

RELG 7559: TEC Proseminar

Fall 2017 | Mondays 3:30-6:00 pm | New Cabell Hall 489

Professors: Dr. Nichole M. Flores & Charles Mathewes
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Office hours: NMF: Mondays 12:00-1:00, Tuesdays 11:00-12:00
CTM: Wednesdays 1:00-2:30, Friday afternoons by appointment

Course Description: The purpose of this seminar is to acquaint graduate students with the several understandings of the fields constituting the various forms of normative and philosophical study of religion present in the discipline, and especially in our department, in order to help students position themselves as scholars working in or near these approaches. All TEC students, especially those who are still in the course-work stage of their program, are welcome to attend.

We have persuaded various professors in the TEC area to talk with the proseminar. Each professor will send one or two pieces of representative work prior to the meeting. During the faculty member's visit, s/he will talk for approximately ten minutes on (a) how she or he understands the field in which s/he is working; (b) what s/he is trying to do in those arenas; and (c) how his/her submitted works participate in those larger efforts. There will then follow a broader conversation about the faculty member's work, partly as it pertains to the piece or pieces they have submitted, and partly about broader issues that arise. These visits will help us understand what these faculty do, and how they understand the context into within which they are attempting to do it.

The assignments for the course are not onerous. Students will read three recent books of importance and various pieces written by TEC faculty members. These works offer distinctive visions of the normative and theoretical study of religion and that embody distinctive styles of undertaking such study. Students will also create a "journal profile" – an analytical overview of an important journal, relevant to the student's research interests. Each journal profile will then be shared among the members of the proseminar.

Class Requirements

- (a) Attendance and participation in all sessions; timely completion of all reading assignments.
- (b) Weekly reports on every week's reading. For the extra-UVA authors (Miller, Schilbrack, Tonstad), the reports should be in "book review" format, of no more than 1000 words. The first half of the reviews will be expository in nature; the second half will offer a critical response to and evaluation of the text(s) under consideration. For the UVA faculty, the reports should may be briefer, and need not be more than 500 words
Each report must be emailed to Professors Flores and Mathewes by noon on the Friday before the Monday seminar.
- (c) Either revision of a previously written paper for publication or a Journal report Paper Revision: You have to have a paper *at the beginning of the semester* (i.e., one that you've already written) that we judge able to be improved to such a degree that by December, you can submit it to a journal. This will be more viable for students who are a bit longer into the program than ones in their second year. First year students are strongly discouraged from doing this. Journal reports are due at the beginning of class on Monday, December 4 (and you should upload a copy of your report to Collab, so that we all can get one.) Papers are due on 5pm on Monday, December 11. Brief extensions may be granted, if you ask nicely.

Wait, what is a "Journal Report"?: We'll explain this in class.

Reading Materials

The following books are available for purchase at the U.Va. bookstore.

- Kevin Schilbrack, *Philosophy and the Study of Religions: A Manifesto* (Wiley Blackwell, 2014)
- Richard Miller, *Friends and Other Strangers: Studies in Religion, Ethics, and Culture* (Columbia University Press, 2016)
- Linn Tonstad, *God and Difference: The Trinity, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Finitude* (Routledge, 2017)

Other readings will be available via Collab.

Office Hours

It's in your interests to come to office hours to discuss the material, and we encourage you to do so. If you cannot make the assigned times, let us know; we can set up an appointment during regular weekday hours.

READING SCHEDULE

Aug 28	Introduction
September 4	Kevin Schilbrack, <i>Philosophy and the Study of Religions</i>
September 11	Linn Tonstad, <i>God and Difference</i>
September 18	Richard Miller, <i>Friends and Other Strangers</i>
September 25	Jennifer Herdt, <i>Forming Humanity</i> (ms; workshop on Fri, Sept 28)
October 2	— <i>Reading Day</i> —no class—
October 9	Paul Jones, guest (3 pieces on Collab) Nau 441
October 16	Frank Clooney, Harvard, guest (pieces TBA) (Update us on where you are in the report and/or paper revisions—a 500-word update is all we require here.)
October 23	Larry Bouchard, guest (pieces TBA) Nau 441
October 30	TBA
November 6	Willis Jenkins, guest: chapters 1, 2, 4, 5 & 7 of <i>Future of Ethics</i> and the SAQ article Nau 441
November 13	Jennifer Geddes, guest Nau 441
November 20	—no class, AAR
November 27	TBA
December 4	Final session: wrap up; distribution of journal profiles.