

HITO 124: Mysticism
University of California San Diego
MWF, 12-1, Spring 2015
HSS 2154

Mysticism, n. 1. Freq. *derogatory*. Religious belief that is characterized by vague, obscure, or confused spirituality; a belief system based on the assumption of occult forces, mysterious supernatural agencies, etc. 2. Mystical theology; belief in the possibility of union with or absorption into God by means of contemplation and self-surrender; belief in or devotion to the spiritual apprehension of truths inaccessible to the intellect. [*Oxford English Dictionary*]

Course Faculty –

William H.C. Propp, Professor of Ancient History and Judaic Studies
 wpropp@ucsd.edu / (858) 534-6187
 Office Location: H&SS Room 4012
 Office Hours: Mon 3-5 in HSS 4012

Matthew T. Herbst, Ph.D., Associate Teaching Professor
 Faculty Director, Making of the Modern World Program
 Contact: matthewherbst@ucsd.edu / 858-822-4859 / website: <http://ucsdherbst.org/>
 Office: Eleanor Roosevelt College Admin Building,
 Making of the Modern World Office, Room 209
 Office Hours: Tuesday 1:30-2:30

Course Website

Syllabus & readings are found at <https://ted.ucsd.edu/> [search for HITO 124].

Grading

Exams: 65%
 Writing:* 35% *Weekly in-class responses (15%); one final reflection essay (20%), due in week 10.
 Details will be provided.

Reading

Ursula King. *Christian Mystics. Their Lives and Legacies throughout the Ages*. New York:

Routledge, 2004.

Euripides. *Bacchae*. Tr. With notes by Paul Woodruff. Cambridge: Hackett P, 1999.

Joseph Dan, *Kabbalah – A Very Short Introduction*.

Brian Swimme and Mary Tucker. *The Journey of the Universe*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2011.

E-Readings. These are available at <https://ted.ucsd.edu/> [search for HITO 124].

Accommodations for Student with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodations and services for this course due to a disability need to provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the

Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) prior to eligibility for requests. Receipt of AFAs in advance is necessary for appropriate planning for the provision of reasonable accommodations. OSD Academic Liaisons also need to receive current AFA letters if there are any changes to accommodations. For additional information, contact the Office for Students with Disabilities: 858-534-4382 (V); 959.534.9709 (TTY) – reserved for people who are deaf or hard of hearing; or email: osd@ucsd.edu. For more, see: <http://disabilities.ucsd.edu>.

Consideration for the Learning Environment

The “Golden Rule” is the best guide here. Avoid any action that may potentially disturb the learning environment. Attend class only if you are willing and able to pay attention and to respect the learning environment. In case of doubt, simply consider if an action contributes to the *purpose* and *benefit* of the class as a whole. If it does not, avoid it. Here, civility counts. Turn off cell phones to prevent disrupting the class. Exceptions will be made to cover emergency medical providers, active duty military personnel, child-care needs, or other *critical* issues. If you need clarification on “critical,” please speak with us.

PowerPoint Policy:

We supplement lecture with PowerPoint slides, but do not post these. They are only supplements to assist; they are not the substance of lecture.

Standards of Academic Integrity

Each student is responsible to know and observe the UCSD rules concerning academic integrity and plagiarism. Familiarize yourselves and be cognizant of your responsibilities and rights under the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship < <http://senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/appendix2.pdf> >.

Your responsibilities and rights under the UCSD Student Code of Conduct can be found at <http://ugr8.ucsd.edu/judicial/22_00.html>.

A student found to have violated the university’s academic integrity standards will be subject to penalties ranging from failing the assignment or course to suspension or expulsion from the university, and an academic misconduct charge will be noted on your academic record.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, or how to credit the work of others properly, or how to evaluate sources for quality and reliability, or about any other pertinent issue, speak with your professors. Ignorance of these standards will not be accepted as justification for their violation, so be sure to understand and abide by them.

WEEK 1

Introduction

Monday, March 30, Course Introduction (Both)

Wednesday, April 1, On the Study of Mystical Experience (Propp)

E-Reading: William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, Lectures XVI-XVII, “Mysticism.” Michael Harner, “Discovering the Way” in G. Harvey, ed. *Shamanism, a Reader*, chap. 2.

What is Reality?**Friday, April 3, The Wheel of Fate: Transcendentalism of India (Herbst)**

E-Reading: Selections from South Asian sacred texts

WEEK 2**Monday, April 6, Of Creation and the Natural World: Biblical Cosmology (Propp)**E-Reading: *Genesis* 1-3 and *Song of Songs***Wednesday, April 8, What is Real? Greek Perspectives (Herbst)**

E-readings: Selections from Greek sources

Friday, April 10, Of Creation and the Natural World: Modern Cosmology (Herbst)Text: Brian Swimme and Mary Tucker. *The Journey of the Universe***WEEK 3****The Bible as Mystical Text****Monday, April 13, Mystical Encounters in the Old Testament (Propp)**E-Reading: *Exodus* 1-4 and 24, *Judges* 8, *Isaiah* 6, *Jeremiah* 1, etc., *Ezekiel* 1**Wednesday, April 15, Mystical Encounters in the New Testament (Herbst)**E-reading: Selections from *The New Testament***Friday, April 17, EXAM 1 (20%)****WEEK 4****Mysticism in Greco-Roman Antiquity****Monday, April 20, Mystery Religion and Mystical Experience (Herbst)**Text: Euripides, *The Bacchae*. E-Reading: Excerpts from the Mystery ReligionsRecommended: Greek and Roman Religion *selection*.**Wednesday, April 22, Neoplatonism (Propp)**E-reading: On Neoplatonism, <http://ls.poly.edu/~jbain/mms/texts/mmsplot.htm>For a background, review: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/neoplato/>**Mysticism in Christianity****Friday, April 24, God, Satan, and the Desert (Herbst)**Text: Christian Mystics, Introduction and chapters 1-2. E-Reading: Selections from the *Life of St. Anthony*, Gregory of Nyssa, Pseudo-Dionysius; W. Harmless, "Mystic as Desert Calligrapher – Evagrius Ponticus" in his, *The Mystics*.**WEEK 5****Monday, Apr 27, Catholic Mysticism (Herbst)**

Text: Christian Mystics, ch. 3.

E-Readings: Selections from Francis, Julian of Norwich, and the *Cloud of Unknowing***Wednesday, Apr 29, Orthodox Mysticism (Herbst)**

Text: Christian Mystics, ch. 5.

E-reading: Symeon the New Theologian, Selections 1, 2 and 3.

Jewish Mysticism

Friday, May 1, Jewish Mysticism (Propp)

Text: Dan, preface and chapters 1-3;

E-reading: Sources on Jewish Mysticism.

WEEK 6

Monday, May 4, May 6 Main Ideas of Kabbalah (Propp)

Text: Dan, chapters 4, 6.

E-reading: Sources on Kabbalah.

Wednesday, The Zohar (Propp)

E-Reading: Arthur Green, *A Guide to the Zohar*, Chaps 5-6, 8-10;

Nathan Wolski, *A Journey into the Zohar*, Chaps 8, 10.

Friday, May 8, Sabbatai Zevi and Hasidism (Propp)

Text: Dan, Ch. 7-8.

WEEK 7

Monday, May 11, EXAM 2 (20%)

Muslim Mysticism

Wednesday, May 13, Muhammad and Early Muslim Mysticism (Propp)

E-Reading: "Sources of Islamic Mysticism" in *Early Islamic Mysticism*.

Friday, May 15, Medieval Muslim Mysticism (Herbst)

E-Reading: Excerpts from *Early Islamic Mysticism*; Carl Ernst, "Muhammad as the Pole of Existence" in *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad*; W. Harmless, "Mysticism and Islam – Rumi" in *The Mystics*; Selections from Sufi writings.

WEEK 8

Early Modern Traditions

Monday, May 18, Catholic Mystics (Herbst/Guest)

Text: Christian Mystics, ch. 4. E-Reading: Early Modern Catholic Mystics.

Wednesday, May 20, Protestant Mystics (Herbst)

Text: Christian Mystics, ch. 4.

E-Reading: Early Modern Protestant Mystics.

Friday, May 22, After the Enlightenment (Propp)

E-Reading: On Deism and selections by Pascal, Hume, Wesley.

WEEK 9

Mysticism in the Scientific Age

Monday, May 25, Memorial Day

No Class.

Wed., May 27, Transcendental Cosmology: Humanity & the Natural World(Herbst)
 E-Reading: Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Nature;” Henry David Thoreau, “Walking;” and on historical context.

Friday, May 29, The Enlightened Mind: Science, God, Humanity (Propp)
 E-Reading: Selection on Physics and ultimate reality; U. King, “One Planet, One Spirit.” Text: B. Swimme and Mary Tucker. *The Journey of the Universe*.

WEEK 10

Monday, June 1, Spirit and Action (Both)

E-Reading: On A.J. Heschel, Simone Weil, and the Gülen movement.
 Text: Christian Mystics, ch. 6.

Wednesday, June 3, Mysticism and the Brain (Propp)

E-Reading: V. S. Ramachandran, “God and the Limbic System,” chap. 9, pp. 174-98, in V. S. Ramachandran and Sandra Blakeslee, *Phantoms in the Brain*. E-Reading: Luhrmann, *When God Talks Back*, Chapters 7 – 8.

Friday, June 5, What is Mysticism? A Discussion (Both)

Due: Final Reflection Essay (20%). A paper copy must be turned in at the start of class and a digital copy must be emailed to your professors as a Word or PDF file. Entitle the document as follows: YourLastName.Mysticism.2015.

Assignment Details will be provided in class.

Week 11 –Final Exam

EXAM 3: Wednesday, June 10, 11:30-2:30pm (25%)