

# REL 523 Discourse and Practice

Spring 2021

## Contact Information

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Professor: Dr. Edith Szanto  
Email: [eszanto@ua.edu](mailto:eszanto@ua.edu)  
Office: Presidents Hall 209  
Phone: 205-348-5310  
Office Hours: Thursday 11:30 to 1 on Zoom or in person  
(please let me know ahead whether you'd like to meet in person or on Zoom)  
Class location: Presidents Hall 102  
Class time: Thursday 1:30 to 3:20 pm

## Course Description

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Introduces the terms & ideas related to discourse and practice and their relevance to the study of religion. Students will apply theories to analyze examples relevant in Religious Studies, either ancient or modern, or drawn from the study of Islam.

This is a Hybrid Course. For at least the first few weeks, we will be meeting on Zoom (<https://uasystem.zoom.us/j/2534968518>). However, as soon as the Professor deems it possible, the class will meet in Presidents Hall 102, which is large enough to accommodate 6 while socially distanced. Please note that office hours are offered both in person and on Zoom, and also by appointment.

## Objectives

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1. Describe aspects of religious practice and discourse.
2. Identify scholarly trends and debates in relation to the study of discourses and practices within the study of religion.
3. Implement the above knowledge in writing assignments.
4. Effectively create oral presentations with the use of technology.

## Books

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Please see the syllabus below.

## Requirements

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1. Regular attendance and adequate preparation for each day's readings are expected and required to do well in this course.

2. Weekly reflections that are at least 500 words long and that include at least 3 discussion questions will be worth 4 points each. There are 13 classes discounting the first and last meeting of the class, but only 11 are required. Students may thus miss two without a penalty.
3. Two meetings with me. They will be scheduled roughly a week or two prior to the meeting.
4. A research project consisting of a) a research proposal and bibliography, b) a presentation, and c) a final paper.

### Assessment

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Weekly reflections	11 x 4 points each for a total of	44 points
Meetings with me	2 x 5 points for each meeting	10 points
Bibliography and proposal		6 points
Presentation of the final paper		5 points
Final paper		35 points
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Total		100 points

### Grading Scale

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97-100 = A+; 92-96 = A; 90-91 = A-; 87-89 = B+; 82-86 = B; 80-81 = B-;  
 77-79 = C+; 72-76 = C; 70-71 = C-; 60-69 = D; 0-59 = F.

#### Meeting with me (10 points = 2 \* 5 points)

I'd like to know who my students are and what they are interested in. Please drop by my office in person or virtually. I will ask you a general question about the course and how you are doing in it. These meetings will be scheduled twice during the semester. Each meeting is worth 5 points.

#### Weekly Reflections (44 points = 11 \* 4 points)

Students will write reflections that are at least 500 words long and that include at least 3 discussion questions will be worth 4 points each. There are 13 classes discounting the first and last meeting of the class, but only 11 are required. Students may thus miss two reflections without a penalty.

#### Research Paper Proposal and Bibliography (6 points)

Students ought to turn in a short proposal consisting of roughly 200 words describing the main thesis of their proposed research paper, a short general outline (outlining the organization of topics discussed) and an annotated bibliography consisting of at least five peer-reviewed academic sources.

### **Research Paper Presentation (5 points)**

Prepare a presentation on the research topic proposed earlier. This presentation should consist of a 7 to 10 minute presentation. Students will present during our usual Zoom class meeting, share their screen and thereby their power point presentations and others will respond with constructive feedback.

### **Research Essay (35 points)**

Research paper (min 5000 word) and an annotated bibliography (which is not part of the 5000 words). Choose any topic related to the course materials and write about it. Students are expected to make use of the course readings, but must also make substantive use of **at least ten** scholarly, peer-reviewed books or scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles from outside the required readings. **Late papers: 10% will be deducted per day.**

### **Format for written assignments**

Students shall use MLA format. All documents produced on a word processor shall use 12-point Times New Roman font, and shall be submitted electronically through Turnitin.com. Emailed and paper copies will not be accepted.

### **Policy on Missed Assessments**

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Do not wait until the last minute to submit your assessments. Work submitted after the due dates listed in Blackboard may result in a grade of zero. The instructor is solely responsible for determining whether provisions will be made for unforeseen circumstances. You must report these circumstances as soon as possible after the event. You will be required to produce documentation.

Please contact the instructor if there are questions about missed due dates.

### **Notification of Changes**

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The instructor will make every effort to follow the guidelines of this syllabus as listed; however, the instructor reserves the right to amend this document as the need arises. In such instances, the instructor will notify students in class and/or via email and will endeavor to provide reasonable time for students to adjust to any changes.

### **Technical Support**

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To obtain assistance with technical issues, please contact OIT. Please be ready to provide your myBama username, your phone number, your campus location, your device type, and a description of your issue.

Location	125 Gordon Palmer Hall
Hours	8:00am to 4:30pm      Monday – Friday
Phone	205-348-5555
After Hours Phone	855-474-3860
Email	ITSD@ua.edu

## **System Requirements**

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This hybrid course requires a modern Mac or PC computer and high-speed internet connection. Your computer must also have a [compatible browser](#), PDF viewer, speakers or headphones, microphone, and productivity software such as Office.

## **Minimum Student Technical Skills**

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Taking a hybrid course requires a general computer literacy. Students are expected to be able to use Crimson email, Blackboard, web browsers, and general word processing programs prior to enrolling in an online course. Student needing assistance using Blackboard are encouraged to visit the [UA Blackboard support site](#).

## **Turnitin**

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The University of Alabama is committed to helping students uphold the ethical standards of academic integrity in all areas of study. Students agree that their enrollment in this course allows the instructor the right to use electronic devices to help prevent plagiarism. All course materials are subject to submission to TurnItIn.com for the purpose of detecting textual similarities. Assignments submitted to TurnItIn.com will be included as source documents in TurnItIn.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. TurnItIn.com will be used as a source document to help students avoid plagiarism in written documents.

## **The Capstone Creed**

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The Capstone Creed was created by the Student Leaders Council. In the spring of 2000, a discussion of campus culture among student leaders led to an effort to identify the core values that sustain us as members of the University community. The Student Leaders Council recognized that the Capstone experience is not limited to our formal affiliation with the University during enrollment and that the University community does not end at the geographic boundaries of campus. As members of the Capstone community, there is a common thread that unites us all, and the Student Leaders Council has endeavored to make those core values manifest through the implementation of a campus-wide creed with which all Capstone stakeholders can identify.

The Capstone Creed reads: As a member of The University of Alabama community, I will pursue knowledge; act with fairness, integrity and respect; promote equity and inclusion; foster individual and civic responsibility; and strive for excellence in all I do.

## **Statement on Academic Misconduct**

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Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official [Code of Academic Conduct](#) provided in the Online Catalog.

## **Statement On Disability Accommodations**

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Contact the [Office of Disability Services \(ODS\)](#) as detailed in the Online Catalog.

## **Severe Weather Protocol**

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Please see the latest [Severe Weather Guidelines](#) in the Online Catalog.

## **Pregnant Student Accommodations**

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Title IX protects against discrimination related to pregnancy or parental status. If you are pregnant and will need accommodations for this class, please review the University's FAQs on the [UAct website](#).

## **Religious Observances**

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Under the Guidelines for Religious Holiday Observances, students should notify the instructor in writing or via email during the first two weeks of the semester of their intention to be absent from class for religious observance. The instructor will work to provide reasonable opportunity to complete academic responsibilities as long as that does not interfere with the academic integrity of the course. See full guidelines at [Religious Holiday Observances Guidelines](#).

## **UAct Statement**

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The [UAct website](#) provides an overview of The University's expectations regarding respect and civility.

## **COVID-19 Statement**

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All University faculty, staff, and students are expected to maintain a commitment to the health and safety of our campus community. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, specific health and safety standards are in place to minimize exposure and community spread on campus. All students must be familiar with and abide by the requirements outlined in the UA Return Plan | UA System Comprehensive Health and Safety Plan. Students must (1) wear a mask or face covering at all times while participating in face-to-face class sessions; and (2) adhere to social distancing standards. More information on these requirements and UA Healthcheck system and screening can be found at [healthinfo.ua.edu/returnplan](http://healthinfo.ua.edu/returnplan). You are expected to visit the site and comply with all noted requirements related to in-person class attendance.

## Schedule

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

- 1) Thursday, January 14, 2021 Introduction to the Course  
Discuss the film Archipelago  
Please watch this at home before class:  
<https://vimeo.com/190315880>  
password: festival
- 2) Thursday, January 21, 2021 Critiquing an Ethnography:  
Bush, Between Muslims (pp. 1-54, 112-174)
- 3) Thursday, January 28, 2021 Bourdieu, Outline of a Theory of Practice (pp. 1 – 71, 159 – 197)
- 4) Thursday, February 4, 2021 DeCerteau, The Practice of Everyday Life (pp. 29 – 60, 91 – 130, 177 – 189)

Meet with me this week either online or in person.

- 5) Thursday, February 11, 2021 Fitzgerald, Experience (pp. 125 – 139)  
Stark, Rationality (pp. 239 – 258)
- 6) Thursday, February 18, 2021 Ong, Orality and Literacy (pp. 1 – 76)
- 7) Thursday, February 25, 2021 Ong, Orality and Literacy (pp. 77 – 152)
- 8) Thursday, March 4, 2021 Murphy, Discourse (pp. 396 – 407)  
Ryba, Manifestation (pp. 169 – 189)  
McCutcheon, Myth (pp. 190 – 208)
- 9) Thursday, March 11, 2021 Connolly, Why I am not a Secularist (pp. 19 – 96, 115 – 136)
- 10) Thursday, March 18, 2021 Foucault, The Order of Things (pp. 3 – 45, 125 – 214)

Monday, March 22 Proposal and bibliography due

- 11) Thursday, March 25, 2021 Foucault, The Order of Things (pp. 217 – 249, 303 – 387)
- 12) Thursday, April 1, 2021 Douglas, How Institutions Think (pp. 1 – 68)

Meet with me this week either online or in person.

- 13) Thursday, April 8, 2021                      Douglas, How Institutions Think (pp. 91 – 128)
- 14) Thursday, April 15, 2021                     JZ Smith, Imagining Religion (pp. 36 – 89)
- 15) Thursday, April 22, 2021                    Paper presentations
- Monday, April 26                      Papers are due