

Directed Study in Religion (Rel. 385): Spring 2016

Instructor: Dr. Kelly Denton-Borhaug; Office: Comenius 109, x7104

Office Hours: M/W 2:30 -- 3:30 PM; T 10:30 -- 12:30

Class Time: Mostly every other Monday, 4:00 -- 5:15; meet in the Rel. Phil. Commons

Course Description:

Religion 385 presents senior religion majors with the opportunity to focus on a question, conundrum or problem related to the study of religion. This may be a question that you began to study in a religion course, or a problem that you always have wanted to investigate. It might be something related to the career you envision yourself pursuing after Moravian College. In any case, students should choose something that will be meaningful and important for their own lives and thinking.

“Directed Study” is the name of this course because it represents for many students a leap into independent study on one large project, and for many students this is the first time they will have experienced this opportunity. Over the course of the semester, working with your faculty mentor, you will develop a coherent statement or abstract of the question or problem you plan to investigate and research. You will develop an appropriate academic bibliography, to be approved by your faculty mentor, and work your way through it. Your work in 385 will culminate in **an approximately 30 page research paper (with appropriate citation and works cited)** that you will work on in stages throughout the semester. In addition, you will be required to **present** your work in a number of venues; **before your 385 peers; at Scholarship Day before the college community; and perhaps before the Religion Dept. as a whole**, including invited alumni (this last presentation is still in development). For Scholarship Day you will either a) work with Studio South to develop a poster that outlines your project and participate in a poster session with other students; or b) give a 15 minute presentation as part of a presentation session. More information will be provided about Scholarship Day once the date has been set.

This is a required course for religion majors. The course consists of two main parts:

- (1) The First Part involves the individual research project described above under the direction of a faculty mentor. The faculty mentor who is directing and supervising your individual project is fully in charge of this part of your work and will assign your grade. You will work with your mentor to set up regular meetings and receive appropriate guidance and oversight for your project.
- (2) The Second Part of the course involves study and reflection on the methods we employ in Religious Studies to study religion. In this part of the course, we explore different models of explanation of human actions, in order to explore different methods that have been used in Religious Studies to investigate religions, e.g., Phenomenology, Functionalism, and Interpretation- Hermeneutics of human action. We will focus on a brief overview of methods early in the semester, as you are outlining your own research project and making decisions about how to proceed.

Course Objectives:

- To develop an understanding of different views on religion.

- To demonstrate understanding of the diverse methods employed in Religious Studies.
- To share and discuss individual projects with a group of classmates, and learn from diverse feedback and perspectives on your project.
- To develop skills of analyzing and evaluating religious phenomena vigorously, fairly, and with sympathy.
- To exercise scholarly fairness, sympathy, and tolerance toward different conflicting views, and expand our intellectual horizon.
- To diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind against speculation and open questioning.
- To enrich our intellectual imagination.
- To think creatively, and to be able to imagine alternatives to familiar views and situations.
- To improve our understanding of the complexities of problems in the study of religion(s), and the rationale behind different positions.

I will share a number of selections from different sources at the beginning of the semester related to understanding religions study and method.

Attendance at Bi-Weekly Peer Meetings: We will meet once every other week; I ask that you inform me with at least a day's notice if you have a compelling reason (family emergency, religious observance, or serious illness) why you cannot attend. Otherwise there are no excused absences.

Accommodations

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic Support Center, located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling [610-861-1401](tel:610-861-1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

Academic honesty:

Students are required to honor academic integrity. The course imposes the application of Moravian College's Academic Honesty Policy. The policy is to be found at Moravian College's *Student Handbook*.

Course requirements:

- (1) One in-class presentation on the project you are working on.
- (2) Consistent, faithful and engaged work with your faculty mentor; regular attendance at all scheduled meetings with your mentor; engaged participation in peer classes; leadership with respect to study and presentation on research methods.
- (3) Demonstration of initiative, independence and hard work on your project.
- (4) Participation in Scholarship's Day, with your poster or presentation ready on time.
- (5) Submission of your paper in the required stages; meeting all deadlines; consistent, regular and hard work on all aspects of your project.

Tentative Lecture Schedule and Deadlines

All 385 projects will include a Works Cited Page. You may use either APA or MLA citation formats (please consult these formats for other aspects of your paper, including title page, pagination, etc.). Your final project should be submitted BOTH to your faculty mentor and to Dr. KDB on the day of the final deadline.

Your grade will be adversely affected by not meeting deadlines. It is up to individual faculty mentors to determine how this will factor into your overall grade.

Students should plan to work a minimum of 10 hours per week in this course, including class time. The most important advice is this: DO NOT PROCRASTINATE! Good thinking, and good work take time! Give yourself the supreme luxury in this project of taking sustained and quiet time to research, read, and think. Take more time to talk about your project regularly with any and everyone willing to listen and respond. Your work will be the better for it.

You also are advised to make regular use of the Writing Center. Get in the habit of taking every draft to the Center before you are required to submit it. Also, make use of the reference librarians in Reeve's. You can save a lot of time and research more efficiently by asking their assistance with your project. Make an appointment with one of the research experts in Reeve's, explain your project, and ask for their help as to how best to proceed with research.

Required Extra-Class Event: Tuesday, April 12, 6:30 pm, Prosser Auditorium: The Moravian College 9th Peace and Justice Scholar in Residence Keynote Address: Claude Anshin Thomas, Vietnam Veteran, Buddhist Monk and Peace Activist

All students are required to attend this event; please make appropriate plans with your workplace and/or sports team now. If you have a conflict with another class, please respectfully request that your professor give you permission to attend this event.

Group Peer Meetings

1/18, Monday, 4 pm

Today we will review each student's 1-page draft of their research problem, question. These drafts should succinctly and carefully outline 1) what you wish to research; 2) what you believe you will need to learn in order to explore your question/answer the question you have posed; 3) beginning thoughts as to why this is a good/meaningful/important question/problem to research and study.

Students also will be presented with materials on research methods that they will study this week for the purpose of presentation to their peers next week, and leadership of discussion.

2/1, Monday, 4 pm

- 1) Research methods: Laying out a typology of various research methods;
- 2) What methods make the most sense for each student project, given the question/problem/issue s/he intends to research?

Each Student plans a time to meet with Elizabeth Young Miller, our Research Instruction & Seminary Liaison Librarian, for an individual session to explore best research strategies related to your particular project. Please inform me that you have completed this course requirement BEFORE 2/15. Email her TODAY to set up your consultation.

2/15, Monday, 4 pm

Today we will hear and respond to the presentation by Religion Faculty Candidate, Dr. Gloria Chien. All students are required to attend.

2/23, Tuesday, 4 pm

Today we will hear and respond to the presentation by Religion Faculty Candidate, Dr. Kin Cheung. All students are required to attend.

A semi-final bibliography for your research project is due by 2/23 to both your mentor and to Dr. KDB. IMPORTANT NOTE: THIS SHOULD BE AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY. IF YOU INCLUDE BOOKS, STATE WHICH CHAPTERS YOU INTEND TO FOCUS ON AND WHY; IN ANY CASE, EVERY ENTRY SHOULD INCLUDE A ONE TO TWO SENTENCE SUMMARY OF WHAT THIS RESOURCE ENTAILS, WHY YOU THINK IT WILL BE HELPFUL FOR YOUR PROJECT, AND HOW YOU INTEND TO UTILIZE IT.

2/29, Monday, 4 pm

Today we will hear and respond to the presentation by Religion Faculty Candidate, Dr. Rae Dachille-Hey. All students are required to attend.

Your first 10 pages of your research project are due to your mentor and to Dr. DB no later than 3/5.

3/14 -- peer gathering, topic TBA

Students will submit their Scholarship Day Proposal no later than 3/15

3/28 -- peer gathering, topic TBA

Your second 10 pages of your research project are due to your mentor and to Dr. DB no later than the last day of March.

4/11 -- peer gathering, topic TBA

Scholarship Day is in the second half of April. More details to come!

Tuesday, April 12, 6:30 pm, Prosser Auditorium: The Moravian College 9th Peace and Justice Scholar in Residence Keynote Address: Claude Anshin Thomas, Vietnam Veteran, Buddhist Monk and Peace Activist

All students are required to attend this event; please make appropriate plans with your workplace and/or sports team now. If you have a conflict with another class, please respectfully request that your professor give you permission to attend this event.

4/20 -- Scholarship Day at Moravian College: All 385 Students will present their research, whether as a poster or oral presentation.

4/25 -- peer gathering, topic TBA

Your complete penultimate draft (30 pages) is due to your mentor and to Dr. DB no later than April 25.

Final Polished, Complete Research Project is due to mentor/Dr. DB by 5/4.