

**REL 300 - Research, Writing, Thinking in Religion & Applied Ethics**

Suitable as elective for students interested in reading some major texts at the intersection of philosophy and religion

ASUW - Fall 2009 - Tuesdays 6:40 PM - 9:30 PM

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If the question of finding a good, happy, and meaningful life could be answered exhaustively in terms of social justice and moral life, then would there be a distinct role left for religions to play? Or, if religious life in its great variety has no bearing on striving for a community of human flourishing, then would we be better, happier, and freer without “religious” questions? Yet what if the very human condition is defined by religious questioning? Wouldn’t a life dedicated to idols of the ultimate – and great religions agree with critical thinkers that religious and secular idols are equally blinding – be a misspent life? The aim of this course is to dedicate some time to thinking about these questions from the perspectives ranging from the profane to the ethical to spiritual life.

**Required texts** (listed in the order of presentation):

**Part A**

Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Vintage Books, 1955, 1991. 978-0679733737

Rudolf Otto. *The Idea of the Holy*. Oxford UP, 1958. 978-0-19-500210

Film: *Baraka*. Ron Fricke. Mark Magidson Films Inc., 1992.

**Part B**

Merold Westphal. *God, Guilt, and Death: An Existential Phenomenology of Religion*.

Indiana UP, 1984. 978-0253204172

Film: Ingmar Bergman’s *Winter Light*. Svensk Filmindustri, 1962.

**Part C**

Søren Kierkegaard. *The Seducer’s Diary*. Penguin Books, 2007. 978-0141034843

Kierkegaard selections from *Works of Love* (blackboard).

David Lodge. *Therapy*. Penguin Books, 1996. 978-0-14-024900-2

Film: Richard Linklater’s *Waking Life*. Twentieth Century Fox, 2002.

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BARRETT-HONORS students will study in addition: Søren Kierkegaard. *Repetition*.

Published in Kierkegaard. *Fear and Trembling/Repetition*. Princeton UP, 1983. 978-0691020266

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**Registered students should consult the blackboard site for the *Fall 09 Syllabus* in early August.**