and (3) an outline showing how you plan to organize the paper.

The proposal should not be considered a contract. As you do more reading and thinking, you might change your mind about the specific issues you want to discuss, about the best way to organize your paper, and even about the thesis you want to defend. I will return your proposal with comments within a week.

**How to approach the proposal:**

* Look over all the readings for the course as soon as you can, in order to choose a general topic for your term paper.
* Once you have made a choice, make the topic more specific. If, for example, you want to write about feminist theories of religion, which particular issues that feminists raise are you most interested in exploring? If you are interested in the ethics of doing field research methods, what particular methods are at issue. If you are stuck, consider looking at news pieces related to your interest issue, or for journal articles in a Langson search.
* We’ll discuss constructing a thesis in class.
* When you have narrowed your topic, at least a little, either e-mail me or meet with me (in person or Zoom) for help in making the topic clearer and more focused.
* You are always welcome to submit the writing assignments listed below before the official deadlines. If you expect to have a great deal of work to do for other classes towards the end of the quarter, you could relieve some of the time pressure by submitting work for this class before the due date.

**2. By Tuesday, 8a: Draft due (6-7 page draft of final paper due, incl. works cited; 12 point font; 40pts)**

After you have a working thesis proposal, we will turn this thesis “hunch” into a question (in class) that you can then use to create research charts. That is, you will create research charts that, in part, “ask” a question of your sources related to your working thesis in order to gather evidence, quotes, and ideas that address that question. This is the thinking process that will enable you to develop your thesis and paper organization more specifically.

Complete a research chart for each source. Please use a minimum of 4 sources, though the best papers will likely have 5-7 sources with careful reading and helpful support evidence.

Turn in ONE document no later than Tuesday, session 8a, that includes:

* A 6-page double-spaced draft of your term paper, including a correctly formatted works cited (WC)
  + You should include paragraphs with topic sentences that reflect/support your thesis and lead readers through your claim in an organized way. If there are any important counter-claims, you may want to include that as well.
* Please copy your research charts for each source into the end of the document, resulting in ONE document with your draft, the WC, and the research charts

I will return your draft with questions and comments within a week. Take time to think through the feedback, since you will need to revise your draft to accommodate it. If you have questions about my written remarks or simply want to discuss them, you may either e-mail or meet with me in person or by Zoom.

**3. By Week 11b: Final paper due (10 pages draft of final paper due, including works cited; 12 point font; 60pts)**

The final version of your term paper is due by session 11b. This includes ONE document including :

* a 10 page, double-spaced document
* WC
* a copy of your draft
* all research charts, including any new charts you added, if applicable

**4. In-class presentation (Week 11; 20pts)**

You will give a short oral report on your work in the last week of class. In the seven-minute oral report you should plan to (a) state your thesis, (b) the main points of your argument and (c) any important counter-claims, if applicable. You should also briefly state (d) what motivated your interest in this topic, and (e) how your thinking about religious studies theory and methods evolved on the issue from proposal to final draft.

To keep to seven minutes, please prepare by making notes on what you want to say, so you can practice and ensure you’re in the time limit.