RLG101H (Fall 2019) – Final Exam Study Guide

GENERAL EXAM INFORMATION

Academic integrity: Here is the official UTM exams statement: “The University of Toronto Mississauga and you, as a student, share a commitment to academic integrity. You are reminded that you may be charged with an academic offence for possessing any unauthorized aids during the writing of an exam. Clear, sealable, plastic bags have been provided for all electronic devices with storage, including but not limited to: cell phones, SMART devices, tablets, laptops, calculators, and MP3 players. Please turn off all devices, seal them in the bag provided, and place the bag under your desk for the duration of the examination. You will not be able to touch the bag or its contents until the exam is over. If, during an exam, any of these items are found on your person or in the area of your desk other than in the clear, sealable, plastic bag, you may be charged with an academic offence. A typical penalty for an academic offence may cause you to fail the course.”

Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre: The RGASC offers help with exam writing. For more information drop in to their offices (Room 3251 in the New North Building), go to their website (http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/), or call 905-828-3858.

More general information exam info can be found at the RLG101H WordPress site: https://rlg101h.wordpress.com/grading/final-exam

ABOUT THE RLG101H EXAM

Previous exams:
There are copies of previous exams for RLG101H available on the UTM Library website: https://library.utm.utoronto.ca (click “Old Exams” in the menu on the left). It’s important that you only look at past exams that list the instructor as Ken Derry.

Aid allowed:
• ONE double-sided letter-sized (8.5” x 11”) crib sheet. This sheet must be created by printing the template on the RLG101H WordPress site: https://rlg101h.wordpress.com/grading/final-exam. Use a printer to create a double-sided sheet with one blank table on each side.
• You may put only ONE word in EACH space in the table (=100 words on each side, i.e., 200 words total). You may also only put one name per box (e.g., “Sigmund Freud” would take up two boxes – but for the exam you don’t need to know theorists’ first names, so just put “Freud” on your sheet.)
• You must PRINT the words in the table by hand. All words must be in ENGLISH.
• You may NOT use contractions or acronyms or pictures/drawings. You MAY use arrows.
• Your text may be in different colours. You may also highlight sections of the crib sheet in different colours. Basically, if you like colours please have fun with the crib sheet!

Material covered:
The exam will cover all lecture material and all required texts listed in the course syllabus, including The Lion King (which you need to know in order to illustrate ideas from Nye’s text). More information on what material you should focus on can be found starting on page 3 below.
For studying purposes, I recommend looking at the opening questions from each lecture; the summaries that Nye provides at the end of each chapter of his book; your own notes on Nye’s book; and the texts on the course site under “Course Texts” (= the “Indigenous Traditions” selections, the “Readings on Writing”, and the lecture slides): https://rlg101h.wordpress.com/course-texts/

Three parts to the exam:
This exam is three hours long and has three parts and each part is worth the same number of marks, so you should spend no more than ONE HOUR on each part of the exam.

Part 1 (20 marks)
This section includes 21 multiple-choice questions, worth one mark each. (In other words, it’s theoretically possible to get 21/20 in this section.) You must answer ALL questions. Write your answers for Part 1 on Scantron forms that will be provided.

Part 2 (20 marks)
There are five sections in Part 2; each section comprises two questions and you must answer one question from EACH section (i.e., you must answer five questions in total). Each question is worth four marks. You will receive one mark for each point you make, so to receive all four marks for a question you must make four correct points. You should answer in full sentences (you may use point form, provided that you state your ideas clearly).

Here is an example of the kind of question that could appear in Part 2 of the exam: “Clearly explain two theories of ritual from Nye’s chapter on ‘Ritual’ and illustrate each theory using The Lion King. In your answer make sure to clearly describe each theory and identify the theorist.”

Grading: You would receive two marks for clearly and correctly explaining each theory of ritual, and two marks for illustrating each theory using The Lion King.

Sample answer:
• 2 marks: Sigmund Freud argues that ritual repetition is a sign of neurosis, an unhealthy attempt to avoid facing the difficulties of the world. When Simba lives with Timon and Pumbaa we see them singing “Hakuna Matata” (=“no worries”) over and over while Simba ages. This is a kind of ritual repetition. If we apply Freud’s theory we can see that it may be an unhealthy attempt by Simba to avoid facing his problems. This analysis is confirmed when Nala asks Simba to go back home with her to face Scar and help his community, and Simba says no, giving “Hakuna Matata” as his reason.

• 2 marks: Malory Nye mentions that rituals can express or challenge power relationships. When Rafiki holds up baby Simba at the start of the movie and the other animals bow down, this ritual expresses the power that Simba has (and will have) over those animals. In contrast, when Scar refuses to attend this ritual he is challenging that power.

Part 3 (20 marks)
A short film will be shown about 45-50 minutes after the start of the exam. This is not a film you have seen before as part of this class. The film will be shown only ONCE, so please take careful notes while it is playing. After watching the film, write a brief analytical discussion of it composed of four paragraphs. The point of this question is to test your ability to use the tools we’ve given you in RLG101H to analyze something new, something you haven’t encountered before.
Note that you do NOT need to write an introduction or a conclusion for your analysis, just four analytical paragraphs. In these four paragraphs, analyze the video using **FOUR** different theories (one theory per paragraph). Each paragraph must:

- Clearly explain the theory being used
- Identify the theorist
- Analyze the video using the theory
- Use your analysis to show that, when the film is looked at using each theory, a particular **meaning is revealed**. In other words: how does each theory help you to see what the film may be trying to say to us about a character, an event, a culture, people in the real world, life in general, etc.? Note that the meaning you find using each theory can be different.

You may use any theories from Nye’s *Religion: The Basics*, but each one must be from a different chapter. Choose your four theories from FOUR of the following six chapters:

1. Culture
2. Power
3. Gender
4. Belief
5. Ritual
6. Text

Here is one section from each of the above chapters that you may find particularly helpful to review for this part of the exam.

1. Culture: “Cultural Hybridity and Religious Syncretism” (51–54)
2. Power: “Antonio Gramsci and the Concept of Hegemony” (60–65)
3. Gender: “Religion and Ideologies of Gender” (84–86)
4. Belief: “Catherine Bell, Pierre Bourdieu, and Habitus” (124–26)
5. Ritual “Rituals and Transformation” (144–48)

**COURSE READINGS: WHAT TO STUDY**

Again, the main readings that you need to review for the exam are “Indigenous Traditions” and Malory Nye’s *Religion: The Basics*. For each of the texts, we want you to pay particular attention to the key ideas being presented, and how they relate to specific examples. Also, focus on the material that was touched on in lectures and tutorials. In other words, the exam will not concern material that was not in some way addressed during the term by the instructor or the TAs.

This does not mean you should only study your lecture/tutorial notes. It’s still important that you understand what Nye is saying about the topics we covered. Regarding the “**Indigenous Traditions**” texts, we will not ask you a question on the exam such as: “Which Indigenous community tells a story about a man finding a tunnel and meeting his dead kinsmen in the underworld?” However, you should remember that, in the reading, a key point is that tales of the afterlife may tell us more about how we should live than about what happens when we die. It is also helpful if you can remember/recognize basic details of the examples in the “**Indigenous Traditions**” texts in order to illustrate some of the concepts discussed in those texts, and in the course more generally.

As for Nye’s *book Religion: The Basics*, below is a summary of key sections to review as well as sections that you do not need to worry about for the exam. Note that you should not need to re-read Nye’s entire book to prepare for the exam; instead, review your summary notes of each chapter in relation to your notes (and the lecture slides) from our class discussions of that material. You may want to re-read brief sections of the book to refresh your memory.
As mentioned above, you should definitely make sure that you review the points that Nye provides at the end of each chapter (in the grey “Summary” box). These points offer a great overview of the key ideas that he is trying to get across – don’t simply memorize these points, but make sure you understand what he is saying and why. This will be a great help to you!

I also recommend reviewing the two documents provided for the Film Analysis and the Field Research Analysis that summarize various theories in Nye’s text.

Finally, you will definitely find it helpful to look at past exams for this course (see “Previous Exams” on page 1 of this study guide). These exams will give you a sense of the kinds of questions you’re likely to see (and not see), and therefore what kind of material in the readings to focus your studies on. You will also notice that parts 2 and 3 of the exam offer you a fair bit of choice in terms of which questions to answer, and which theories to use. Two quick points about past exams:

a) I regularly change the course material, so keep in mind that you will see references to things (like Elephant dung!) that don’t make much sense to you because we didn’t discuss them this term.

b) There are no answers available to past exams; I encourage you to work on the questions with other students in the course to find the best solutions (you might also want to bring questions with you to Exam Jam!).

Below you will find a list of the sections of Nye’s book that you should review for the exam, and the sections you can ignore. Also, make sure to re-read the introduction to each chapter, as Nye explains key points about the chapter in the opening section.

1: Religion: Some basics
All of the ideas in this chapter are important, and connect to everything Nye discusses in the rest of the book. (You don’t need to learn the information in the chart on page 10, but you should understand the basic point of that chart regarding the study of “world religions.”)

2: Culture
You can skip section on Stuart Hall: Popular Culture (29–32) and Mass Culture and the Popular as ‘What People Do’ (33–36). You should review the rest of the chapter:

- Raymond Williams: Types of Culture (24)
- ‘Elite Culture’ (24–26)
- Culture on the Popular Level (26–28)
- Culture and Popular Religion (36–39)
- Power and Culture (39–41)
- Culture and Resistance (41–43)
- Religion, Culture, and Society (43–45)
- Clifford Geertz: Religion as a Cultural System (46–48)
- The Problem of Culture (49–50)
- Cultural Hybridity and Religious Syncretism (51–54)
- Culture and Religion (54–55)

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1 To be clear: although I genuinely think that all parts of Nye’s book are interesting and useful, there are definitely several sections that you don’t need to study for this exam.
3: Power
You can skip the section on Max Weber: Religious Ideology and Economic Change (69–70). You should review the rest of the chapter:
- Karl Marx: Religion as Ideology (58–60)
- Antonio Gramsci and the Concept of Hegemony (60–65)
- Althusser and Ideological Apparatus (65–69)
- Michel Foucault: Religion, Discourse, and Power/Knowledge (70–76)

4: Gender
You can skip the section on Gender and Christianity (88–92), and most of the section on “Veiled” Muslim Women (see below). You should review the rest of the chapter:
- Gender as a Basis for Analysis (80–82)
- Sex, Gender, and Sexuality (82–84)
- Religion and Ideologies of Gender (84–86)
- Luce Irigaray and Grace Jantzen (86–88)
- Religion, Gender, and Agency (92–95)
- “Veiled” Muslim Women (95–99): the only part of this section you need to review is Hala Shukrallah’s discussion of gender and “traditional” values (97–98)
- Gender-Nuanced Studies of Religion and Culture (99–102)

5: Belief
You can skip the sections on Cognitive Approaches to Religion and Belief (109–111); Hick and Eliade: Non-Reductionist Views on Religion (111–115); and Belief, Doctrine, and Common Sense (119–123). You should review the rest of the chapter:
- Problems with “Belief” (106–108)
- Belief and Reductionism (108–109)
- Belief and the Absence of “Religion” (115–116)
- Classifications of Belief (116–119)
- Belief and Practice (123–124)
- Catherine Bell, Pierre Bourdieu, and Habitus (124–126)

6: Ritual
You can skip the sections on Ritual and Ritualising (129–131); Rituals and Communication (138–139); and Rituals and Performance (139–141). You should review the rest of the chapter:
- What is Ritual? (131–133)
- Rituals and Meaning (133–135)
- Rituals and Symbolism (135–137)
- Rituals and Society (141–142)
- Rituals and Repetition (142–144)
- Rituals and Transformation (144–148)
- Rituals and Power (148–150)
7: Texts
You can skip the sections on Textual Forms of the Bible (155–157); The Context and Uses of Texts (160–162); Reading and Translating Texts (162–167); and Texts, Interpretation, and Commentary (172–175). You should review the rest of the chapter:
- What is a Text? (154–155)
- Text, Context, and the World (157–160)
- Authorship (167–172)
- Readers and Reading (175–180)

8: Contemporary religions, contemporary cultures
As with chapter one, all the ideas in this chapter are important. You don’t need to try to memorize all of the details in each of the sections, however. Instead, you should understand the key points in the chapter and some of the examples that help illustrate these ideas. For example, Nye asserts that religion is still very important in the modern world, and gives several different examples of this importance, including links between religion and nationalism (185–189) and religion and violence (198–200). Also, pay particular attention to the final sections in this chapter, which sum up some of the fundamental ideas that run throughout the book:
- Contemporary Religions (208–209)
- Conclusion: The Study of Religion and Culture (209–210)