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Office hours: M-W 2:00-3:00 p.m.
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Religion 75: Mysticism and the Spiritual Quest

Fall 2004

M-W 2:55-4:20, Heger Hall

To access course texts for RELI 75 on Electronic Reserves, please click here.

Mysticism is traditionally defined as the yearning for direct connection to a transcendent reality and is referred to as the esoteric dimension of religious search. Though evident as a global phenomenon, mystical traditions most notably develop in the monotheistic faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as in the many religious traditions of India, China, Japan and ancient Greece. A cross-cultural exploration of the meanings, definitions, practices and common themes of mysticism via a study of original texts (in translation) from different parts of the world. Same as PHI 102. Credit given for this course or PHI 102, not both.

Course structure and objective:

We will follow the required readings and handouts thematically and chronologically, moving from studies about mysticism and the spiritual quest to original texts, and back again. Our objective is to consider various definitions of mysticism, often defined as “the yearning for direct connection to a transcendent reality...the esoteric dimension of religious search,” to understand mysticism and the spiritual quest through original texts (in translation) from the East and from the West, and to be able to think comparatively about various forms of mysticism. Lecture notes available on e-reserve. Books available in bookstore and (often at discount) from online booksellers.

Required:

George E. Saint-Laurent, *Spirituality and World Religions: A Comparative Introduction*. Mayfield/McGraw-Hill, 2000. ISBN: 1-55934-962-X (“SWR”)

Evelyn Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*. Ariel Press, 1988. ISBN: 0-898041430 (“PM”)

D.T. Suzuki and Carl Jung, *Introduction to Zen Buddhism*, Grove Press, 1991, ISBN 0802130550

Additional required readings, handouts, and lecture notes on E-Reserve, including:

Lectures XVI and XVII, on Mysticism, from: William James, *Varieties of*

Religious Experience, Touchstone, ISBN: 0684842971 (do not access via dial-up)

"Definitions of 'Mysticism' and 'Mystical Theology'" from William Ralph Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, (The Bampton Lectures), Methuen, 1899.

Course requirements:

Class attendance and participation. More than three absences will incur penalty. (5%)

One page typed "talking points" for each of ten chapters in Evelyn Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*, to be turned in at end of class during which chapter is discussed. (10%)

One well-developed 6-page analytical book report on D.T. Suzuki and Carl Jung, *Introduction to Zen Buddhism*. (10%)

Mid-term (25%) and Final (25%) examinations

One well-developed 8-page (3000 words) page paper on a topic assigned due last day of class in hard copy and to turnitin.com. (25%)

Book reports and final papers must be processed via "www.turnitin.com" and will not be graded until they are logged into "turnitin.com". All written out of class assignments must be typed on one side of white paper with reasonable margins in 12 point New Times Roman type, and fastened with one staple in the upper left hand corner (no report covers). Please recognize the administrative demands placed by large classes, and turn in your work on time and in the proper format. Late or missing assignments, and/or lack of class attendance or participation, will reduce your grade. Attendance taken daily; lateness equals ½ absence. Make-up examinations not given. No late assignments. Please check your Hofstra e-mail account regularly, or forward your Hofstra e-mail to the account you use. The Computer Lab near the Library can assist you in forwarding your e-mail. No food, drink, or newspapers in classroom. Please turn off all cell phones and pagers during class.

Fall 2004—Schedule

(Tentative schedule, subject to change. Items in bold must be downloaded from e-reserve and prepared for class. Course notes are available on e-reserve as numbered handouts. Note: the Underhill book is available electronically via the Hofstra Library.)

SEPTEMBER

W-9/8 *Introduction: Course structure and requirements
Defining mysticism and the spiritual quest.*

Handout #1, Inge, "Definitions of 'Mysticism' and 'Mystical Theology'"

M-9/13 Mysticism in world religions.
Handout #1, Underhill, *Preface*
SWR Chapter 3: "Religious Spirituality and Four Great Teachers"

W -9/15 (NO CLASS--FRIDAY CLASS SCHEDULE)

M-9/20 *Understanding Mysticism in general*
Underhill, Ch. 1 "What is Mysticism?"
Underhill, Ch. 2 "The World of Reality"

W-9/22 *Understanding spirituality in general*
SWR 1-19; *The Labyrinth*

M-9/27 *Understanding religious spirituality*
SWR 21-38, SWR Chapter 3: "Religious Spirituality and Four Great Teachers"

W-9/29 Prayer and Mysticism,
Underhill: Ch. 3 "The Preparation of the Mystic",
Underhill, Ch. 4 "Meditation and Recollection"

OCTOBER

M-10/4 *Mystical states: William James, Lectures on Mysticism*

W- 10/6 *Mystical states: William James, Lectures on Mysticism (continued)*
Hindu Spirituality
SWR 161-193, **Handout #2**

M-10/11 Hindu Spirituality
SWR 161-193; The Upanishads

W-10/13 *Hindu Spirituality*
SWR 161-193; **The Bhagavad Gita**

M-10/18 *Buddhist Spirituality*
SWR 47-52; 195-227, **Handout #4**

W-10/20 *Buddhist Spirituality*
SWR 47-52; 195-227; **Handout #5, Buddhist Mysticism**

M-10/25 *Buddhist Spirituality*
D.T. Suzuki and Carl Jung, *Introduction to Zen Buddhism*

W-10/27 *course review—book reviews due*

NOVEMBER

M-11/1 no class- take-home midterm

W-11/3 take-home midterms due

Jewish Spirituality

SWR 43-47; 67-95; **Handout #6**; also, **Handout #1**

M-11/8 *Plato and Christian Mysticism*

Handout #7

W-11/10 *Christian Mysticism and Spirituality*

SWR 52-58; 97-127; **Handouts #8 & #9**, Augustine.

M-11/15 *Christian Mysticism and Spirituality*

SWR 52-58; 97-127; **Bernard, Richard of St. Victor.**

Underhill, Ch. 5 "Self-Adjustment", **Handout #10**

W-11/17 *Christian Mysticism and Spirituality*

SWR 52-58; 97-127; "**The Cloud**", **Julian of Norwich**

Underhill, Ch. 6 "Love and Will"

M-11/22 *Christian Mysticism and Spirituality*

SWR 52-58; 97-127; **Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross**

W-11/24 *Contemplation: East and West*

Underhill, Ch. 7 "The First Form of Contemplation",

Underhill, Ch. 8 "The Second Form of Contemplation"

Underhill, Ch. 9 "The Third Form of Contemplation"

M-11/29 *Mysticism and Spirituality: East and West*

Underhill, Ch. 10 "The Mystical Life"

DECEMBER

W-12/1 *Islamic Mysticism and Spirituality*

SWR 58-65 (**Handout #11**, also, **Handout #1**)

M-12/6 *Islamic Mysticism and Spirituality*

SWR 58-65

W-12/8 in-class final—term papers due

Exam week: December 13-18;

Commencement: December 19

Recommended additional reading:

Raphael Ben Zion, *The Anthology of Jewish Mysticism* (Rev. Edition),
Judaica Press, ISBN: 1880582473

D. L. Carmody and J. T. Carmody, *Mysticism: Holiness East and West*, Oxford University Press, 1996 ISBN: 0195088190

William C. Chittick, *Sufism*, Oneworld Publications, Ltd., ISBN: 1851682112

Louis K. Dupre & James A. Wiseman, *Light from Light: An Anthology of Christian Mysticism* (2nd Ed.), Paulist Press, ISBN:0809140136

Harvey Egan, *An Anthology of Christian Mysticism*, Pueblo, ISBN: 0814660126.

Arthur Green and Barry Holtz, *Your Word is Fire: The Hasidic Masters on Contemplative Prayer*, Jewish Lights Pub. , ISBN: 1879045257

F. C. Happold, *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology* (3rd Ed.), Viking Paper ISBN: 0140137467

William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, Touchstone, ISBN: 0684842971

William Johnston (Ed.) *The Cloud of Unknowing and the Book of Privy Counseling*, Image Books, ISBN: 0385030975

Thomas Merton, *Mysticism and Zen Masters*, Noonday Press, ISBN: 037452001

Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, Crossroad, ISBN: 0824514041.

Stephen Mitchell (Tr.), *Tao Te Ching: A New English Version*, Harper Perennial, ISBN: 006081245

Stephen Mitchell (ed.) *Bhagavad Gita: A New Translation*, Harmony Books, ISBN: 060960550X

Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, Oneworld Publications (Reissue Ed.), 1999, ISBN: 1851681965

Simone Weil, *Waiting for God*, Harper Perennial, ISBN: 0060959703

Phyllis Zagano, *Twentieth-Century Apostles: Contemporary Spirituality in Action*, Liturgical Press, ISBN: 0814625541

Phyllis Zagano, *Woman to Woman: An Anthology of Women's Spiritualities*, Liturgical Press, ISBN: 0814650252

Bibliographies and full text resources:

(Christianity and Islam)

<http://www.ccel.org/u/underhill/mysticism/mysticism1.0-BIBLIOGR.html>

(Judaism)

<http://www.shamash.org/lists/scj-faq/HTML/rl/mys-index.html>

(Zen Buddhism)

<http://www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-Zen.html>

(Chinese Mysticism)

<http://www.chinasite.com/Culture/Mysticism.html>

(East-West Contemplative Dialogue)

<http://www.innerexplorations.com/ewtext/east-wes.htm>

(Mysticism in World Religions)

<http://www.digiserve.com/mystic/index.html>