

**Chapter 1 : 3 Approaches to Religious Studies (Podcasts) | The Discarded Image**

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Literary approaches[ edit ] There are many approaches to the study of sacred texts. One of these approaches is to interpret the text as a literary object. Metaphor, thematic elements, and the nature and motivations of the characters are of interest in this approach. An example of this approach is *God: A Biography* , by Jack Miles.

Neurological approaches[ edit ] The temporal lobe has been of interest which has been termed the "God center" of the brain. Scientific investigators have used a SPECT scanner to analyze the brain activity of both Christian contemplatives and Buddhist meditators, finding them to be quite similar.

Psychology of religion[ edit ] Main article: Psychology of religion The psychology of religion is concerned with the psychological principles operative in religious communities and practitioners. Some issues of concern to the psychologist of religions are the psychological nature of religious conversion , the making of religious decisions, religion and happiness , and the psychological factors in evaluating religious claims. Sigmund Freud was another figure in the field of psychology and religion. He used his psychoanalytic theory to explain religious beliefs, practices, and rituals, in order to justify the role of religion in the development of human culture.

Sociology of religion[ edit ] Main article: Sociology of religion The sociology of religion concerns the dialectical relationship between religion and society ; the practices, historical backgrounds, developments, universal themes and roles of religion in society. The sociology of religion is distinguished from the philosophy of religion in that it does not set out to assess the validity of religious beliefs, though the process of comparing multiple conflicting dogmas may require what Peter L. Berger has described as inherent "methodological atheism". The works of Max Weber emphasised the relationship between religious belief and the economic foundations of society. Contemporary debates have centred on issues such as secularization , civil religion , and the cohesiveness of religion in the context of globalization and multiculturalism. The sociology of religion also deals with how religion impacts society regarding the positive and negatives of what happens when religion is mixed with society. At least one comprehensive study refutes this idea. Research has found that secular democracies like France or Scandinavia outperform more theistic democracies on various measures of societal health. The authors explains, "Pressing questions include the reasons, whether theistic or non-theistic, that the exceptionally wealthy U. Conversely, how do the latter achieve superior societal health while having little in the way of the religious values or institutions? Law and religion Vogel reports that in the s a new "law and religion" approach has progressively built its own contribution to religious studies. Over a dozen scholarly organizations and committees were formed by , and a scholarly quarterly, the *Journal of Law and Religion* first published that year and the *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* opened in As of , major Law and Religion organizations in the U. Between and , the field saw the publication of some books and scholarly articles. Exponents look at canon law, natural law, and state law, often in comparative perspective. Methodologies are hermeneutics , or interpretive models, that provide a structure for the analysis of religious phenomena.

Phenomenology philosophy Phenomenology is "arguably the most influential approach to the study of religion in the twentieth century. Phenomenology had been practiced long before its being made explicit as a philosophical method by Edmund Husserl , who is considered to be its founder. In the context of Phenomenology of religion however, the term was first used by Pierre Daniel Chantepie de la Saussaye in his work "*Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*" His other main conceptual contribution is the idea of the epoche: The epoche, also known as phenomenological reduction or bracketing, involves approaching a phenomenon or phenomena from a neutral standpoint, instead of with our own particular attitudes. In performing this reduction, whatever phenomenon or phenomena we approach are understood in themselves, rather than from our own perspectives. In the field of religious studies, a contemporary advocate of the phenomenological method is Ninian Smart. He suggests that we should perform the epoche as a means to engage in cross-cultural studies. In doing so, we can take the beliefs, symbols, rituals etc. Another earlier scholar who employs the

phenomenological method for studying religion is Gerardus van der Leeuw. In his *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, he outlines what a phenomenology of religion should look like: Firstly, argues van der Leeuw, the student of religion needs to classify the religious phenomena into distinct categories: Secondly, scholars then need to interpolate the phenomena into their own lives. The life examined by the religious studies scholar, insists van der Leeuw, needs to "acquire its place in the life of the student himself who should understand it out of his inner self. Fourthly, scholars need to clarify any apparent structural relationships and make sense of the information. In so doing, they move towards a holistic understanding of how the various aspects of a religion relate and function together. Fifthly, this leads naturally to a stage at which "all these activities, undertaken together and simultaneously, constitute genuine understanding [Verstehen]: Sixthly, having thus attained this general grasp, there is a continual need to make sure that it tallies with the up-to-date research of other disciplines, such as archaeology, history, philology etc. In order to avoid degeneration into fantasy, phenomenology must always feed on facts. The subjectivity inherent to the phenomenological study of religion makes complete and comprehensive understanding highly difficult. However, phenomenologists aim to separate their formal study of religion from their own theological worldview and to eliminate, as far as possible, any personal biases etc. There are a number of both theoretical and methodological attitudes common among phenomenologists: Many scholars of religious studies argued that phenomenology was "the distinctive method of the discipline". Segal stating that it amounted to "no more than data gathering" alongside "the classification of the data gathered". The approach was introduced by British anthropologist Alfred Radcliffe-Brown. An example of a functionalist approach is understanding the dietary restrictions contained in the Pentateuch as having the function of promoting health or providing social identity etc. Lived religion[ edit ] Lived religion is the ethnographic and holistic framework for understanding the beliefs, practices, and everyday experiences of religious and spiritual persons in religious studies. Orsi and David Hall. The study of lived religion has come to include a wide range of subject areas as a means of exploring and emphasizing what a religious person does and what they believe. Today, the field of lived religion is expanding to include many topics and scholars. Religious studies and theology[ edit ] Western philosophy of religion, as the basic ancestor of modern religious studies, is differentiated from theology and the many Eastern philosophical traditions by generally being written from a third party perspective. The scholar need not be a believer. Theology stands in contrast to the philosophy of religion and religious studies in that, generally, the scholar is first and foremost a believer employing both logic and scripture as evidence. Theology according to this understanding fits with the definition which Anselm of Canterbury gave to it in the 11th century, *credo ut intelligam*, or faith seeking understanding literally, "I believe so that I may understand". The theologian then has the task of making intelligible, or clarifying, the religious commitments to which he or she subscribes. The scholar of religious studies has no such allegiances. Prominent voices in this critical view include Jonathan Z. King, Russell T. McCutcheon, and Daniel Dubuisson. Their areas of research overlap heavily with postcolonial studies. There are a large numbers of peer-reviewed scholarly journals in the discipline of Religious Studies. Many journals focus on historical or sociological topics or concentrate on particular religious traditions, such as Judaism or Islam. Religious studies journals have been laggard in gaining accessibility through the Internet, but libraries specializing in religious history have started to catch up.

**Chapter 2 : Religious studies - Wikipedia**

*Based on a symposium on the theme 'Islam and the History of Religions', this important work features thoughtful essays on the study of Islam. In essays organized around five themes in religious studies, the scholars in this volume call for an i.*

It also depends heavily on the motives the researcher brings to his or her investigation of religious or worldview issues. In this article we will explore six different ways scholars and researchers approach the study of religions and worldviews. Obviously some of them overlap and researchers may utilize the work of those from other approaches in making their evaluations. Sociological Sociology is the study of patterns and trends in human societies and cultures. Researchers in this field utilize a number of sources of data including surveys, censuses, business, statistics, and others. The main purpose of the sociologist of religion is to discover with as much objectivity as possible the religious and worldview perspectives and trends in any specific people group, culture, or country. Data and evaluations of it are usually published in journals and online. It is located online at <https://www.sociology.com>: Psychologists explore these areas through a multitude of methods. Some researchers simply listen to and record the thoughts and beliefs of their subjects. Others may use experimental methods to test behavioral and learning tendencies in people and animals. In the field of religion and worldview the psychologist may use the above methods to try and explain religious ideas and practices. Their goal is to discover what those factors are in order to correct behaviors and thoughts that are regarded as inappropriate by society or culture. In this perspective all such experiences are regarded as having no real objective meaning except that which the individual may claim. In any case, no one experience is to be favored over any other as they are all seen as totally subjective. Thus the Christian experience of spiritual rebirth is seen as no more or less valid than, say, the mystical experience of a Hindu or Buddhist. Historical The historical approach applies historical methodologies to the study of these issues. The objective historian seeks to accumulate all the evidence and data he or she can to discover as close as possible to what really happened in past events. Historians, however, in the study of religion, often come to it with presupposed philosophical ideas about what could or could not have happened. For instance, many Bible historians presuppose that any miraculous or supernatural occurrences recorded in Scripture cannot possibly have happened in real history. Thus, they say, those events must be based on legends and myths or were embellished by the biblical authors. In some cases they may speculate about what happened by offering naturalistic alternatives. For example, one serious Bible skeptic has proposed that Jesus did not actually rise from the dead but was impersonated by his identical twin! Of course, not all historians discount supernatural occurrences. In fact, many have applied historical principles to supernatural Bible events and concluded that there are no better explanations than that they happened as reported. The best example is what we mentioned above; the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Even some non-Christian historians are hard put to explain the numerous circumstances surrounding that event outside of it being actually true. This approach simply assumes that all religions and worldviews are basically true and have equal validity. Those in this camp ignore the obvious philosophical and theological differences and stress what commonalities may exist. This approach usually considers any religion or worldview that may make exclusivist claims to be intolerant and bigoted. Many liberal Protestant denominations, unfortunately, have adopted this approach. Evangelical Christian The evangelical method is, to first, carefully analyze the philosophical bases, the historical underpinnings, the stated doctrinal beliefs, and the practices of all religions and worldviews. Then, each belief system is systematic compared to the essential historic Christian doctrines as defined by believers from Scripture since the New Testament era. These key doctrines include the nature of God the Trinity , the nature God-man and work death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation by grace through faith in Him. Any movement whose historical claims cannot be substantiated and whose beliefs fall outside of the boundaries of Christian orthodoxy must be rejected. This is the approach we take here at Marketfaith Ministries, as do most evangelical scholars. This analysis is done, not with malice, but with genuine love for those who do not follow the only true way of salvation in Jesus.

**Chapter 3 : Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies : Charles J. Adams :**

*Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies has 13 ratings and 1 review. This collection of essays from some of the most acclaimed scholars in the field arg.*

The presentation will suggest that in the hemispheric history of late antiquity, civilizations are involved in broad networks of economic, cultural, and religious activities that are not defined by clear boundaries on a map. McNeill and William H. McNeill can provide a useful alternative to the standard civilizational narrative. In this way, the hemispheric and global visions defined by scholars like Marshall Hodgson and Gunder Frank can be focused on late antiquity. Smith and Talal Asad. Two broad subjects illustrate the transitions of the era. In post-classical polities, rulers generally were expected to uphold their faith tradition but were not expected to participate in defining the content. A second major transition is the continuing evolution of the cumulative discursive faith traditions. The major traditions developed institutional forms that tended to be distinct from the structures of political authority. In Islamdom, the scholars ulama sometimes held governmental positions but they emerged as the distinctive definers of Islamic law and doctrinal content. The emergence of the independent church structures in Western Europe and the development of non-statal authorities in Hinduism and Buddhism can be seen as a part of a broader hemispheric pattern. Similarly, major efforts resulted in production of relatively comprehensive and often systematic re-articulations of the Axial and classical faith traditions. These activities reframed the cumulative traditions in post-classical terms. The presentation will conclude that the history of late antiquity has a hemispheric unity in which the early post-classical institutions evolve and become, by the second millennium CE, new ways of structuring polities and faith traditions.

Return to top Jason Mokhtarian, Indiana University. This work, which covers a wide range of topics in Zoroastrian theology, cosmogony, creation, ethics, and myth, is one of the richest sources of Zoroastrian polemics against early Islam and the other religions of late antiquity, especially Judaism, Christianity, and Manichaeism. The work was clearly influenced by comparable works and apologetic trends in the late Sasanian-early Islamic Near East, and its author reveals intimate knowledge of the Torah, rabbinic literature, the Peshitta, and the Quran. Yet how it engages such sources remains largely unknown. Was he a Zoroastrian convert to Islam whom the author is trying to convince to return to the Good Religion? Was he a Zoroastrian non-priest who sought answers about his own faith? Zoroastrian tenets which can be used to further our knowledge of Sasanian-era Zoroastrianism, a typically elusive topic. Return to top Jennifer Hart, Elon University. As the name suggests the Questions is largely composed of questions and answers, the primary focus of which is inquiries about how rituals go wrong and what to do about it when rituals do go wrong. This paper takes up the task of examining these questions and answers and putting them in context both within Mandaeism and the religious world of Late Antiquity as a whole. The paper begins by categorizing the types of ritual error chronicled by the Questions. It then turns to an analysis of the significance and symbolism of the errors and their corrections. Finally the paper builds upon this analysis to argue that the concern for ritual error expressed by the Questions derives from an effort to secure a unique religious identity for Mandaeism amidst the religious plurality of Late Antiquity. Mona Zaki, William and Mary University. Its inhabitants, initially a nameless mass, acquired sharp definition by the fourth century hijri. That the inhabitants would become labeled as sinners not only affected their placement in hell but also dictated the types of punishments they were subjected to. The early debates on salvation, the definition of the sinner, and his chances of reprieve validated Jahannam as an afterlife destination in these early centuries. That the Prophet had less of an impact on the formation of the infernal narrative forces us to look at different early sources for authorship. Apart from specific landmarks and the cold zamharir, some Muslim punishments parallel those depicted in the Book of Arda Viraf. Sulayman could be treated as a plausible source. Zoroastrian influence on the Muslim afterlife should be assessed first on how much of the material is drawn from this source. In the second part of my paper I discuss the conundrum Jahannam poses. If Arabic would be the language of the blessed, what alternatives did its counterpart have? Was it Persian, Hindi or Turkish? Along similar lines, Abu Muslim al-Khurasani was seen in a vision tortured in Jahannam. Although this paper poses more questions than answers, there is

material to discuss the strong presence of Zoroastrian ideas on the infernal narrative. Return to top George Archer, Georgetown University. Neither is it news to say that the Quranic setting is steeped in various strains of the biblical lore. But we must ask despite this condemnation, what is this supposed to mean? For clarification, we can look to a few other occasions when the Quran plays number games with biblical lore. And the Quran purposefully confuses these numbers, or again mocks the audience for bickering over them. Using numerical hairsplitting as an emblem of disbelief would have been a notably powerful way of attacking the sectarian controversialism of the biblical communities. Because number is the most powerful tool of oral memory. One can forget a beautiful poem, or confuse a monotonous rhyme scheme, but one always remembers how to count. In an oral biblical setting, memory of number is therefore a central tool for making contact with the sacred past. The Quran, by introducing number games into the memories of the biblical past can at once graft its own message onto these ancient memories, while destabilizing the culture of theological nitpicking which surrounds them. Scholars since the time of Graetz have seen the period preceding and following the Arab conquests as one of the most obscure in Jewish history. At the same time, while documentary evidence for this period is scarce, I will argue that there are classic Jewish works that represent largely untapped resources for recovering evidence of the Islamic impact on the literary and religious imagination of those Jews who were early on drawn into the Arab-Islamic cultural ambit. Scholars have long acknowledged that Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan must date to the period after the Arab conquests, at least in the forms in which they are currently extant. Nevertheless, the place of these late midrashim in their milieu, and thus in the history of development of Jewish exegesis of the Bible, has only begun to be properly appreciated. I will suggest that the time is ripe for a new generation of scholars to approach the corpora of midrash and tafsir as intertwined discourses, and in particular to investigate late midrashic works not only as examples of early medieval rabbinization as has been proposed but also as early responses to the religious and ideological implications of the Arab-Islamic imperial project. Christine Shepardson, University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Early Syrian Orthodoxy and the Rise of Islam. Abby Kulisz, Indiana University. Not only does this narrow demarcation of history exclude Islam from the religions of late antiquity, it also ignores critical discourses in Christian intellectual history after the seventh century. The growing sophistication of Islamic thought meant that Christians had to employ creative techniques to articulate and defend their doctrines. Building upon recent scholarship on the relationship between Islam and late antiquity, this paper explores exchanges on the Trinity in two ninth century apologetic writings, one Christian and one Muslim:

## Chapter 4 : Methodology - Religious Studies - LibGuides at University of Memphis Libraries

*Richard C. Martin is the principle author of Defenders of Reason in Islam, also published by Oneworld, and of other books and numerous articles on approaches to understanding Islamic religious phenomena.*

An analysis of method, then, does not focus so much on the results of the research or even the datasets employed but on those metaquestions or metaissues that govern the questions asked or not asked and the answers deemed satisfactory or not satisfactory. Since data do not always exist naturally in the world, methods are often intimately involved in the actual creation of data by, for example, determining what is worthy of analysis in the first place and subsequently separating it from cognate data. Different methodologies used to interpret the same dataset thus often produce different results. To reduce bias, the methodologies employed by scholars should be well documented, along with the data, and thus be available to the scrutiny of other scholars. This practice, often referred to in the scientific community as full disclosure, allows for the systematic study of the first principles employed within a discipline. Orientalism, as both a discipline and an ideology, increasingly came under attack during the 1980s, culminating in the publication of Edward W. Hodgson provides one of the most articulate approaches, which seeks to steer between the methods developed by Orientalism and those who criticize such methods. Humphreys provides the best survey of approaches, topics, and desiderata for the modern historian of Islam. Rippin affords a rich collection of materials—both primary and secondary—that provide reflection on how Islam has been constructed and contested both historically and in the modern period. Hughes and Lockman chart the recent manifold political and issues of identity surrounding the presentation of Islam in the current geopolitical moment given events such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and so on that impinge on all scholarship dealing with Islam and the Middle East. The essays in Wheeler chart the repercussions of all these debates in the undergraduate classroom. *Die Arabischen Studien in Europa bis in den Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts*. The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization. University of Chicago Press, Magisterial first volume includes a section that seeks to redefine the terms, categories, and vocabulary employed in Islamic studies. *The Past and Future of an Academic Discipline*. Argues that the interpretive lenses used to study Islam are continually caught up with larger forces e. *A Framework for Inquiry*. Princeton University Press, Combines a bibliographic study with an inquiry into method, with each chapter exploring a broad topic in the social and political history of the Middle East and North Africa between CE and 1900. *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*. Cambridge University Press, *Genealogy, Continuity, and Change*. A volume of essays that discusses how the discipline of Islamic studies in Europe and North America evolved in its various historical contents. Said argues that knowledge of the Orient is tantamount to power over it and, as a result, that the academic disciplines associated with the East developed and remain entrenched within the domain of empire maintenance. Originally published in New York: Oxford University Press, Wheeler brings together a number of leading scholars with rich experience in teaching Islam in a diversity of undergraduate settings. Users without a subscription are not able to see the full content on this page. Please subscribe or login. How to Subscribe Oxford Bibliographies Online is available by subscription and perpetual access to institutions. For more information or to contact an Oxford Sales Representative click here.

## Chapter 5 : Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies by Richard C. Martin

*In essays organized around five themes in religious studies, the scholars in this volume call for an increase in the attention given to Islam as part of religious studies and for greater clarity in our understanding both of Islam and of religion in terms of Islam.*

## Chapter 6 : Comparative religion - Wikipedia

*Approaches to Religious Studies. By Kwan Shui-man Class Discussion What is Religion? Some definitions*

â€œ Religion is the sigh of the hard-pressed creature, the heart of a hear.

## Chapter 7 : Richard C. Martin, Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies - PhilPapers

*The field of Islamic Studies covers the religious thought, and the intellectual and social history, of Muslim societies. The program is open to all sub-fields of Islamic Studies, but has particular strengths in the study of Islamic origins, Quran and hadith, Islamic law, Sufism, Shi'ism, and the religious history of Iran, Central Asia, and India.*

## Chapter 8 : Courses and Syllabi

*Approaches to Religious/Worldview Studies The field of religion/worldview is a broadly defined area of study. Depending on the researcher's perspective, it is approached in various and often quite different ways.*

## Chapter 9 : Method in the Study of Islam - Islamic Studies - Oxford Bibliographies

*religion, and several studies have been conducted on the issue. Richard Martin wrote "Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies" in , giving the viewpoints of several scholars.*