Voyage: Spring 2017  
Discipline: Philosophy  
Course Number and Title: PHIL 479 Topics in Comparative Religions: Matter Matters  
Division: Upper  
Faculty Name: David Haberman  
Semester Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: One religions of the West course OR one religions of the East course, OR one issues in the study of religion course

COURSE DESCRIPTION
“Matter Matters: A Reconsideration of Idolatry and Anthropomorphism”

This course involves a historical investigation of the related concepts of idolatry and anthropomorphism in the interpretation of religions, especially as they relate to human interaction with embodied forms of divinity. Discourses about idolatry were common currency in virtually every intellectual movement in the early modern period. The concept of idolatry is embedded as a favored interpretive strategy in the very foundation of the comparative study of religion that emerged from the religious conflicts of the 16th century. Anthropomorphism has drawn scholarly attention for a long time, but until recently the great majority of this attention has been unreservedly negative. This course tracks efforts to reevaluate these interpretive approaches in the study of religion that have led to present-day reconsiderations of the worship of religious objects found, for example, in Asian and African religions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. Learn about some major features in the historical development of the field of comparative religion.
2. Acquire definitional knowledge of the concepts of idolatry and anthropomorphism.
3. Come to understand the significant role that the concepts of idolatry and anthropomorphism have played as interpretative strategies in the study of the religions of others.
4. Become familiar with the worship of religious objects in Asian and African religions.
5. Analyze and evaluate the results of historical interpretive strategies dependent on the concept of idolatry, as well as their persisting effects in the field of religious studies.
6. Explore emerging theoretical developments and other possible ways of understanding worshipful interaction with embodied forms of divinity.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS
No textbook. All articles on course website.
TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Depart Ensenada — January 5

B1 — January 8: Introduction to Many Things

B2 — January 10: A Sense of Place
Film: “In the Light of Reverence”

Honolulu — January 12

B3 — January 13: Root Issues and Beyond
David Haberman, “Root Issues”

B4 — January 15: Anthropological Understanding
Paul Armstrong, “Play and Cultural Differences”

B5 — January 18: Idolatry: Source Narratives
Jan Assmann, “What’s Wrong with Images?”

No class January 19

B6 — January 21: Calvin’s Enhancement of Idolatry
Carlos Eire, “John Calvin’s Attack on Idolatry”

B7 — January 23: Comparative Religion: Origins in Idolatry
Jonathan Sheehan, “Thinking about Idols in Early Modern Europe”
Guy Stroumsa, “John Spenser and the Roots of Idolatry”

Kobe — January 24 - 28

B8 — January 30: Images of the Buddha: Worshiped or Not?
**article on whether Buddha temple images are worshiped or not; perhaps a chapter from David Snellgrove’s The Image of the Buddha.

Shanghai — January 31 – February 5

B9 — February 7: Anthropomorphism Reconsidered
Lorraine Daston, “How Nature Became the Other: Anthropomorphism and Anthropocentrism in Early Modern Natural Philosophy”

B10 — February 9: Idolatry, Anthropomorphism and Science
Martin Mulsow, “Idolatry and Science: Against Nature Worship from Boyle to Rudiger”

Ho Chi Minh City — February 10-14
B11 — February 16: **Anthropomorphism and Religion**
Stewart Guthrie, “Religion as Anthropomorphism”

No Class February 17

B12 — February 19: **Trees with Faces**
David Haberman, “Faces in the Trees”

Yangon — February 20-24

B13 — February 26: **Drawing Form and Personality Out of the Formless**
Powerpoint Slides of the Worship of Mount Govardhan

B14 — February 28: **Worship of Divine Forms in Hindu Temples**
Diana Eck, “Seeing the Sacred”

Cochin — March 1-6 (March 1: Field Class - Embodied Worship in Hindu Temples)

B15 — March 8: **Anthropomorphism Reconsidered in Social Psychology**
Epley, et. al., “When We Need a Human: Motivational Determinants of Anthropomorphism”

B16 — March 11: **Agency and Presence in Idols**
Alfred Gell, “The Distributed Person”

Mauritius — March 12

B17 — March 14: **The Lives of Images**
W. J. T. Mitchell, “Empire and Objecthood”

No Class March 15

B18 — March 17: **African Religions and Religious Objects**

Cape Town — March 19-24

B19 — March 25: **Things and Religion in Southern Africa**

B20 — March 27: **Fetishism**
William Pietz, “The Problem of the Fetish II: The Origin of the Fetish”

No Class March 29
B21 — March 30:  Traditional Ghanian Religion
slides and select readings

Tema — March 31-April 3

B22 — April 5:  Anthropomorphism and Environmentalism
K. Tam, S. Lee, and M. Chao, “Saving Mr. Nature: Anthropomorphism
Enhances Connectedness to and Protectiveness Toward Nature”

B23 — April 7:  Idolatry Reclaimed?
Bron Taylor, “Idolatry, Paganism, and Trust in Nature”

B24 — April 9:  Wrap-Up Discussion (plus a few words on Islam and material
culture)

Study Day April 10

Casablanca — April 11-April 14

B25 Finals — April 16: Final Presentation/Paper

Arrive Hamburg — April 19

FIELD WORK

Semester at Sea field experiences allow for an unparalleled opportunity to compare, contrast, and synthesize the different cultures and countries encountered over the course of the voyage. In addition to the one field class, students will complete independent field assignments that span multiple countries.

Field Class attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field class. Field Classes constitute at least 20% of the contact hours for each course.

Field Class and Assignment

The Field Class for this course will take place on Wednesday, 1 March in Cochin, India.

Embodied Worship in Hindu Temples

This field class will involve a visit to several Hindu temples near Cochin, India to observe the central temple act of murti-puja, or worship of embodied forms of divinity, and to talk with temple priests and worshipers about this practice. This will provide an opportunity to gather information that will be used to assess the appropriateness of interpretive strategies connected with the concept of idolatry for understanding and explaining this ritual practice.
Field Class Objectives:

1. Experience the inside of a variety of Hindu temples
2. Observe the worship of embodied forms of divinity (murti-puja)
3. Learn more about this practice from conversations with Hindu worshippers

Field Class Assignment: Students will be required to submit a 2-3 page field journal entry about this trip, demonstrating their knowledge of Hindu temple religious practices near Cochin and serious reflection on interpretive issues related to this class.

Independent Field Assignments
During our voyage, we have the opportunity to observe a variety of interactions with religious objects. You are to record such religious practice in at least three countries in fair detail, and include what you learned about how people you speak with regard the religious object. How do they conceive of the object? How do they understand the possibility that divinity or the sacred can assume physical form? What are some of the purposes or benefits from worship of embodied forms of divinity or the sacred? The final field journal is due April 16th. Each journal entry should be 2-3 pages in length. State where you went, the date of your visit, what port it was, and what religious tradition was associated with the site you visited. You should make field notes either during or immediately after your visit. When you adapt your notes to a journal entry, try to describe everything that you saw as well as the conversations you had. What did you observe? What did you learn about religious interaction with material objects, and also about interpretive possibilities for understanding and explaining what you observed? At the end of the course, journal entries will be evaluated based on 1) apparent effort in conducting and recording field work, 2) effective writing, 3) your ability to apply appropriate terms and concepts from readings and lectures to your own observations of religious practices and recorded conceptions of religious objects.

One of the three sites must be the required Field Class in Cochin. For the other two, consult the list of suggested sites in each port, which can be found at the end of this syllabus.

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING SCALE

Class attendance and participation 20%
Essay #1, March 11: 20%
Field Assignment Journal, March 11/April 9: 20%
Essay #2, April 7: 20%
Final Presentation/Paper, April 16: 20%

The following Grading Scale is utilized for student evaluation. Pass/Fail is not an option for Semester at Sea coursework. Note that C-, D+ and D grades are also not assigned on Semester at Sea in accordance with the grading system at Colorado State University (the SAS partner institution).

Pluses and minuses are awarded as follows on a 100% scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory/Poor</th>
<th>Failing</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97-100%: A+</td>
<td>87-89%: B+</td>
<td>77-79%: C+</td>
<td>Less than 60%: F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94-96%: A</td>
<td>84-86%: B</td>
<td>70-76%: C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93%: A-</td>
<td>80-83%: B-</td>
<td>60-69%: D</td>
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ATTENDANCE/ENGAGEMENT IN THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM
Attendance in all Semester at Sea classes is mandatory, but it is at the instructor’s discretion to assign a grade to the participation and attendance requirement. Remember to include information concerning the evaluation of Field Assignments and the Field Classes, which must constitute at least 20% of the total grade in a course.

Students must inform their instructors prior to any unanticipated absence and take the initiative to make up missed work in a timely fashion. Instructors must make reasonable efforts to enable students to make up work which must be accomplished under the instructor’s supervision (e.g., examinations, laboratories). In the event of a conflict in regard to this policy, individuals may appeal using established CSU procedures.

LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS
Semester at Sea provides academic accommodations for students with diagnosed learning disabilities, in accordance with ADA guidelines. Students who will need accommodations in a class, should contact ISE to discuss their individual needs. Any accommodation must be discussed in a timely manner prior to implementation. A memo from the student’s home institution verifying the accommodations received on their home campus is required before any accommodation is provided on the ship. Students must submit this verification of accommodations pre-voyage as soon as possible, but no later than November 19, 2016 to academic@isevoyages.org.

STUDENT CONDUCT CODE
The foundation of a university is truth and knowledge, each of which relies in a fundamental manner upon academic integrity and is diminished significantly by academic misconduct. Academic integrity is conceptualized as doing and taking credit for one’s own work. A pervasive attitude promoting academic integrity enhances the sense of community and adds value to the educational process. All within the University are affected by the cooperative commitment to academic integrity. All Semester at Sea courses adhere to this Academic Integrity Policy and Student Conduct Code.

Depending on the nature of the assignment or exam, the faculty member may require a written declaration of the following honor pledge: “I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance on this exam/assignment.”

RESERVE FILM FOR THE LIBRARY
AUTHOR: Dir: Christopher McLeod (Sacred Land Film Project)
TITLE: In the Light of Reverence
PUBLISHER: Bullfrog Films
ISBN #: 1-56029-976-2 (DVD)
DATE/EDITION: 2001

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

AUTHOR: David Haberman
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Root Issues
BOOK TITLE: People Trees: Worship of Trees in Northern India
VOLUME: (Oxford)
DATE: 2013
PAGES: 7-30

AUTHOR: Paul M. Armstrong
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: “Play and Cultural Differences”
JOURNAL TITLE: The Kenyon Review
VOLUME: New Series, Vol. 13, No. 1
DATE: 1991 (Winter)
PAGES: 157-71

AUTHOR: Jan Assmann
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: “What’s Wrong with Images?”
BOOK TITLE: Idol Anxiety
VOLUME: edited by Josh Ellenbogen and Aaron Tugendhaft (Stanford)
DATE: 2011
PAGES: 19-31

AUTHOR: Carlos Eire
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: “John Calvin’s Attack on Idolatry”
BOOK TITLE: War Against the Idols
VOLUME: (Cambridge)
DATE: 1986
PAGES: 195-233 (*plus, if possible, Introduction, pp. 1-7)

AUTHOR: Jonathan Sheehan
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: “Thinking about Idols in Early Modern Europe”
JOURNAL TITLE: Journal of the History of Ideas
VOLUME: Vol. 67, No. 4
DATE: 2006 (October)
PAGES: 561-69

AUTHOR: Guy Stroumsa
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: “John Spenser and the Roots of Idolatry”
JOURNAL TITLE: History of Religions
VOLUME: Vol. 41, No. 1
DATE: 2001 (August)
PAGES: 1-23
AUTHOR: Lorraine Daston
ARTICLE TITLE: “How Nature Became the Other: Anthropomorphism and Anthropocentrism in Early Modern Natural Philosophy”
BOOK TITLE: Biology as Society, Society as Biology: Metaphors
VOLUME: edited by Sabine Massen, Everett Mendelsohn, and Peter Weingart (Kluwer)
DATE: 1995
PAGES: 37-56

AUTHOR: Martin Mulsow
ARTICLE TITLE: “Idolatry and Science: Against Nature Worship from Boyle to Rudiger”
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Journal of the History of Ideas
VOLUME: Vol. 67, No. 4
DATE: 2006 (October)
PAGES: 697-711

AUTHOR: Stewart Guthrie
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: “Religion as Anthropomorphism”
BOOK TITLE: Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion
VOLUME: (Oxford)
DATE: 1993
PAGES: 177-204

AUTHOR: David Haberman
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: “Faces in the Trees”
JOURNAL TITLE: Journal for the Study of Religion Nature and Culture
VOLUME: Vol. 4, No. 2
DATE: 2010 (June)
PAGES: 173-90

AUTHOR: Diana Eck
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Seeing the Sacred
BOOK TITLE: Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India
VOLUME: (Columbia)
DATE: 1998
PAGES: 3-31

AUTHOR: N. Epley, A. Waytz, S. Akalis, and J. Cacioppo
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: “When We Need a Human: Motivational Determinants of Anthropomorphism”
JOURNAL TITLE: Social Cognition
VOLUME: Vol. 26
DATE: 2008
PAGES: 143-55

AUTHOR: Alfred Gell
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: “The Distributed Person”
BOOK TITLE: Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory
VOLUME: (Clarendon)
DATE: 1998
PAGES: 96-154

AUTHOR: W. J. T. Mitchell
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: “Empire and Objecthood”
BOOK TITLE: What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images
VOLUME: (Chicago)
DATE: 2006
PAGES: 145-68

AUTHOR: Geoffrey Parrinder
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: “The Nature of West African Religions”
BOOK TITLE: West African Religion”
VOLUME: (Epworth)
DATE: 1949
PAGES: 11-17

AUTHOR: William Pietz
ARTICLE TITLE: “The Problem of the Fetish, II: The Origin of the Fetish
JOURNAL TITLE: Anthropology and Aesthetics
VOLUME: No. 13
DATE: 1987 (Spring)
PAGES: 23-45

AUTHOR: Something on Traditional Ghana Religion and Religious Objects
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE:
JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE:
VOLUME:
DATE:
PAGES:

AUTHOR: K, Tam, S. Lee, and M. Chao
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: “Saving Mr. Nature: Anthropomorphism Enhances Connectedness to and Protectiveness Toward Nature”
JOURNAL TITLE: Journal of Experimental Social Psychology
VOLUME: Vol. 49
DATE: 2013
PAGES: 514-21

AUTHOR: Bron Taylor
ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: “Idolatry, Paganism, and Trust in Nature”
JOURNAL TITLE: Pomegranate
VOLUME: 12.1
DATE: 2010