

**PhD-906 Methodological Studies I
Fall Semester 2025**

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Budd Building, Seminar Room
60 Lorraine St.

This required fall seminar will introduce PhD students to the methods of religious studies, focusing particularly on the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions. Students will examine the scholarly works that have contributed various perspectives on the study of these traditions through a close reading of the methods and theories of selected texts.

Course Format:

This course consists of 12 sessions over the course of the semester. The first nine will take place during the PhD orientation residency. The following four will be scheduled during the remainder of the semester as a hybrid course (either in person or synchronously online). The times and dates will be determined at the fall orientation session.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

1. analyze the contributions of key scholars in the study of religions and interreligious studies,
2. evaluate the different methods of analytic research in particular sub-fields of study, and
3. situate themselves in the various methods of research.

Required reading for the intensive week:

Selections from:

Engler, Steven, and Michael Stausberg, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*. Second edition. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2022. Chaps. 1.1 and 1.3 (and others according to student selections).

McCutcheon, Russell T. *Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse on Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Introduction, pp. 1-25.

Mosher, Lucinda, ed. *The Georgetown Companion to Interreligious Studies*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2022. TBD.

Hannoum, Abdelmajid. ["Translation and the Colonial Imaginary: Ibn Khald Un Orientalist."](https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2303.00230) *History & Theory*, vol. 42, no. 1, Feb. 2003, pp. 61–81. EBSCOhost, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2303.00230>.

Visotzky, Burton L. *Aphrodite and the Rabbis How the Jews Adapted Roman Culture to Create Judaism as We Know It*. [S.l.]: St. Martin's Press, 2024.

For post intensive follow-up sessions in October (please read):

Bulliet, Richard W. *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An essay in Quantitative History*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979.

Goitein, Shelomo Dov. *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World As Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*. Vol. 1: Economic Foundations. University of California Press, 1967. Pp. 1-74.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979. Pp. 1-110.

Assignments:

1. Attend the intensive residential PhD orientation session in September and follow up synchronous online sessions, TBD.
2. Read and be prepared to discuss the assigned texts prior to each relevant session.
3. Students will present on one chapter in Engler, *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, as it pertains to their potential method of research.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Fall Intensive sessions

Students should have read all the required reading prior to class. The instructors will present on the topic and then pose critical questions regarding the purpose, method, assumptions, and implications of the works.

Session 1: Monday, 15 September, 9:00-12:00: Methodologies in the study of religion

Discussion of McCutcheon

Session 2: Monday, 15 September, 2:00-5:00: Introduction to Interreligious Studies

Dr. Lucinda Mosher on Interreligious studies

Session 3: Tuesday, 16 September, 9:00-12:00: Introduction to Qualitative Research

Dr. Allison Norton on Qualitative Research

Session 4: Tuesday, 16 September, 2:00-5:00: Introduction to the Environment

Dr. Lisa Dahil on the Environment and Religion

Session 5: Wednesday, 17 September, 9:00-12:00:

Discussion of Hannoum

Session 6: Wednesday, 17 September, 2:00-5:00:

Literature Review work - reading

Session 7: Thursday, 18 September, 9:00-12:00: Rare Books and Archives

A visit to see some of the HIU rare books

Session 8: Thursday, 18 September, 2:00-5:00:

Discussion of Visotzky

Session 9: Friday, 19 September, 9-12 pm: Which method?

Students will present on a chapter from Engler, related to their proposed method of research.

Fall Semester Sessions

METHODS AND RESEARDCH PROBLEMS
Times and Dates TBD (during the Orientation Week)

These final class sessions will take place each following the orientation week, throughout the rest of the semester. These class sessions will examine several important examples of methodological challenges in using sources. Students will be expected to have read and be ready to contribute to the discussion.

Session 10: Quantitative Research – October XX

Students will be introduced to the reference materials in Islamic Studies, and some recent problems and debates in the study of Islamic history.

Required Reading: Bulliet, Richard W. *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An essay in Quantitative History*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979.

Session 11: Research with Historical Sources – October XX

Students will be introduced to the important research of the Cairo Geniza and its affect on Medieval Studies.

Required Reading: Goitein, Shelomo Dov, and Gustave E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies. *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab*

World As Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza. University of California Press, 1967, Pp. 1-74.

Session 12: Orientalism, Postcolonial and Decolonial Theory – October XX

In this session, students will examine an important methodological theory that has affected all academic fields since the late the 20th century.

Required reading: Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979. (Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-110).

Suggested Reading: Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. Revised sixtieth anniversary edition. New York: Grove Press, 2021.