

Reason, Religion, and Modernism in Europe

Humanities Center Spring 2014

AS. 300. 322
Meeting Times: TTh 12-1:15pm
Location: Gilman 208

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OH: By appointment

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of experimental psychology, sociology, and evolutionary biology. How did these nascent sciences impact religion? And reciprocally, what were religious thinkers' contributions to the development of these sciences? We will address these questions by investigating the case of Catholicism in France, Britain, and Germany, where philosophers, social critics, and theologians interrogated subjectivity and faith, dogma and history. This period at the beginning of the twentieth century was known as the Modernist turn in Catholicism, which drew on scientific advancements in order to challenge Church hierarchies and fundamentally transform Catholics' personal relationship to God. Our objective is to examine the intersection of science, faith, and society from historical and philosophical perspectives.

Readings and Required Books

Blondel, Maurice. *Action*. (1893)

Blondel, Maurice. *Letter on Apologetics & History and Dogma* (1896)

Durkheim, Émile. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912)

Freud, Sigmund. *The Future of an Illusion* (1927)

Le Roy, Édouard. *What is a Dogma?* (1899)

Requirements

Participation: The seminar will meet twice a week. Careful reading of the assigned texts and active participation are essential. Absences beyond the first will adversely affect students' grades.

Wikipedia Review: Students will review a selection of Wikipedia entries on topics such as "Modernism," "Maurice Blondel," and "Alfred Loisy," and compare them to two readings on the syllabus. The reviews will compare the respective sources, organization, and arguments of the Wikipedia entries and readings. A list of topics will be distributed at the beginning of the fourth week and a 4-6-page review is due by the end of the sixth week.

NPR Transcript: Students will compose a dialogue between two of the authors on the syllabus in the style of an NPR show. You will name the show and present a host who introduces the topic of conversation and guides the topic. Topics should bear on one of the key themes discussed in class. Transcripts should be 4-5 pages in length and will be due at the end of the eleventh week.

Papers: There is a midterm and a final paper. Topics will be provided for the midterm paper (5-7 pages) at the beginning of the seventh week. They are due at the end of eighth week after the fall break. Students will choose their own topic for the final paper (13-15 pages) in consultation with me. Following the tenth week, students will prepare a one-page paper proposal which should

include a list of readings from the syllabus, as well as additional secondary literature from beyond the syllabus. Final papers will be due at the end of the exam period.

Grade Breakdown:	Participation	10%
	Wikipedia Review	15%
	NPR Transcript	15%
	Midterm Paper	25%
	Final Paper	35%

Schedule

Week 1 Defining Modernism in the Fin de Siècle

Tuesday Introduction

Thursday Shaw, Russell. "Under the Ban: Modernism, Then and Now," *Crisis Magazine* (September 2007). Page online.

<http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=7873>

Gay, Peter. *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy*. New York: WW Norton, 2008. 1-30

Week 2 Modernism and the Church

Tuesday Pope Pius X. *Lamentabili Sane. Syllabus Condemning the Errors of the Modernists*. July 3, 1907. Page online.

<<http://papalencyclicals.net/Pius10/p10lamen.htm>>

Pope Pius X. *Pascendi Dominici Gregis. Encyclical of Pope Pius X on the Doctrines of the Modernists*. September 8, 1907. Page online.

<http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_x/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_19070908_pascendi-dominici-gregis_en.html>

Thursday Blondel, Maurice. *Action*. Introduction

Week 3 Maurice Blondel

Tuesday Blondel, Maurice. *Action*. Cont.

Thursday English, Adam C. *The Possibility of Christian Philosophy: Maurice Blondel at the Intersection of Theology and Philosophy*. New York: Routledge, 2012.

Week 4 Philosophy and Christianity

Wikipedia Review Topics Distributed

Tuesday Blondel, Maurice. *Letter on Apologetics*

Thursday Bernardi, Peter J. *Maurice Blondel, Social Catholicism, and Action Francaise: The Clash over the Church's Role in Society during the Modernist Era*. (The Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

Week 5 Evolutionism and History in Catholicism

Tuesday Loisy, Alfred. *The Gospel and the Church*. Ch. 1

Thursday Loisy, Alfred. *The Gospel and the Church*. Chs. 2-3

Week 6 The Controversy Over Church Dogma

Wikipedia Review Due

Tuesday Blondel, Maurice. *History and Dogma*

Thursday Blondel, Maurice. *History and Dogma*. Cont.

Week 7 Science, Pragmatism, and Dogma

Midterm Topics Distributed

Tuesday Le Roy, Édouard, *What is a Dogma?* pp. 1 - 40

Thursday Le Roy, Édouard, *What is a Dogma?* pp. 41 - 89

Spring Break

Week 8 Religious Psychology

Midterm Papers Due

Tuesday James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Lectures 1-2

Thursday James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Lectures 3-8, 20

Week 9 Religion and Pragmatism

Tuesday James, William. *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*

Thursday Schultenover, David G, ed., *The Reception of Pragmatism in France and the Rise of Roman Catholic Modernism, 1890-1914*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009)

Week 10 Religion as Primitive Cognition

Tuesday Durkheim, Émile. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Introduction; Book 2, chs. 1-4

Thursday “The Tarde-Durkheim Debate” (1903) Available online:
<http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/downloads/TARDE-DURKHEIM-GB.pdf>

Week 11 Sigmund Freud and the Critique of Religion
NPR Transcripts due

Tuesday Freud, Sigmund. *The Future of an Illusion*

Thursday Freud, Sigmund. *The Future of an Illusion* cont.

Week 12 Henri Bergson: Between Ethics and Biology

Tuesday Bergson, Henri. *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, ch. 1

Thursday Bergson, Henri. *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, chs. 2-3

13 Discuss Final Research Projects