



Prof. Dr. Almut-Barbara Renger

New Age – Religion in Historical Perspective

Second Semester 2012–2013

Course Manual

Time and place: Tuesday, 9.00–12.00 h, room 253

Language of Instruction: English

Course code: THB2NAE5 and THMINOR-D5

Credit points: 5 ECTS

<i>Part of:</i> [Degree Program]	[Year]	[Term]	[Type]
BA in Religious Studies	2	semester II	compulsory
parttime BA in Religious Studies	4	semester II	compulsory
BA in Theology	2	semester II	compulsory
parttime BA in Theology	3	semester II	compulsory
Religion in the Modern World	3	semester II	option group

Course contents:

The term “New Age” refers to a religious and cultural movement that began in the 1960s. However, the foundation for the movement had been laid long before. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, a variety of individuals and organizations among them Helena P. Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society as well as internationally renowned scholars in fields such as comparative mythology and comparative religion paved the way for the movement’s rise. Then, in the 1970s, the movement developed a social and political component. Today, we can see a popularized form of New Age that breaks down the boundaries between “privatized” and “public” religion and is part of a competitive market in which producers compete with each other to satisfy the wants of consumers. In this seminar, we first discuss the main characteristics of what is referred to by scholars as “New Age” or “modern esotericism.” Subsequently, we will focus on concrete manifestations of New Age religion and place these in a historical framework. Special attention will be paid to C.G. Jung’s theory of archetypes, Goddess spirituality, and channeling.

Literature:

A detailed syllabus with additional information about the exam formate (a paper), program, reading list with texts to be read and additional material which can be used for study and discussion is to be found below.

Learning goals:

The objective of this seminar is to provide students with a general theoretical framework that is relevant for the academic study of the New Age Movement. Moreover, in this course, students will improve their presentation and writing skills.

Specific learning goals:

- Familiarity with the discussions and methodological approaches in the socio-scientific and historical study of New Age
- Knowledge and understanding of the origins, background and development of New Age
- Skills in discussion, oral presentation, writing a small paper and research on the internet

Format:

This course will have the format of both lecture and seminar, which means that active participation of students is essential. Although the instructor will give detailed information by means of lectures, work will also be done in collaboration with the students who will introduce readings of the respective week and discuss and present their own ideas. In addition, a paper has to be written.

Assignments and grade breakdown:

Preparation for and active participation in class is compulsory.

Workload: lectures/tutorials (7 x 2 hours): 14 hours; contribution to Nestor discussion forum: 8 hours (20% of final grade); group presentation and QARQ: 12 hours (40% of final grade); short paper: 18 hours (40% of final grade); expected self-study: 88 hours.

A presentation by a student will take 15-25 minutes. Because all students will have read the preparatory literature, it is essential not just to repeat the content of the reading, but (a) to highlight the crucial argument/modes of narrative or discourse, (b) provide more information about the context (e.g., the author, the rest of the book, debates that underlie the text, reviews of the book/article, etc.), and (c) to extract a couple of questions or critical remarks that should be discussed in class. The use of handouts is required; Power-Point presentations including images are strongly encouraged. The presentations (even if in preliminary form) have to be sent to the instructor at least five days before the session, otherwise 1.0 will be subtracted from the grade for this assignment. Each student will be responsible for 2 presentations. These will make for 40% (2 x 20%) of the final grade.

In consultation with the instructor, students will write a term paper of 4,000–5,000 words (incl. footnotes and references). Papers should focus on a relevant academic question, make use of primary and secondary literature, and should employ standard rules of argumentation, citation systems, and bibliography. Term papers require an ability to critically engage with literature that lies outside the required readings. The instructor will comment on a preliminary version of the paper, if that is submitted before 24 May 2013. The final version is due 1 June 2013 and will make for 40% of the final grade.

Re-examination:

The weighed final grade has to be satisfactory (5.5). If the final grade is unsatisfactory, students can repeat one of the assignments that were unsatisfactory. All material has to be handed in by 7 June 2013.

Program

23 April

1. Introduction

Introduction to the course's topic, explanation of assignments, distribution of presentations

Texts used in the classroom:

– James R. Lewis, “Approaches to the Study of the New Age Movement,” in: Lewis & J. Gordon Melton (eds.), *Perspectives on the New Age*, Albany/NY: State University of New York Press, 1992, 1–12.

– Kocku von Stuckrad, “Esotericism and Modernity,” in: von Stuckrad *Western Esotericism: A Brief History of Secret Knowledge*, London: Equinox, 2005, 133–146.

Additional material for reading at home:

– Wouter J. Hanegraaff, “A Preliminary Demarcation of the Field,” in: Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought*, Boston/MA: Brill, 1996, 7–20.

7 May

2. C.G. Jung's Impact: Myth and Archetypes

Reading:

– C.G. Jung, “Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious,” in: Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (= *The Collected Works*, ed. by Sir Herbert Read, Michael Fordham and Gerhard Adler, vol. 9., part 1, 20 vols., 2nd edition), translated by R.F.C. Hull, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986 [1959], 3–41.

– C.G. Jung, “Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype,” in: Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, translated by R.F.C. Hull, 74–109 [first published as a lecture: “Die psychologischen Aspekte des Mutterarchetypus,” in: *Eranos* 6 (1938), 405–409].

Additional material:

– Michael Vannoy Adams, “Does Myth (Still) Have a Function in Jungian Studies? Modernity, Metaphor, and Psycho-Mythology?,” in: Lucy Huskinson (ed.), *Dreaming the Myth Onwards: New Directions in Jungian Therapy and Thought*, New York: Routledge, 2008, 81–90.

Presentation:
2-4 students

14 May 3. Goddesses in Every Woman: Ancient & Modern

Reading:

– C. G. Jung, “Introduction,” in: Mary Esther Harding, *Woman’s Mysteries. Ancient and Modern*, Boston, MA: Shambhala, 1990, ix–xii.

– Mary Esther Harding, “Myth and the Modern Mind,” in: Harding, *Woman’s Mysteries. Ancient and Modern* [1935], Boston, MA: Shambhala, 1990, 3–20.

– Jean Shinoda Bolen, “There Are Goddesses in Everywoman,” “Goddesses as Inner Image,” and “Activating the Goddesses,” in: Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman* [1984]. *Powerful Archetypes in Women’s Lives*, New York: HarperCollins, 2004, 1–34.

– Jean Shinoda Bolen, “Aphrodite: Goddess of Love and Beauty, Creative Woman and Lover,” in: Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman* [1984]. *Powerful Archetypes in Women’s Lives*, New York: HarperCollins, 2004, 233–262.

Additional material:

– Demaris Wehr, “Jung and Feminism: Opposition or Dialogue?” and “Feminist Theory in Psychology and Theology”, in: Wehr, *Jung and Feminism: Liberating Archetypes*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1987, 1–12 and 13–26.

Presentation/ critique:
2-5 students

28 May 4. Eranos and Esotericism: Religion and Science

Reading:

– Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, “Modern Esotericism and New Paradigms,” in: Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions. A Historical Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 229-250.

– Wouter J. Hanegraaff, “The Archetype of Eranos: Carl Gustav Jung and the Western Unconscious” and “Eranos and Religionism: Scholem, Corbin, Eliade,” in: Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy. Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 277–294 and 295–314.

Additional material:

– Princeton University Press: Bollingen Series (General)
<http://press.princeton.edu/catalogs/series/bs.html>

Presentation:
 2 students

4 June 5. Helena Blavatsky's Impact: Distribution of Secret Knowledge
 in an Anxious Age

Reading:

– Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, “Introduction: H.P. Blavatsky and Theosophy,” in: Goodrick-Clarke (ed.), *Helena Blavatsky*, Berkeley/CA: North Atlantic Books, 2004, 1–20.

– Michael F. Brown, *The Channeling Zone: American Spirituality in an Anxious Age*, Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1997, 1–37.

Presentation:
 2-3 students

11 June

6. Conclusion: *New Age Capitalism?*

Reading:

– Paul Heelas, “Significance,” in: Heelas, *The New Age Movement: Religion, Culture and Society in the Age of Postmodernity*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, US: Blackwell Publishing, 1996, 106–134.

– Kimberly J. Lau, “Ideology Incorporated: From Bodily Practice to Body Product” and “Risks of Modernity,” in: Lau, *New Age Capitalism. Making Money East of Eden*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2000, 1–20 and 131–140.

Presentation:
 1-3 students

Concluding discussion