



# *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

## *Syllabus*

### *Text and the religious experience - 24311*

*Last update 05-10-2021*

*HU Credits: 2*

*Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)*

*Responsible Department: Comparative Religion*

*Academic year: 0*

*Semester: 1st Semester*

*Teaching Languages: Hebrew*

*Campus: Mt. Scopus*

*Course/Module Coordinator: Prof. Eviatar Shulman*

*Coordinator Email: [eviatar.shulman@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:eviatar.shulman@mail.huji.ac.il)*

*Coordinator Office Hours: upon appointment*

*Teaching Staff:*

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Prof Eviatar Shulman,  
Prof Uri Gabbay

Course/Module description:

The course aims to examine the idea of religious experience, in the broad spectrum that includes mystical, meditative and revelatory experience, possession, and more mundane and quotidian events as ritual, study and prayer.

We will ask what establishes an experience as religious, and in what sense such experiences are foundational. We will also examine how this experience determines the person and her or his social life.

Within this perspective, we will especially be concerned with the uses of text in constructing religious experience, and to use text as a tool to position religious experience between the bodily and concrete, through the conceptual, to the abstract and sublime.

The course will begin with a discussion of the concept of religious experience, mainly in light of Jewish sources, and will proceed to two main focuses on the ancient near east and early Buddhism. Different comparative materials will be employed,, mainly from Christianity and Hinduism.

Course/Module aims:

To rethink the relationship between text, experience and religion

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. to better understand how their consciousness and experience is textually conditioned.
2. to examine religious experience in a rich and variegated perspective, using both criticism and sympathy.
3. To consider the value of writing in the generation of culture,
4. To understand the role of text in religious experience.

Attendance requirements(%):

80

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: frontal teaching + class discussions, including student presentations. Students will respond to primary reading materials before class on Moodle.

Course/Module Content:

1. Introduction to the idea of religious experience.

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2. early Judaic religious experience.
  3. The spectrum of religious experience in Mesopotamia.
  4. Buddhist religious experience between meditation and text.
  5. Hinduism.

Required Reading:

up to five articles, including one chapter from William James, *The Varieties of religious experience*.

- Meyer, Birgit. *Mediation and the Genesis of Presence: Toward a Material Approach to Religion*. Inaugural Lecture, Utrecht University, 2012.

One chapter from -

- Luhrmann, Tanya M. *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.

Additional Reading Material:

primary materials for each class.

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %

Presentation 10 %

Participation in Tutorials 25 %

Project work 40 %

Assignments 0 %

Reports 25 %

Research project 0 %

Quizzes 0 %

Other 0 %

Additional information: