**Thursday Research Chart & Discussion Question Assignment**

**Rel. St. 110W**

Due every Thursday by class time: upload to Canvas, and also have a digital or hard copy in class as we’ll be using them weekly.

Best 6 of 8; 10pts each

**Description**: Each Thursday, you will create research charts for the Thursday readings. A research chart provides a means for you to engage a particular reading more systematically while creating a source you can use for your writing project this quarter.

For each source on a given Thursday, please create a research chart that includes:

A. Works Cited entry for the source/s with the kind of source you believe it to be, and the page that model is found on in The Bedford Handbook (find this free pdf under syllabus “Texts” section”

B. Information from the source that illuminates the Religious Studies theories or methods we have looked for that week (or to date). So this is a blended task of: (1) understanding/recording particular claims, definitions, assertions, quotes from a Thursday source in their own context, and (2) evaluating the source as an example of Religious Studies theory and methods.

The aim is not to critique the claim to first, understand an author’s claims and motivation and recognize the theoretical or methodological orientation.

For instance, the chapter by Jeffery Long “What is Jainism?,” (Week 2b), how would you describe Long’s definitional approach to Jainism in light of specific content from our Tuesday readings on theory and method? From Tuesday’s readings, you might want to consider substantive or functionalist definitions, particular definitions from classical theorists we read about, identifying/analyzing examples in which Long challenges or blurs a particular approach, or adds something new, among many other approaches.

C. Produce 1-2 reflective questions you’d like to raise for class discussion that emerge from your research chart engagement between Tuesday theory and Thursday source. We will use these charts and questions in class. One question is sufficient if it demonstrates close engagement between Tuesday/Thursday sources.

Below is a partial sample with content from another course; you will need to adapt this to our course content:

Gross, Aaron. “The Study of Religion after the Animal.” *Animals as Religious Subjects: Transdiciplinary Perspectives,* edited by Celia Deane-Drummond, Rebecca Artinian-Kaiser, and David L. Clough, Bloomsbury, 2013, pp. 59-72.

Kind of Source: chapter in an anthology; p. 17 in *The Bedford Handbook*

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| PG. # | CONCEPT, DEFINITIONS, OR QUOTES, ETC. | NOTES TO MYSELF |
| 59  | At the very beginnings of studies into religion, scholars have not very strongly thought about animals and religion, in order to move past it to other studies such as humanity and the categories used to study religion. Religious studies scholars have not done much in the area of animals and religion  | Thesis 1 |
| 61  | Gross is suggesting that the very foundations of religious studies are built on questions about the animal/human binary, and it is from these foundations that religious studies has only just recently decided to turn its focus towards the animal  | Author’s claim about religious studies and the animal  |
| 62- 64  | Durkheim’s first point that is described is that conceptual thought was created at the same time and in the same manner that humanity distinguished itself from the animal. This process also creates society, which is an essential characteristic of humanity as distinguished from the animal. Religion is simply understanding the difference between those important group activities (the sacred) and an individual’s mundane daily actions (the profane). Religion is the fulfillment of humanity’s emergence from the animal. Animals, not having this conceptual thought, are cut off from participation in both society and religion, as both of these things are predicated on humanity emerging from the animal.  | Durkheim’s views: society is produced as a distinguishing feature of “humanity” vs. “animal” |
| 64- 67  | Eliade builds off of the sacred-profane binary by adding ‘myth’ as a new layer to it. Humans are animals that know that there are real things in the world, and they create myths in order to create meaning on these real impulses and experiences. Three basic differences to separate primate and human are verticality (vertical posture, which allows to view some space as sacred space, creating the sacred-profane distinction), tools (the ability to use tools for multiple situations, not only a specific moment or situation), and the decision to kill and eat other animals (not just blind instinct, but the developing of a relationship between hunters and prey that then create a sacrificial structure and gender differentiation). Like Durkheim, the domain of the religious is exclusively human by definition.  | Eliade’s views: humans are mythmakers. Like Durkheim, the domain of the religious is exclusively “human” by definition. |
| 68- 69  | Religion is a human activity, but the line between religion and human can vary depending on how the scholar needs to draw it. What counts as “religion” is not set in stone, and activities that one scholar would call religious may not pass the litmus test of another scholar. Smith argues that originally, religion was considered to be  | Smith’s views |
|  | on a different ground than other “human sciences” but now religion can be studied within the human sciences due to a reconsideration of the human/divine binary (a specific religion no longer had to be studied by someone who already accepted that all of its tenets were true). While Smith still keeps religion in the domain of the human, he draws attention to the violence that can result from creating a distinction between different humans (the ‘primitive’ vs. the ‘civilized’?) which seems to foreshadow the discussion about the human/animal distinction.  |  |
| 69  | These scholars have studied religion exclusively as a version of “non- animal”, using the human/animal binary as a support system to keep their views afloat. Animal and religion scholars need to respond to this scholarship history and work around it.  |  |
| 70- 71  | Humanity is all too eagar to separate ‘humanity’ from other beings, and not only just animals but other humans too (possibly leading to racism, sexism, classism, etc.). Agamban specifically says it is more important to work on ending these divisions than it is to take sides of discussions of human rights. The human wants to generate a ‘human’ more and more excluded from the animal, and the ‘animal’ can be defined with homo sapiens within it. That machine must be stopped if religious studies are going to move past the human/animal binary.  | Agamben’s anthropological machineAgamben’s view indirectly challenges Eliade and Durkheim |
| 72  | Gross wants religious studies scholars to dive into the question of the animal in order to find how the animal has shaped the very discussion of religious studies in the past. The ‘animal’ is already built into religious studies, and scholars need to explore how deep that goes.  | Author’s aim/prescription |

Questions
1. Eliade’s description of myth, used by humanity to create meaning which leads to consciousness and the transcendence of the animal, is not explained in terms of having any limitation. If, for Eliade, myth leads to religion by producing the profane/sacred distinction, what is the limit for what should count as myth? Should it be anything used by humanity to create meaning, no matter how mundane?

2. Gross is primarily concerned with dealing with how religion (and the humanities) have had “non-animal” built into their conceptions and scholarship. Gross is obviously very concerned with this depiction, but (at least in this selection) offers little in terms of a solution to redefine religion (and the humanities) to remove “non-animal” from the conception. Overturning Durkheim’s point about the sacred/profane distinction giving rise to religion seems a difficult challenge, so to remove the “non-animal” element from this conception of religion would require demonstrating that animals do have the ability to develop the sacred/profane binary. Is this a possible task, or will there be no other way than to overturn Durkheim’s view entirely?

**Rubric (10 points possible)**

* 0-3 Did not do, or majority unfinished
* 4-6 Good start, but some required elements missing or significantly underdeveloped
* 7- 8 Solid effort, with all elements present and room for further development of reading comprehension, connections with theory/methods, Works Cited (WC) entry, or questions
* 9-10 Excellent charts with clear engagement with reading content, 2-3 thoughtful connections with theory/methods, strong WC entries, 1-2 thoughtful questions that reflect content, theory, and methods (its presence, absence, inadequacy, etc).