

RELS886 Religion, Nature and Technology

Thursday 8:30am-11:30am, Fall 2016
Elias Andrews Room, Theological Hall 2nd Floor

Dr. James Miller
Professor of Religious Studies
Mackintosh-Corry Hall B176
james.miller@queensu.ca
+1 613 533 6000 x 75399

Objective

In this seminar we will read together a series of books that dispute, interrogate, refashion or reject Weber's central claim that a key theme of modernity can be captured by the German term *Entzauberung*—the disenchantment or de-magicking of the world. Starting from Bruno Latour's classic *We Have Never Been Modern*, we will read together key works that instead seek to theorize religion/culture/spirituality together with nature/environment in modernity. These various approaches involve the emergence of new formulations of the sacred in the West, the examination of modernities beyond the West, and the development of new theoretical formulations such as affect theory or new materialism. Students will demonstrate their understanding of these works through seminar presentations and weekly discussions. They will formulate their own research question on a related topic, and hand in an essay at the end of term.

Schedule

Sep. 15	Introductions
Sep. 22	<i>No Class</i>
Sep. 29	Bruno Latour, <i>We Have Never Been Modern</i> , Harvard 1993
Oct. 6	Bronislaw Szerszynski, <i>Nature, Technology and the Sacred</i> , Wiley-Blackwell 2005
Oct. 13	Graham Harvey, <i>Food, Sex, Strangers: Understanding Religion as Everyday Life</i> , Routledge 2014
Oct. 20	Donovan Schaefer, <i>Religious Affects: Animality, Evolution, and Power</i> , Duke University Press 2015
Oct. 27	Brian Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker, <i>Journey of the Universe</i> , Yale University Press 2014
Nov. 3	Whitney A. Bauman, <i>Religion and Ecology: Developing a Planetary Ethic</i> , Columbia University Press 2014
Nov. 10	Prasenjit Duara, <i>The Crisis of Global Modernity: Asian Traditions and a Sustainable Future</i> , Cambridge University Press 2014
Nov. 17	<i>No Class</i>
Nov. 24	James Miller, <i>China's Green Religion: Daoism and the Quest for a Sustainable Future</i> , Columbia University Press 2017
Dec. 1	Research Presentations

N.B. One copy of each text has been requested for the 3 hour reserve at Stauffer library. Most books are available on Kindle or other electronic format. *Religious Affects* is available online through Stauffer. The manuscript for *China's Green Religion* will be circulated via PDF.

Participation

As this is a seminar that demands the continuous participation of all members, weekly attendance is mandatory.

Assignments

- Sep 15–November 24. **Seminar Discussion Paper** (30%). Each week, one or two students will read to the class a 2000 word seminar discussion paper that (a) briefly summarizes the key message of the book; (b) highlights in further detail one aspect of the book that is of particular interest; and then either (c) challenges or critically engages it or (d) illustrates it by reference to a cultural work (art, music, TV, film etc).
- November 17. **Topic Proposal and Annotated Bibliography** (10%). Prepare a topic proposal (max 1000 words) that delineates a specific field of inquiry, proposes a set of questions that will be researched, explains what data or sources will be required to answer the question, and what the anticipated significance of the research will be. A wide range of paper topics will be permitted, including but not limited to: (a) a critical review of some theoretical issue; (b) an analysis of a religious phenomenon relating to nature; or (c) an interpretation of a cultural work that seeks to elucidate themes of religion, nature and/or technology. Attach an annotated bibliography of at least eight sources including books and journal articles, and primary sources (if relevant). Follow the guidelines at <http://sass.queensu.ca/writingcentre/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2013/06/Annotated-Bibliography.pdf>
- December 1. **Research Presentation** (10%). In the last class, students will give an oral presentation about their research accompanied by a one-page handout. Marks will be given for presentation skills as well as content.
- December 15. **Final Essay** (50%). Submit a final paper or research report (max 5,000 words).

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see www.academicintegrity.org). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senate/report-principles-and-priorities>).

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information is available on the Academic Integrity @ Queen's University website. For specific information on departure from academic integrity, academic dishonesty, or academic misconduct issues or regulations please visit the appropriate Faculty/School site using the links provided on this page, or you can request it from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on

academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

Copyright

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Accommodation for Disabilities

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for people with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the **Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS)** and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the QSAS website at: <http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services/>

Grading Policy

The grading policy is “numbers in, letters out,” which means all assignments are returned to students with numerical grades which are then totalled to produce the final grade. This is converted to a letter grade according to the Queen’s scale. For more information see http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/sites/default/files/Policy_on_Grading.pdf.