

JSIS C 254
American Religion
Winter 2014 / TTh 1:30-3:20 / Thomson 101 / 5 credits

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Winter Quarter
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30 – 3:20
Lecture Room: Thomson 101

Course Description

This course asks, “What do we mean by *religion* in America, and why does it matter to our society?” We will explore this question by looking at the different groups that have migrated to America and shaped its institutions and cultures. Beginning with American Protestantism, we will first examine why some strands of English Protestant theology shaped American culture. We will then turn to some groups that have been historically excluded from this consensus and how they have in turn contributed to newer understandings of American religion. Our course will conclude with an exploration of American Protestant fundamentalism. The goal of this course is to explore together how religion in America has shaped America as a whole, suggesting that we should care about American religion regardless of whatever religious background from which we come.

Course Goals

- To identify the “culture” of different American religious traditions, including their relation to American migration history
- To think critically and comparatively about and between each tradition
- To articulate how each tradition in turn constructs American culture
- To apply a critical lens on how America has been and is shaped by its migrant religious traditions
- To read classic texts that theorize American religion
- To prepare students to take on the role as scholars and informed citizens in the study of religion and in the understanding of American religious culture.

Teaching Goals

- To create a stimulating environment for learning
- To critically engage texts theorizing American religion
- To logically unfold the material to give you a clear understanding of these traditions.
- To be a resource for your understanding, critical thinking, and appreciation of these traditions.

Required Texts:

The course will be based on critical readings of the following books. You will need to have ready access to these books in order to complete your assignments and to engage the classroom conversation. In the course outline, I have indicated broadly how each lecture corresponds to the sections of each of these books. However, you are free to read them at your own pace in a way that will help you complete the assignments on time.

Baldwin, James. 1963/1992. *The Fire Next Time*. Vintage. 9780679744726
Fischer, David Hackett. 1989. *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America*. Oxford. 9780195069051.
Herberg, Will. 1955/1960/1983. *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*. 9780226327341.
Marsden, George M. 2007. *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. New Edition. Oxford. 9780195300475.

For some weeks, there will be articles that you are required to download via the UW Library. These articles are the following:

Iwamura, Jane Naomi. (2007), Critical Faith: Japanese Americans and the birth of a new civil religion. *American Quarterly*, 59(3), 937-968.
Smith, Andrea. (2010). Decolonization in unexpected places: native evangelicalism and the rearticulation of mission. *American Quarterly*, 62(3), 569-590.
Tweed, Thomas A. (2010). Mary's Rain and God's Umbrella: Religion, Identity, and Modernity in the Visionary Art of a Chicana Painter. *Material Religion*, 6(30), 274-303.
Yoo, David. (1996). For those who have eyes to see: religious sighting in Asian America. *Amerasia Journal*, 22(1), xiii-xxii.

Recommended Texts:

Griffith, R. Marie. 2008. *American Religions: A Documentary History*. Princeton Univ. Press. 9780195179450.
De Tocqueville, Alexis. 1835/1840/2004. *Democracy in America*. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. The Library of America. 9781931082549.

Course Requirements: 200 points = 100% = 4.0

1 personal reflection paper: **5% (10 points)**
2 critical papers: **20% (20 points each = 40 points total)**
1 field trip paper: **10% (20 points)**
1 mid-quarter exam: **25% (50 points)**
1 take-home final exam: **40% (80 points)**

To promote an environment conducive to learning, please follow these classroom rules:

- NO food
- NO cell phone calls
- Do NOT talk while your fellow students are asking questions or providing commentary
- NO newspaper reading, web surfing, or social media interactions. If you must post something like, "OMG, my instructor said..." do so after class, and if it's on Twitter, have the courtesy to tag me @religethnicwire. But do it after class. Otherwise, you'll be interacting with the outside world more than with the class, which defeats the point of coming to class.
- Speaking of social media, DO NOT add me on Facebook. If you must interact with me on Facebook, do so on my public page, Religion Ethnicity Wired.

- If you cannot avoid coming late or leaving early, do so in a manner that does NOT disturb other students. In fact, we recommend that you come to class on time and stay for the duration.

Academic Conduct

I will strictly enforce the University of Washington Student Conduct code, including the policy on plagiarism. For your reference, the entire code can be found at <http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html>.

Disabled Students

If you would like to request accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz Hall, 543-8924 (V/TDD). If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you require accommodations, please present the letter to me as soon as possible so that I can make necessary arrangements.

COURSE OUTLINE

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTORY CLASS: WHO CARES ABOUT AMERICAN RELIGION?

1.1: Jan 7 Everybody's From Somewhere: Religion and the Shaping of American Culture

UNIT 2: MIGRANT HISTORIES: THE DOMINANCE OF ANGLO-SAXON PROTESTANTISMS

2.1: Jan 9 A Puritan Society

Reading: Fischer, p. 3-206

2.2 Jan 14 An Anglican Society

Reading: Fischer, p. 207-418

2.3 Jan 16 A Quaker Society

Reading: Fischer, p. 419-604

PERSONAL REFLECTION #1 DUE:

As we get into the study of American religion, write a two-page autobiography of your own religious background. Tell me about yourself. Tell me a story or two that illustrates your encounters with religion in America up till now. Tell me what you think this course is going to be about, especially in light of your personal experience.

2.4 Jan 21 A New Light Society

Reading: Fischer, p. 783-898

2.5 Jan 23 Religion and the making of a voluntary society

NO READING: WRITE YOUR CRITICAL PAPER

CRITICAL PAPER #1 DUE (5 pages):

From *Albion's Seed*, you have read about four different 'folkways' in Anglo-Saxon Protestantism and how the Protestant theologies that English migrants brought to America shaped American religion. In your paper, answer the following question: **how did these groups' understanding of the relationship between religion and freedom differ, and how did they come together to form an "American" consensus about religion and liberty?**

UNIT 3: PROTESTANT-CATHOLIC-JEW: NEW INCLUSIONS IN AMERICAN RELIGION

- 3.1 Jan 28** Migration, religion, and the American Way of Life
Reading: Herberg, ch. 1-5
- 3.2: Jan 30** How Catholicism and Judaism became American
Reading: Herberg, ch. 6-8
- 3.3 Feb 4** A New Religious America: toward American religious pluralism?
Reading: Herberg, ch. 9-11
- 3.4 Feb 6** **MID-QUARTER EXAM: Anglo-Saxon Protestantisms and New Inclusions**
NO READING: STUDY FOR YOUR EXAM

UNIT 4: AMERICAN RELIGION AND RACE: CONTESTING THE LAND

- 4.1 Feb 11** American Religion and Race: does it matter?
Reading: Baldwin, Part 1
- 4.2 Feb 13** The Black Church and The Civil Rights Movement
Reading: Baldwin, Part 2
- 4.3 Feb 18** Strangers from a Different Shore: Asian American religions
Readings:
Yoo, David. (1996). For those who have eyes to see: religious sighting in Asian America. *Amerasia Journal*, 22(1), xiii-xxii. (Download from UW Library.)
Iwamura, Jane Naomi. (2007), Critical Faith: Japanese Americans and the birth of a new civil religion. *American Quarterly*, 59(3), 937-968. (Download from UW Library.)
- 4.4 Feb 20** Mixing Traditions: Indigenous and Chicano Religions
Readings:
Tweed, Thomas A. (2010). Mary's Rain and God's Umbrella: Religion, Identity, and Modernity in the Visionary Art of a Chicana Painter. *Material Religion*, 6(30), 274-303. (Download from UW Library)
Smith, Andrea. (2010). Decolonization in unexpected places: native evangelicalism and the rearticulation of mission. *American Quarterly*, 62(3), 569-590. (Download from UW Library)
- 4.5 Feb 25** Who's in, who's out? The Unspoken Consensuses of American Religion
NO READING: WRITE YOUR CRITICAL PAPER
CRITICAL PAPER #2 DUE (5 pages):
In this course, you have seen that some migrant forms of religion are included in the American consensus, while others tend to be excluded. Based on your readings, answer the following question: **to what extent are the inclusions and exclusions in American religion determined by race?**

UNIT 5: AMERICAN FUNDAMENTALISM: REACTING TO INCLUSION

- 5.1 Mar 4** The Second Great Awakening and the Making of American Religion
Reading: Marsden, Introduction, Part 1, 4, and 5
- 5.2 Mar 6** The Making of American Fundamentalism
Reading: Marsden, Part 2

- 5.3 Mar 11 From Fighting the Liberals to the “Uneasy Conscience”: Fundamentalists and Evangelicals
Reading: Marsden, Part 3
- 5.4 Mar 13 American Fundamentalism and the Religious Right
Reading: Marsden, Part 4
FIELD TRIP PAPER DUE (7 pages):
Attend a megachurch in Seattle (this congregation must be over 2000 people). Take detailed notes of your experience there and match it with your reading of Marsden. In your paper, answer the following question: **to what extent was your experience of the megachurch similar or different from Marsden’s account of American fundamentalism?**

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DUE MARCH 20

ASSIGNMENTS

PERSONAL REFLECTION (10 points = 5%)

As we get into the study of American religion, write a two-page autobiography of your own religious background. Tell me about yourself. Tell me a story or two that illustrates your encounters with religion in America up till now. Tell me what you think this course is going to be about, especially in light of your personal experience.

This paper is a *maximum* of 2 pages, 12 point font. Please **double-side** when you print. Because this paper is about your personal experience, it is graded by completion, that is, if you turn it in, the points are automatic.

This personal reflection is due at the beginning of class on **January 16**.

CRITICAL PAPERS (20 points each = 40 points total = 20%)

These papers are **5 pages, double spaced, 12 font**, due at beginning of class session for which they are assigned. DO NOT use these papers to summarize the readings. Instead, critically engage the readings by arguing out your answer to the question I have posed. You can refer to Professor James K. Wellman’s writing tips, attached to the end of the syllabus, for more of what is expected. The following steps can also get you started:

- 1) Choose a problem or a question that is focused, not too broad, but not too narrow.
- 2) Write a thesis, which is your focused argument in the first paragraph. This is not your opinion. It is a statement of your argument about the problem or question. It is what the point that you are going to defend in the course of your five pages.
- 3) Then, argue for your thesis with two or three points concisely made. Include evidence from the readings to make your point more plausible. You may certainly go outside your readings to make your points, if they are relevant, but including more things may distract from your point. If you do go outside the readings, do it sparingly, and keep it very relevant.
- 4) The best papers often include counter-argument—that is, a counter to your main thesis, to which you respond. Consider the other side carefully. Why do you think your

argument is the best answer? Why do you think other perspectives are insufficient? Occasionally, your counter-point is insurmountable, and you change your mind in response to it; if this is the case, allow it to happen, because this can be interesting and creative.

- 5) The final paragraph is a summary paragraph, which summarizes the thesis that you have been defending. It does not include a new argument.
- 6) Don't forget to include a bibliography. You should cite the readings with a consistent style (see Wellman's tips), and you should include a bibliography at the end. Your bibliography is not included in the page count, i.e. if your paper is four pages and your bibliography is the fifth page, then your paper is only four pages long.
- 7) One caveat: Do not be afraid to differ with me, your instructor. In the culture of academia, I will be arguing a case to you during this course, as will the readings. However, your job is to **engage these arguments**. This can—and to some extent, *should*—mean that you will disagree with something. You may even disagree strongly. Your job is to state your case, having heard and read what is assigned. In turn, I will grade on the plausibility of your arguments and on how carefully you have engaged the assigned readings and the lectures. After all, in these areas of culture and religion, it is tough to have the “right” answer, only more or less plausible arguments that are carefully sourced.

CRITICAL PAPER #1: ALBION'S SEED (20 points)

The first book we will read in this class is David Hackett Fischer's *Albion's Seed*. This is a very long book, and it might be easy to get lost. Focus your reading on how the different “folkways” in each of the Anglo-Saxon Protestant traditions developed an understanding of the relationship between religion and freedom.

On the session following the lecture in which we finish this book (**January 23**), you will need to hand in your paper based on your reading of Fischer. You will have read about the four different ‘folkways’ in Anglo-Saxon Protestantism and how the Protestant theologies that English migrants brought to America shaped American religion. In your paper, answer the following question: **how did these groups’ understanding of the relationship between religion and freedom differ, and how did they come together to form an “American” consensus about religion and liberty?** Write me a critical answer that is **5 pages, double spaced, 12 font.**

A TIP FOR HOW TO GET THIS PAPER DONE: The best way to do this is to write a succinct answer to this question for each of the groups after you finish each class's assigned reading. For example, how did the Puritans understand religion and freedom, *etc.*? Then, put together your answers and look for the similarities and differences. How did they differ? How did they come together? Use these notes to form your thesis, and write a five-page paper explaining how this all fits together.

This first critical paper is due at the beginning of class on **January 23**.

CRITICAL PAPER #2: RACE AND AMERICAN RELIGION (20 points)

At this juncture in the course, you will have read David Hackett Fischer's *Albion's Seed*, Will Herberg's classic *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*, and James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time*, as well as some supplementary articles on race and religion.

This assignment calls for you to critically engage the material that has presented to you. On **February 25**, you will need to hand in your critical assessment of why certain forms of religion have become part of the American consensus, while others struggle to make their voices heard. Authors like David Hackett Fischer and Will Herberg argue that while some migrant groups are initially excluded from the American consensus, they eventually become part of it and contribute unique contours to an American understanding of religion and freedom. However, in *The Fire Next Time*, James Baldwin makes the case that this process is uneven across America and that certain groups experience exclusion due to a racial division in America. In addition, your readings of David Yoo, Jane Iwamura, Tom Tweed, and Andrea Smith suggest that because there might be strange mixes of tradition in racialized groups, the intersection of race and religion makes for religious traditions that don't seem to fit the Protestant consensus. Based on your reading of the material presented before you, answer the following question: **to what extent are the inclusions and exclusions in American religion determined by race?** If you think it's all about race, show me why. If you think it's something else, argue for what else you think it is, and show me how. Write me a critical answer that is **5 pages, double spaced, 12 font**.

This second critical paper is due at the beginning of class on **February 25**.

FIELD TRIP PAPER (20 points = 10%)

This assignment calls for you to attend an evangelical megachurch in Seattle. Unlike the critical papers, this assignment is longer: **7 pages, double spaced, 12 font**.

During the first lecture in Unit 5 on **March 4**, I will hand out a list of evangelical megachurch congregations from which you can choose. These congregations are over 2000 people and generally hold to a conservative Protestant theology. While this course is on American religion more generally, you should stick to this list of evangelical megachurches and not try to make a case to attend a service in another tradition because in Unit 5, we are trying to evaluate the resurgence of the Protestant consensus. It's not that I don't like other religious traditions—in fact, we learned about some of those in Units 3 and 4!—but now that you are armed with that knowledge, you now get to go to an evangelical megachurch to critically evaluate the Protestant consensus.

When you are at the megachurch, take detailed notes of your experience there. Then match it with your reading of George Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. In your paper, answer the following question: **to what extent was your experience of the megachurch similar or different from Marsden's account of American fundamentalism?**

In this way, you are critically engaging Marsden's book as well. You will already know by now that American fundamentalism is not the only manifestation of American religion. You will know by now what has been included and what is struggling to be included. You are

allowed to bring that knowledge to bear on your field trip paper, but don't let that overwhelm your paper. Answer the question. How did your *experience of the megachurch* resonate with Marsden's account? That experience can include race. It can include your experience of how the specific megachurch that you attended talked about Catholics, Jews, Buddhists, Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, indigenous spiritualities, and local lived religions. If you write about these things, don't speculate, i.e. don't say, "Based on my experience, I believe that this church would treat these people like this," because you don't know that. If you write about these things, write about something that was actually said from the pulpit, or something someone said to you (even informally), or something that you actually experienced at the church. Then think about how that experience meshes with Marsden's account of American fundamentalism and evangelicalism. From that reflection, develop your argument, and defend your thesis in **7 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font.**

This field trip paper is due at the beginning of class on **March 13.**

MID-QUARTER EXAM (50 points = 20%)

This mid-quarter exam will take place in class on **February 6.** There are two parts to this exam. We will take the entire class session to administer this exam. This exam is **closed-book, closed notes.**

The first part will be graded out of **20 points.** I will list five key terms from Units 1-3 that you must identify. You will answer three of them. Each answer will be worth **6.7 points.** Your answer should be short, sweet, and to the point. It should tell me what this term means. It should give two short examples illustrating what this term means. It should briefly explain why this term is important for understanding American religion.

The second part will be graded out of **30 points.** I will give you four essay questions. You must answer two of them. These questions will ask for your critical engagement with the course material. Develop a thesis that you can argue and defend in your answer. Give examples of your point, and address counterexamples. This is your chance to show me that you have been thinking about American religion and that you have something to say about it, having read the material, heard the lectures, and engaged in classroom discussion.

TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM (80 points = 40%)

This take-home exam will have five essay questions and will be cumulative. Your answers must be typed. This is due at **9 AM on Thursday, March 20** in my office. There will be no exceptions to the date or time of drop off for this take home final exam.

Because this exam is take-home, it is necessarily **open-book and open-note.** This doesn't mean that you shouldn't study. In fact, it encourages you to study *by critically engaging the course material.* These essay questions won't just test what you know; they will test whether you have been thinking enough about American religion to say something coherent and critical about it. This means that as you prepare for this exam, you should be writing critical reflections in your notes so that you know what you are going to argue for potential questions about American religion. The themes for the questions will be drawn from the course material. This means that they should be no surprise.

You can make your answers as long or short as they need to be. As a general rule of thumb, though, don't ramble. State your answer as an argument. Defend your thesis. Give examples that bolster your point. Address counterexamples. Conclude by recapping your argument. Keep the answer coherent. And above all, answer the question.

GRADING POLICY

All take-home assigned work must be typed.

All work is due on the assigned date unless the student can prove medical incompetence or personal catastrophe. Otherwise late work will not be accepted and will receive the grade of 0.0. I also do not give "Incompletes" without the above documentation as noted.

Grading Philosophy:

The course is taught to mastery. That is, if you master the material and express your ideas in a clear, critical and creative way you can attain a very good score. This syllabus includes a numerical grading guide that will correspond to the total possible points of 200.

Policy on grading appeals

Appeals will be accepted only if a student presents a case that an obvious error has been made in the grading of an essay. All appeals must be typewritten and are due one week following the date the exams/essays are returned to the class. For final exams or papers, appeals will be accepted two weeks into the following academic quarter. The typewritten appeal must address the substantive reasons why the student thinks the grade is inappropriate. The professor reserves the right to reject the appeal and has the option of reducing the grade as the situation warrants.

Guide for Grading Writing:

A 3.7 - 4.0 demonstrates not only passion and enthusiasm, but creative control of that energy and a consistent focus on the assignment; this means you have argued your point logically and creatively, and written clearly. A 3.5 is a diamond with a visible flaw, such as a problem in the writing style or a minor problem in the logic of the argument. A 3.3 to 3.0 is very good, but the argument is slightly flawed or the logic, grammar and writing are not as clear as they should be. A 2.0 to 2.5 communicates you tried but the argument is not fully developed and the writing is unclear.

Specific Criteria for Evaluating Papers:

- 1) The writing is articulate; including grammar, sentence structure and language.
- 2) The student has understood text well enough to be critical and analytical.
- 3) The student approaches the subject in an engaging and creative way.

Grading Scale (200 points):

"A" Range:

196 - >200 = 4.0

192 - 195 = 3.9

190 - 191 = 3.8

186 - 189 = 3.7
183 - 185 = 3.6
180 - 182 = 3.5

“B” Range:

176 - 179 = 3.4
171 - 175 = 3.3
167 - 170 = 3.2
163 - 166 = 3.1
160 - 162 = 3.0
158 = 2.9
156 = 2.8
154 = 2.7
152 = 2.6
150 = 2.5

“C” Range:

148 = 2.4
146 = 2.3
144 = 2.2
142 = 2.1
140 = 2.0
138 = 1.9
136 = 1.8
134 = 1.7
132 = 1.6
130 = 1.5

“D” Range:

128 = 1.4
126 = 1.3
124 = 1.2
122 = 1.1
120 = 1.0
118 = 0.9
116 = 0.8
114 = 0.7

<57 = 0.0

A Guide to Successful Writing
Professor James K. Wellman, Jr., Comparative Religion, University of Washington

Writing well in the academy is challenging, but that does not mean that it has to be boring. Here are some ways that you can earn a good grade, *and* enjoy the process.

What is distinct about a strong academic argument?

The academic study of religion is distinct from being religious. As a religious believer, one confesses one's faith and shares what one believes. As a scholar of religion, one seeks to make a plausible case for what one thinks about a question or problem involving religion. A good academic argument is *stated clearly* and *backed up by evidence or argumentation*.

What is the goal of academic writing?

Your goal is to be *persuasive*; to make a plausible case for your point of view.

How to State Your Argument Clearly

1. **Concentrate:** Think deeply about your topic *before* you write. If your argument is unclear to you, it will confuse your readers. A few minutes brainstorming, or outlining your arguments beforehand will save you *a lot* of time and allow you to express your argument more clearly.
2. **Thesis:** State your thesis clearly and early. Have fun and experiment with the process of making a sharp, persuasive argument that is intended to convince another of your point of view.
3. **Organization:** The organization of your paragraphs should match the organization of your arguments. A paragraph is a group of sentences beginning with and unified by a topic sentence that communicates an argument or supporting argument in a coherent manner. Drafting an outline of the core argument and the logical steps to the conclusion can be helpful and clarifying.
4. **Grammar:** Poor grammar distracts the reader from your arguments, making them less persuasive. Good grammar sharpens your arguments.
5. **Phrasing:** Awkward or convoluted phrasing also distracts the reader and makes your arguments less persuasive. State arguments directly and simply, this will make them more powerful: *Example: Awkward: "Smith's definition tends to adopt a nominal form." Vs. Direct: "Smith's definition adopts a nominal form."*
6. **Word Choice:** "The difference between the right word and almost the right word is the difference between lightening and a lighting bug." - Mark Twain. Words are powerful, choose them well. Use the right word and use it correctly. Clear articulation, not big words, impresses the reader.
7. **Be Direct:** Get to the point, avoid anything that delays an effective argument. Cut out any useless words. *Example: Less direct: "It does perform." Vs. More direct: "It performs".*
8. **Use Active Voice:** Go through your essay and switch passive sentences to active voice wherever possible. The passive voice is less powerful and robs personal agency from an actor. *Example: Passive: "The definition is made nominal by the author's..." vs. Active: "The author makes the definition nominal by..."*

9. **Address Counter Arguments:** Bring up possible objections to your argument and respond to them. You can also start by arguing for your original thesis, then proceed through counterarguments and show how you changed your mind.
10. **Proofread:** Read your essay aloud to yourself, or better yet, have someone else read it. Hint: 4.0 essays are often the easiest to read; they are clear, vivid, and to the point. This does not mean they avoid complex and sophisticated arguments, their arguments are just stated succinctly and clearly. Spell checkers are not foolproof; read your entire paper with your own eyes!
11. **Be Consistent:** Regardless of which citation style you adopt you must be consistent in details. A lack of consistency distracts readers' attention from the more significant aspects of your essay.
12. **Own Your Essay:** If you take ownership of your research and thoughts you will produce a stronger essay and have a more enjoyable experience. Besides, nine times out of ten, plagiarism is obvious to informed readers, and there are serious repercussions for attempting it. See: <http://depts.washington.edu/grading/issue1/honesty.htm>.

How to Use Evidence and Argumentation

1. **Evidence:** Evidence is data, facts, statements validated through the arduous work of research. Evidence is data that is tested. Evidence is primary research that has outlasted intense scrutiny in the community of scholars. Evidence you can use in arguments includes references to the text books, lectures, and primary materials from outside research; remember Wikipedia is not always thoroughly vetted and thus unreliable.
2. **Use Examples:** Strong evidence should be supported by examples. . *Example: Rather than just "Stark's definition is too narrow." "Stark's definition is too narrow because it does not apply to religions that do not believe in a god or gods like Theravada Buddhism, philosophical Taoism, and some forms of Confucianism."*
3. **Be Specific:** Don't make general arguments when you can be specific. *Example: "Jaffee's definition is obviously vague." vs. "The phrase 'intense and sustained cultivation of a style of life' is vague because it gives us no criteria by which to judge whether someone's religion is 'intense.'" [DR. TSE'S ADDENDUM: in general, words like obviously are terrible in academic papers. Nothing is obvious in a paper. You are arguing a thesis. Show me what's obvious to you with some evidence.]*

How to Have Fun

1. **Success:** When people write well, they usually enjoy the experience. Follow the suggestions above. Producing good work is satisfying.
2. **Attitude:** It is a fact of college life that you have to write papers, so do not waste energy grumbling about "stupid" assignments. Instead, use that energy to find something that interests you and write about it.
3. **Locating a Topic:** Sometimes the most difficult aspect of writing a research paper is to find a topic. Start by thinking about what interests you the most. Write a list of ten questions that you have about the subject; narrow these down to three central

questions. Now attempt to answer these by reading widely on the topic. Repeat this process until you have narrowed your inquiry to a single question or problem.

4. **Think Small:** The larger the topic of research, the more unwieldy it will become. Identify a small problem that interests you. If you have researched the subject exhaustively, you will have plenty to write about.
5. **Make Arguments You Care About:** Find an angle from which to approach an assignment that interests or matters to you. You will write better, and enjoy the process. If you can think of a more interesting way for you to complete the assignment, you may propose an alternate essay to us.
6. **Develop Your Own Style:** Academic writing does not have to be boring and robotic. Never forget that your goal is to be persuasive; that acknowledged--there is ample room for creative, humorous, and engaging prose.
7. **Do Not Fall in Love with Your Own Writing:** Writing is a process that involves many changes. Try not to be wedded to the way your writing reads. Warning--sometimes the most catchy phrases and paragraphs are the most unhelpful to the reader.

Practical Grammatical Tips

1. Use I not we; unless you are writing as a team.
2. Avoid split infinitives: correct: to go boldly; incorrect use: to boldly go.
3. Foreign words and book titles are italicized
4. Note the order of commas, quotation marks, and footnotes (...the end."¹ "....almost the end,"² ...). Or "...the end of the story" (Mauss, 35).
5. Quotations of four or more lines are indented on both sides, single spaced, and appear without quotation marks.
6. Avoid colloquialisms and contractions (is not as opposed to isn't; cannot as opposed to can't).
7. Words that you often can replace with more descriptive words: has, had, is, are; better: makes, says, for example.
8. Avoid being wordy by replacing nouns and adjectives with more descriptive nouns, and verbs and adverbs with more descriptive verbs.
9. Words and phrases to avoid: the fact that, fact(s), very, actually, really, definitely, just, simply, merely, clearly, sort of, easily, obviously, true, seemingly, prove, proof, after all, thing(s), something, better, worse, being, tries to, attempts to.

Footnotes and Citation Styles

1. Your footnote/endnote style should be consistent in all details. Use a footnote if you need to add a point that is relevant to your argument, but will throw off the sequence, or logic of the flow of the argument. I prefer the citations in your footnotes/endnotes in social scientific style: (Smith 1998; Avalos 1995: 25); these notes refer to authors, or are placed at the end of quotations; they reference the full citations in your bibliography at the end of the paper.

2. You can also think of footnotes as miniature essays. They not only point readers to the source of your information, but they serve as useful repositories for additional thoughts you might have on a particular topic that is tangential to your main argument.

Bibliographies

1. Your bibliography should include only those items that you have incorporated into your essay.
2. Your bibliography should be consistent in details. Different citation styles inform readers that you did not proof read your essay and that you probably cut and pasted the information from elsewhere. There are different citations styles, but I prefer those that give complete information (place of publication, publisher, date, etc.). An example of a monograph would be:

Avalos, Hector. 1995. *Illness and Health Care in the Ancient Near East: The Role of the Temple in Greece, Mesopotamia, and Israel*. Harvard Semitic Museum Monographs, 54. Atlanta, GA.: Scholars Press.

3. In general, web sites are rarely useful sources of information. Nevertheless, if you must cite a web site, do so as follows: ETANA web site: <http://www.etana.org/>, accessed April 15, 2005.
4. A bibliography that includes less than 15-25 sources tells me that you have not researched the topic adequately.
5. Remember that dictionaries and encyclopedias represent only the first stage of your research. One must dig much deeper than these resources to fully understand a topic. Nevertheless, when reading articles in such resources take advantage of their bibliographies to locate information on a topic.

Writing Resources

1. *The Elements of Style*, Strunk and White.
2. *The Chicago Manual of Style*.
3. *The Craft of Research*, Eds. Wayne C. Booth et. al.
4. Political Science/Jackson School Writing Center: <http://depts.washington.edu/pswrite/>
5. CLUE: Writing Center: <http://depts.washington.edu/clue/writing.htm>