



Lecture 8: Religious Words

The Interview

Due Nov 21st

Elements:

- The Consent Form - 1%

- The Recording - 2%

- The Transcript -2%

Preparing for the Interview

Keep the 15 min minimum in mind; aim for 30 mins

Keep interview focused on interviewee's beliefs, practices, commitments; redirect conversation if they talk about their religion in general

Take a good look at the generic interview question document

Can practice interview in advance

Send Informed Consent Form for the interviewee to review

Do not send interview questions to interviewee in advanced (some exceptions made for language requirements)

Conducting the Interview

Arrive before interviewee

Before you start recording, review the elements of the Informed Consent Form

Make sure the Consent Form is signed and returned to you before the interview takes place

Don't forget to start recording

Treat your interviewee with respect (this is not a time to debate religion!!)

This is a semi-structured interview - you can let the conversation proceed in the direction you feel is best

Again, keep your interview focused on interviewee's practices and beliefs:

IF for example, they say "Muslims fast in Ramadan" or "All Buddhists believe..."
then you can ask: "How does this belief or practice become expressed in your life?"

Consent Form:

Consent Form (1)						
Criteria	Ratings					Pts
<p>Criteria</p> <p>* Interviewee must answer all 4 questions on page 2.</p> <p>* Names of interview and RLG101 student must be printed on page 2.</p> <p>* Interview and RLG101 student must both sign and date the form on page 2.</p>	<p>2 pts</p> <p>Full Marks</p> <p>The form is complete. Congratulations!</p>	<p>0 pts</p> <p>Incomplete</p> <p>The form is missing multiple required elements. Please see additional feedback for what you need to do. Fill in the missing elements, then re-submit the consent form. After you submit a complete form, your interview recording and transcript can be graded.</p>	<p>0 pts</p> <p>Missing Date</p> <p>You and/or your interviewee did not write the date next to their signature. Please make sure this information is filled in, then re-submit the consent form. After you submit a complete form, your interview recording and transcript can be graded.</p>	<p>0 pts</p> <p>Missing Question</p> <p>Your interviewee did not answer one or more of the 4 required questions on page 2. Please make sure they have answered all 4 questions and re-submit the consent form. After you submit a complete form, your interview recording and transcript can be graded.</p>	<p>0 pts</p> <p>Missing Signature</p> <p>The form is missing a signature from you and/or your interviewee. Please add the missing signature(s) and re-submit the consent form. Note that we cannot accept printed names as signatures, or electronic "signatures" made using a cursive font. After you submit a complete form, your interview recording and transcript can be graded.</p>	2 pts
Total Points: 2						

Recording

Upload your recording to MyMedia

Recording must demonstrate that the interview is at least **15 mins** long from the **start of the first question** to the **end of the last question**

Interview Recording							
Criteria	Ratings						Pts
<p>Interview Recording</p> <p>The recording must be in English, clearly audible, and at least 15 minutes long. It must also be focused on the participant's beliefs and practices related to food and the religion they follow.</p>	<p>5 pts</p> <p>Full Marks</p> <p>The recording meets all criteria. Well done!</p>	<p>2.5 pts</p> <p>Off Topic</p> <p>The interview is not sufficiently focused on the relationship between religion and food. Please make sure your interview stays on this topic.</p>	<p>1.5 pts</p> <p>Not Understandable</p> <p>The recording is not understandable because the recording quality is poor or it is not in English. You must re-do the interview and submit a new URL here. Once you do this, your interview and transcript can be graded.</p>	<p>0 pts</p> <p>Technical Issues</p> <p>Your recording doesn't play when the link is clicked. Please upload your recording again to MyMedia, and submit a new URL here for grading. If you are still running into problems, check the MyMedia help page: https://onereach.library.utoronto.ca/faq/how-can-i-get-help-mymedia-server.</p>	<p>0 pts</p> <p>Too Short</p> <p>Your interview is less than 15 minutes long. You must do an additional interview with the original person so that the combined length of the two interviews is at least 15 minutes. OR you must interview a new person for at least 15 minutes. (If you interview a new person you must also submit a new signed consent form from them.) Once you do this, your interview and transcript can be graded.</p>	<p>0 pts</p> <p>Wrong Consent Form</p> <p>Your interviewee does not appear to be the same person indicated on the consent form you submitted. You must submit a revised consent form from the person you interviewed. Once you do this, your interview and transcript can be graded.</p>	5 pts
Total Points: 5							

Transcript

Transcript includes all that was said in the interview, both your questions and interviewee responses

Do not write during the interview; transcribing happens after the interview is over

If you use transcription software, you need to **EDIT** as the software isn't perfect and will make a lot of mistakes

For the transcription:




Omit "filler" words that don't affect the meaning of what is said. For instance: um, ah, like, so, y'know, etc.

Don't correct grammar. Type what you hear.

Feel free to use punctuation to get across what you hear. For example, if the interview says something emphatically, include an exclamation point. If the interviewee kind of trails off, use ellipses (. . .).

Start the transcript with your first question (i.e., if preliminary conversation that's not part of the interview is in the audio recording, you don't have to transcribe this).

Transcript

Interview Transcript (1)   				
Criteria	Ratings			Pts
Match Does the transcript match the interview recording? (This includes clearly and correctly indicating who is speaking at all times.)	2 pts Totally acceptable Overall the transcript is a good match with the recording.	1 pts Could be better Some parts of the transcript don't line up with the recording as well as they should.	0 pts Unacceptable Significant portions of the interview don't match the transcript, or are missing from the transcript	2 pts
Writing Does the transcript contain many writing mistakes? (These include spelling, punctuation, and using proper capitalization.)	2 pts Totally acceptable Overall there were not too many writing mistakes in the transcript.	1 pts Could be better There were quite a few writing mistakes in the transcript, and/or sizeable portions of the interview are missing and so cannot be assessed.	0 pts Unacceptable There were a significant number of writing mistakes in the transcript, and/or more than half of the interview is missing and so cannot be assessed.	2 pts
Fillers Verbal fillers (um, ah, and so forth) should not appear in the transcript.	1 pts Totally acceptable Few if any verbal fillers appear in the transcript.	0.5 pts Could be better There are a good number of verbal fillers in the transcript and/or sizeable portions of the interview are missing and so cannot be assessed.	0 pts Unacceptable All (or almost all) verbal fillers from the interview remain in the transcript, and/or more than half of the interview is missing and so cannot be assessed.	1 pts
Total Points: 5				

Understanding Religiosity and the 3B Framework:

Belief - Behaviour - Belonging

Religion For Breakfast (Dr. AM Henry)

Belief: theologies, doctrine, holy texts, social values and ethics that guide daily life

Behaviour: religious rituals and actions, as well as religiously inflected habits and practices associated with daily life

Belonging: a sense of being part of a shared religious community that exists across time and cultures

Religious Words

Why use this title and not just talk about "Religious Scripture"?





Oral Traditions:

1. **Oral Stories and Myths:** Oral storytelling traditions where religious stories, myths, and parables are passed down
2. **Oral Prayers and Chants:** In many religions, prayers, hymns, and chants are recited orally during religious rituals and ceremonies. These may be in the form of mantras, psalms, or other sacred words.
3. **Oral Sermons and Teachings:** Religious leaders often deliver sermons and teachings orally to convey religious principles, moral guidelines, and interpretations of sacred texts.
4. **Oral Histories:** Some religious communities preserve their history through oral traditions, passing down the collective memory of their faith and community through storytelling.

Written Traditions:

1. **Scriptures and Holy Books:** The most significant written tradition in many religions is their sacred scriptures or holy books. These texts contain the core teachings, beliefs, and history of the faith. Examples include the Bible in Christianity, the Quran in Islam, the Bhagavad Gita in Hinduism, and the Tao Te Ching in Taoism.
2. **Religious Text Commentaries:** In addition to the primary scriptures, religious scholars often write commentaries and interpretations of these texts to provide insights, explanations, and applications of the teachings.
3. **Religious Law Codes:** Some religions have written legal codes that dictate moral and ethical conduct, such as the Ten Commandments in Judaism and Christianity or the Sharia in Islam.
4. **Religious Poetry and Hymns:** Many religious traditions have a rich tradition of poetry and hymns. These can be used in worship, meditation, and as expressions of devotion. For example, the Psalms in the Bible and the hymns in Sikhism's Guru Granth Sahib.





Written Traditions Continued:

5. Religious Texts on Rituals and Practices: Some texts focus on the rituals, ceremonies, and religious practices to be followed by adherents. These may include liturgical manuals and guides for conducting religious ceremonies.

6. Religious Literature: Apart from core religious texts, various religious traditions produce literature that explores spiritual themes, ethics, and philosophy. This may include writings by theologians, philosophers, and scholars within the tradition.

7. Religious Biographies and Hagiographies: The lives of religious figures, saints, and prophets are often documented in written form to inspire and guide believers.

8. Apocryphal and Non-canonical Texts: Some religious traditions have texts that are considered outside their official canon but are still of historical or theological interest. These may include apocryphal texts.

Myths

Myths are narratives or stories that contain important knowledge and wisdom about significant events and characters

Mythology refers to all the myths within a specific religious tradition

Myths are usually about things that happened at the beginning or end of time and involve supernatural beings or cultural heroes, rather than ordinary events.

Often deal with significant topics like creation, life, and death.

In many religious cultures, myths are seen as their sacred history and the reason for current personal and social conditions.

Myths also serve as models for how people should behave in religious rituals, cover various aspects of life, hold valuable knowledge and ways of understanding world

Can change over time





Indigenous Myths

Indigenous myths and legends have been passed down for generations primarily as oral traditions

Important method of passing down knowledge and heritage

Myths passed down forming bond with the past and protecting cultural memory, preserving values, knowledge, culture

Creation Myth - Turtle Island



Story of Turtle Island

The story of Turtle Island varies among [Indigenous](#) communities, but by most accounts, it acts as a creation story that places emphasis on the [turtle](#) as a symbol of life and earth.

In some [Ojibwe](#) oral traditions, the story of Turtle Island begins with a flooded Earth. The Creator had cleansed the world of feuding peoples in order to begin life anew. Some animals survived the flood, such as the [loon](#), the [muskrat](#) and the turtle. [Nanabush](#) (Nanabozo) (or Weesakayjack in some [Cree](#) tales) — a supernatural being who has the power to create life in others — was also present. Nanabush asked the animals to swim deep beneath the water and collect soil that would be used to recreate the world. One by one the animals tried, but one by one they failed. The last animal that tried — the muskrat — was underwater for a long time, and when it resurfaced, the little animal had wet soil in its paws. The journey took the muskrat's life, but the creature did not die in vain. Nanabush took the soil and put it on a willing turtle's back. This became known as Turtle Island, the centre of creation.



Scripture:

Texts that have been given high regard in a religion, often considered sacred

Canon = officially sanctioned texts by orthodox authorities

Non-canonical religious literature = religious texts, writings, or scriptures that are not considered part of the official, recognized, or authoritative canon

Max Muller – Sacred Books of the East translation project inaugurated 1879

Scriptures in Various Religions:



Hinduism: Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, and more

Buddhism: Tripitaka and Mahayana Sutras, and more

Jainism: Agams and more

Judaism: Hebrew Bible (Tanakh)

Christianity: Bible

Islam: Qur'an

Difficulty in defining 'scripture'

Oral vs. written text

Some "scripture-like" books not typically included

Distinguishing primary sacred texts from secondary

Scripture is a relational concept

- Graham pg 8195
- Shape and content don't automatically make a text scripture
- Book's holiness is real when communities consider it sacred
- "Scripture" defined by community's view as powerful and meaningful
- Varied interpretations across different groups
- Relational and contextual aspect vital in religious text study
- "Scriptural" features not inherent, but related to community role
- "Scripture" is a religious and historical concept, not a specific literature genre

Scripture and Sacrality

- Scripture's power is demonstrated through key features and common practices.
- Crucial attributes include remarkable authority and sacredness compared to other texts.
- Scriptural books carry supernatural authority and holiness in both centralized and decentralized religious traditions.
- The authoritative nature is evident when a sacred text forms the legal foundation for communal order (eg, Torah in Judaism, Qur'an in Islam, Vinaya section of Tripitaka in Buddhist monastic code)
- Extraordinary sacredness of scripture is evident in various aspects of communal life.
- The reverence for scriptural text includes handling, mentioning, citing, reciting, or reading.
- Theological doctrines are developed to distinguish scripture ontologically from all other texts, emphasizing its profound sacred nature.

Words and Power

- Both spoken and written words considered powerful in human perception.
- Words not just symbols, but actions performing tasks.
- Ritual utterance of a name believed to exert control or summon the named.
- Sacred word for believers is not just a word; it's an effective, saving word.
- Transformative power often linked to being spoken or written by a deity (Jewish, Christian, Muslim traditions).
- In some cases, sound itself considered sacred (Indian traditions) or scriptural word seen as saving truth, independent of divine origin (many Buddhist traditions).
- Power of spoken scripture seen in religious practices, especially worship.
- Examples: Veda recitation in Brahmanic ritual, mantra recitation in Hindu and Tantric traditions, dhikr in Sufi tradition in Islam, Buddhist chanting and singing of sutras and mantras.
- Perceived power present in both official religious practices and popular spirituality.
- Magical beliefs extend reverence to a copy of sacred scripture, believing in the presence of divine wisdom or ultimate truth in the text.
- Example: Placing hand on a Bible during a legal oath reflects notions of scripture's sacred power.