

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

Spring 2009 (W)

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We 4:40PM - 7:30PM - Sands 204

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 spend some time researching, writing, and thinking about these questions. We will carefully examine the relationship among the spheres of unexamined, ethical, and religious existence.

Required Texts

Mircea Eliade. *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987. 0-15-679201-x

Abraham Joshua Heschel. *The Sabbath*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975. 0374512671

David Lodge. *Therapy*. Penguin Books, 1996. 0140249001

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

Read for the first class meeting

Rudolf Otto. *The Idea of the Holy*, chaps I-VI, pp. 1-40. Registered students may consult the “blackboard” for the syllabus and research (article) resources.