Reli 330

Religion, Identity, and Community: Contested Boundaries and Belonging

http://goindia.about.com/od/festivalpictures/ig/Kumbh-Mela-Pictures/Kumbh-Mela-Sunrise-Bathing.htm

SCHOOL OF ART HISTORY, CLASSICS & RELIGIOUS STUDIES
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Trimester 1, 2010
1 March to 4 July 2010
REL 330

Religion, Identity, and Community: Contested Boundaries and Belonging

Course co-ordinator: Dr Rick Weiss
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Tutor: Milan Magan
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Where and when:
Lectures: HU 220
Wednesday 13:10 – 15:00
Tutorials: tba

Trimester dates
Teaching dates for this course: 1st March – 4th June 2010
Mid-trimester break: 5th April – 18th April 2010
Examination/Assessment period: 11th June – 4th July 2010
Withdrawal dates: Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawals refunds.aspx

Religious Studies is in the Hunter Building. The programme administrator, Aliki Kalliabetsos, is in room HU 318. Notices regarding the course or any information on changes will be posted on the notice board outside her office. Notices may also be communicated to students via emails sent from Blackboard. Students who do not use their assigned student.vuw.ac.nz email addresses should ensure that ITS has an up-to-date email address, and that they check this address regularly.

Office Hours: The office is open Monday - Friday, 9.30 – 12:00 and 2:30 - 3.30pm. You can arrange to meet with Rick Weiss by appointment, and he will also answer all emails promptly.

Course outline

1 This course examines religion as a locus of personal and social identity, inquiring into the force of religion in uniting and dividing communities in our modern world. The course is comparative, reflecting broadly on the ways that religion has served both to bring people together into harmonious societies, but also to antagonise groups in often violent ways. Specific case studies will serve as data for analysis. Topics that the course will cover include cults, pilgrimage, fundamentalism, religious conflict, and nationalism and religion.
Course delivery
The course uses a mixture of lectures and tutorials. The lectures communicate historical and doctrinal materials, while the tutorials allow students the opportunity to develop their own communication skills through critical discussion of the readings and lectures.

2 The course learning objectives:

- To familiarise students with the range of ways in which religious communities are forged, maintained, and defended;
- To introduce students to the ways in which scholars have understood religious communities and identities;
- To encourage students to critically and creatively engage with this scholarly literature;
- To develop student skills in research and the writing of academic presentations on religious community and its interpretations;
- To develop students’ academic reading, research and presentation skills through the research and writing of review and research essays.
- To develop students’ academic autonomy, that is, the capability to develop frameworks for the undertaking of research and the confident presentation of findings orally and in writing.
- To allow students to develop their advanced research skills by preparing a project on a chosen topic.

3 The lecture programme follows. Lectures may be varied from time to time. As much notice as possible will be given when changes occur and, if necessary, a revised programme will be issued at lectures.

4 There are 7 tutorials during the trimester. The dates and details are below. Tutorials deal with topics that complement the lecture programme and they provide an opportunity to discuss aspects of the course in a small group and develop your ability to contribute to discussions.

5 The course is internally assessed by means of the following assignments:

- 5 tutorial assignments, to be submitted in the tutorial that they address, are worth 15% of the final grade. These are to be thoughtful responses of approximately 400-500 words to questions set for the required reading of the week. Students can choose any five tutorials to submit their assignments, but they are strongly encouraged to submit early and regularly in the trimester.

- A review essay of approximately 1,500 words. This essay will involve the review of a scholarly book relevant to the course, to be decided upon in consultation with the lecturer and/or tutor. The book should reflect the student’s interest in a
particular area of the world or of a particular issue relevant to the course, and
should be on a topic that the student will explore in the final research essay. The
review essay is worth 20% of the final grade, and is due by 5pm on Monday,
March 29, 2010.

- a research essay of approximately 3000 words, worth 35% of the final grade, is to
be submitted by 5pm on Friday, June 4, 2010, in the essay box outside of Aliki’s
office, Hunter 318.

- a class test worth 30% of the final grade held in class on Wednesday, June 2.

Essays are to be submitted in two ways, both of which are mandatory to receive
credit for the essay:

First, students must submit a paper copy of the essay to the assignment box outside
the Religious Studies office (HU 318). Please make sure you sign and date the sheet to
document that you submitted your assignment, and when.

Second, students must submit an electronic copy via Blackboard. These electronic
copies will be submitted to Turn It In, an electronic plagiarism database, to check for
possible plagiarism.

Students should keep a copy of all their work until it is returned.

Mandatory course requirements: To gain a pass in this course, students must:
Attend a minimum of 5 tutorials Achieve 50% average for all written assessment (2
essays, 5 tutorial assignments, and 1 class test)

6 Required text: The RELI 330 Course Reader should be obtained from the Student
Notes shop at a cost of approximately $40.00.

7 Work-load (Recommendation of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences): For
300-level 20 points one trimester courses, 13 hours per week are recommended. An
average student should spend 10 hours per week for preparation, reading and
writing in addition to attendance at lectures and tutorials.

300 – level 1 trimester 20 points 13 hours
8 **General University policies and statutes** Students should familiarise themselves with the University’s policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy

The AVC (Academic) website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates. This website can be accessed at:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/Publications.aspx

9 **Taping of Lectures:** All students in the School of Art History, Classics and Religious Studies are welcome to use audiotapes to record lectures. If you want to do this, please see your lecturer, tutor or the relevant programme administrator and complete a disclaimer form, which advises of copyright and other relevant issues.

10 **Supplementary Materials:** A website of materials related to RELI 330 is being maintained in Blackboard. You can find it by visiting http://blackboard@vuw.ac.nz.

11 **Evaluation:** This course will be evaluated by UTDC.
Lecture programme

Lecture programme and required readings: The required readings are essential background for the lectures / tutorials and should be completed before each lecture. The readings will be further discussed in the tutorials. The readings are all found in the RELI 330 Course Reader, which can be purchased from Student Notes.

3 March    Lecture 1:  Introduction

10 March   Lecture 2:  Theoretical Foundations: Religion and Community

17 March   Lecture 3:  Cults, Brainwashing, and the Unification Church

24 March   Lecture 4:  Pilgrimage, Gender, and “Communitas”: The Ayyappan Pilgrimage in South India

31 March   Lecture 5:  The Social Psychology of Group Identity (Joe Bulbulia)

**************Mid Term Break 5 – 18 April 2010**************

21 April   Lecture 6:  Religion, Nation and the People: Gandhi

28 April   Lecture 7:  Monastic and Lay Communities in Buddhism (Michael Radich)

5 May      Lecture 8:  Ethnicity and Religious Conflict: War in Sri Lanka

12 May     Lecture 9:  Fundamentalism: Left Behind and the Rapture

19 May     Lecture 10: New Zealand Religion and Identity (Geoff Troughton)

26 May     Lecture 11: Colonialism, Missions and Reform: Hindu Reform Movements

2 June     Lecture 12: Class test
**Tutorial Programme**

The tutorials will cover the readings and lecture for the present week. They provide a forum in which students can debate important scholarly issues, and they also are an opportunity to ask questions about the course. There are 5 tutorial assignments to be handed in at tutorials worth 15% of the final grade (3% for each assignment). These are to be short thoughtful responses to questions set for the required reading of the week (as listed below) and are to be approximately two pages each, about 400-500 words. In your response, give examples from the readings, and use proper referencing (footnotes or in-text referencing). Students can choose any five tutorials to submit their assignments, but they are strongly encouraged to submit early and regularly in the trimester.

**Essays and Assignments**

1 **Essays and assignments**

   Essays are to be submitted in two ways, both of which are mandatory to receive credit for the essay:

   First, students must submit a paper copy of the essay to the assignment box outside the Religious Studies office (HU 318). Please make sure you sign and date the sheet to document that you submitted your assignment, and when.

   Second, students must submit an electronic copy via Blackboard. These electronic copies will be submitted to Turn It In, an electronic plagiarism database, to check for possible plagiarism.

   Students should keep a copy of all their work until it is returned.

2 **Due dates:**

   - **The review essay** of approximately 1,500 words is worth 20% of the final grade, and is due by 5pm on Monday, March 29, 2010 in the essay box outside of Aliki’s office, Hunter 318.

   - **The research essay** of approximately 3000 words, worth 35% of the final grade, is to be submitted by 5pm on Friday, June 4, 2010, in the essay box outside of Aliki’s office, Hunter 318.

3 **Penalties for late essays / assignments:**

   - 2 percent per 24 hours will be deducted for late essays;
   - essays submitted more than two weeks late will not be accepted for assessment unless prior written arrangement has been made with the course coordinator;
   - Essays submitted late due to medical reasons must be given to the programme administrator accompanied by a doctor’s or other appropriate certification.

4 **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism** Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or
creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University’s learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University’s reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else’s work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. ‘Someone else’s work’ means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University’s website: http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx

Use of Turnitin: Student work provided for assessment in this course will be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine http://www.turnitin.com. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

5 Essay 1: The Review Essay

An essay of approximately 1,500 words is due at 5pm on Monday, March 29, 2010. This essay will involve the review of a scholarly book relevant to the course, to be decided upon in consultation with the lecturer and/or tutor. The book should reflect the student’s interest in a particular area of the world or of a particular issue relevant to the course, and it should serve as a source in the writing of the research essay. The review essay is worth 20% of the final grade.

This is an exercise in reading, digesting, and critically reflecting on one book. It is rare that we read a scholarly book from cover to cover, but this is precisely what you will do for this essay. This is not a research essay – you have the luxury of choosing your book, then relaxing in a chair and reading it. This is a challenging exercise, as reading scholarly prose can be difficult. It is important, therefore, to choose a book that is of interest to you.
**How to write a review:**

A book review must contain two parts. The first part will detail the particular contents and argument of the book, and will serve as a summary for the book. This part will demonstrate that the student has effectively read and understood the book. You may provide direct quotations from the book, which is good academic practice, but be careful that you don’t focus on just a couple of pages of the book – this part of the essay is meant to provide an overview of the work.

In the second part of the essay, the student must reflect on the essay’s first part in some critical way, using analytical skills. For example, you can ask:
- Did the author do a good job in relating the content of the particular tradition or issue?
- Do you agree with the argument that the author is making?
- What are the book’s weaknesses, and what are its strengths?
- How would you improve the book, or take it further?
- In sum, what do you think about the book?

In this second section, you have the opportunity for critical reflection, to make your own voice and opinions heard. Be bold, be creative, be controversial here.

The library is full of book reviews, which can serve as models for your own review. The best place to look is in the back of journals, which generally contain 10-20 reviews per volume.

**Some relevant journals for this course:**

- History of Religions
- Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion
- Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion
- Numen
- Religion
- Journal of the American Academy of Religion
- Journal of Asian Studies

**Selecting a book:**

The book you choose must be a scholarly book. This means a book that is written by engaging with other scholarly works, evidenced by extensive citations (footnotes, endnotes, or in-text referencing). What I don’t want are books that are meant for a popular, non-academic audience. If the university library has it, it is likely to be scholarly (though there are many non-scholarly books in our library); if an airport bookstore has it, it is very unlikely that it is scholarly. I want you to read something that is challenging, something that you would not read otherwise. If you have any doubts whether a book is sufficiently scholarly, please show it to the lecturer or tutor. The book also must be focussed on the theme of the course: religious groups/communities and identity (see topics below).

How to select a book:
1. Go to the library!
2. Search the library catalogue (see topics below for keyword search ideas)
3. Go to the shelves, look at some books, choose one that is particularly interesting to you.
4. This process should take 2-3 hours.

**Topics:**

There are a number of fruitful topics that you might explore that will be relevant to the course. Any of the topics covered in lectures are relevant, and I have listed below a number of other topics that you might decide to write on. You are, of course, welcome and even encouraged to come up with your own topic.

6 **Essay 2: The Research Essay**

The research essay of approximately 3000 words, worth 35% of the final grade, is due at 5pm on Friday, June 4, 2010.

The essay will consist of a thoughtful investigation of a question or problem relevant to the course and may employ primary sources (scriptures, iconography, field trips, interviews with religious specialists in a given tradition, observation of a ritual, etc.). Secondary sources (scholarly views on the topic or the text/ritual/icon, etc.) should be consulted and discussed in the essay.

As this is a 300-level course, and given the wide variety of topics that can be addressed in an essay of this sort, part of the work of the essay is to devise a good essay topic. Choose something that you find intriguing, something that will sustain your interest over the hours and days of research and writing. No place is too far away, no topic too far out, to make a good research topic. That said, if in doubt you should clear a topic beforehand with the tutor or lecturer.

**Choosing a topic for the research essay:**

You might do a fieldwork-based project, such as a visit to a local monastic community, church, temple, etc.

You can also do library research on a selected topic (see above for a list of potential topics).

While you can use internet sources, your sources must extend beyond the internet, either in the form of books, interviews, films, television, manuals from a particular tradition, etc. Anything that addresses religious groups, communities, and identities is fair game.

**Focus:**

Though description is important, you will need to do more than simply describe a religious group. You will also need to consider your topic in terms of some central problem or issue. This is perhaps the most important, and most difficult, part of writing the essay. You need to find a focus for the essay that is intriguing and worth addressing, and which can be adequately answered with available sources. One way to do this is to ask a question or set of questions at the beginning of your essay. The
question that you address should be related to the issues that we discuss in the course. I’ve listed some examples of focus questions below, though note that these are meant as helpful examples – you will likely have to alter them, or come up with your own question or set of questions, to better suit your specific topic.

1. What is this group’s relationship to the broader society around them? How do they maintain boundaries between themselves and others? How do they define themselves as a distinct group in a larger society?

2. Does this group have a sense of religious election; that is, do they view themselves as saved/liberated/blessed, while other people are doomed/damned/pitiable? How do they justify this blessed status? What do they need to do to maintain this status?

3. In a case of religious conflict, what, broadly, are the causes (political, economic, etc.) of the conflict? What is religion’s role in the conflict? Does religion serve to exacerbate or assuage conflict in this instance?

4. In the case of the interaction between two cultures or societies (colonialism, globalisation, diaspora, etc.), how has this interaction affected religious traditions? In the case of disparate power relations between the two cultures, how does religion serve to uphold power disparities? How does it serve as a force of rebellion against social inequity?

5. How has this particular group changed due to shifting historical circumstances? How has modernisation affected the ways in which religious groups maintain their coherence, or define their identities? (For example, with the Amish, how have they maintained their lifestyle in the face of forces of modernisation?)

6. Are there features of the religious group that have been politicised? How does the group justify this link between religion and politics? How does religion serve as a power political tool? What do religious groups share with political groups in this case?

7. Is gender important in this case? Why is it important to this group to maintain gender differentiation? Are there features of the groups practices or theologies that are related to their ideals of masculinity or femininity?

8. You can devise any other question or a set of questions that ‘fits’ the material that you are working with, and that addresses issues of religious groups, communities, and identities.

Finding research materials for your essays:

Encyclopaedias such as *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1987) in the Reference Reading Room in the library, can be helpful as each article also contains a bibliography, but the research for the essay must extend beyond such sources.

In addition to library books, you can also use journal articles as sources for your essay. You can search for articles on relevant databases: [http://www.victoria.ac.nz/library/research/databases/index.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/library/research/databases/index.aspx)
The most useful for this course are:

ATLA Religion Database
JSTOR
ProQuest
Te Puna (all New Zealand library resources)
Web of Knowledge

7 For guidance in essay writing, referencing, and presentation of bibliographies please refer to Religious Studies guidelines for essays, attached.
How to cite books, articles and internet resources for essays in Religious Studies

It is mandatory to use a correct citation style in academic writing. The Programme standard in Religious Studies at VUW is the version of Chicago Style for the Humanities. The only exceptions to this Programme standard will be the correct and consistent use of an alternative, standard style when expressly permitted by your course coordinator.

Chicago Humanities style is defined in The Chicago Manual of Style 15th ed. rev. (University of Chicago Press, 2003). The full guide (a hefty volume) is available in the VUW library at Call No. Z253 C532 15ed (ask at the Reference desk). However, the following information should be sufficient for most of your basic needs.

Note that the citation style differs for a footnote and for the bibliography at the end of your essay. For each type of source, we have listed each example in both forms. Each example footnote contains a sample page number so you can be sure how to include the number of the page cited in your footnote.

Note also that as with all academic citation style conventions, every detail of the formatting for Chicago style is fixed. You must thus ensure you follow the examples below in every detail: order, punctuation, formatting (especially italics), spacing and so on.

Some of the details used in these examples have been modified, and some sources therefore do not really exist in the form given below.

**Book – single author**

Footnote:

Bibliography:

**Book – two or more authors**

Footnote:

Bibliography:

**Chapter or article in edited multi-author volume**

Footnote:

Bibliography:

**Translated book**

**Footnote**

**Bibliography**


**Journal article – single author**

**Footnote**

**Bibliography**


**Journal article – two or three authors**

**Footnote**

**Bibliography**


**Web site**

**Footnote**

**Bibliography**

**Reference work (e.g. encyclopaedia or dictionary)**

**Footnote**

**Footnote**

The abbreviation "s.v." is for the Latin *sub verbo* ("under the word").

Reference works are usually not included in the bibliography.

**Sacred texts**

Standard citation convention is set for the sacred texts of each major tradition. You must be sure to cite sacred texts in the correct format. Unless your lecturer for a specific course
states otherwise (e.g. if conformity to a more complex standard is required for courses specialising in a particular tradition), the following conventions will apply.

The Bible
In quoting the Bible, you should use in-text citation (i.e. give your source in brackets in the body of your text, rather than using a footnote). NOTE that the Bible and the Qur’an are the only exceptions to the general rule AGAINST in-text citation in this Chicago Humanities style. (You should otherwise ALWAYS use footnotes, not in-text citation.)

The Bible is cited by book, chapter and verse. For example:

... as it says in the Bible (1 Kgs 2:7).

Note that books of the Bible are abbreviated according to standard abbreviations. A list of abbreviations should usually be available in the edition of the Bible you are using.

Note also that the punctuation mark comes after the close of the parentheses. This is also the case for the full stop in a direct quote:

"... Absolom thy brother" (1 Kgs 2:7).

When citing multiple passages, list the abbreviated title of each new biblical book followed by the chapter number and colon, with all verses in that chapter separated by a comma and space. A semicolon should separate references to subsequent chapters or books. Do not include the conjunction “and” or an ampersand ("&") before the last citation. List passages in canonical and numerical order. For example:

... as it says in the Bible (Matt 2:3; 3:4–6; 4:3, 7; Luke 3:6, 8; 12:2, 5).

It is preferable, unless you are discussing differences of translation and interpretation, to use a single version of the Bible throughout a piece of work. In this case, you can indicate that fact by a note with your first citation, and thereafter omit mention of the version:

Footnote:

Where you have to refer to more than one version of the Bible, you can indicate the different versions in footnotes, or by a set of abbreviations that you establish in a footnote early in the essay.

List the versions of the Bible you use in your bibliography. They should appear alphabetically according to title. For example:

This item would be listed alphabetically under "New".

**The Qur’an**
The name of the text is best written, "Qur’an."

In quoting the Qur’an, you should use in-text citation (i.e. give your source in brackets in the body of your text, rather than using a footnote). NOTE that the Qur’an and the Bible are the only exceptions to the general rule AGAINST in-text citation in this Chicago Humanities style. (You should otherwise ALWAYS use footnotes, not in-text citation.)

When quoting the Qur’an, give the abbreviation "Q.", then cite the number of the *sura* (chapter), then the number(s) of the *ayat* (verse). For example:

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth...." (Q. 24:35).

"Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds; The Compassionate, the Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment" (Q. 1:2-4).

State in the first footnote what "translation" edition is being used for the entire document. For example:

**Footnote:**
In this essay, all citations from the Qur’an will be taken from *An Interpretation of the Qur’an: English Translations of the Meaning (Bilingual Edition)*, trans. Majid Fakhry (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

If you use more than one source for Qur’anic text in your essay, then you need to provide a separate, footnoted reference to each citation, specifying which version that citation is from.

In your bibliography, list each "translation" edition of the Qur’an you use alphabetically under its title. For example:

**Bibliography:**

This item would be listed alphabetically under "Interpretation".

**Buddhist and Indian texts**
For undergraduate purposes, simply cite the English translation you are using as if it is an ordinary translated book. However, note that many Indian or Buddhist texts you will cite are compilations of multiple texts into a single volume. In such cases, you must also include the name of the text in your footnote citation. The name given to the text in English by the translator will suffice; but include the name in the original language also if it is easily accessible. For example:

**Footnote:**

In your bibliography, list only the whole translated works to which you refer in your essay, according to the usual format. In other words, if you cite more than one sutta etc. from a single volume, you need not list every individual text, but just the volume. For example:

Bibliography:

How to cite in the body of your essay
When you refer to one of your sources in the course of your argument, you should always give your source in a footnote, which is indicated by a superscript number attached to the appropriate part of the sentence.

Note that some other stylistic conventions use what is called “in-text citation”, where references are given in parentheses at the end of the sentence; you will see this method of citation often as you read. HOWEVER, IN-TEXT CITATION IS NOT PART OF THE CHICAGO STYLE INTRODUCED HERE (with the sole exceptions of passages from the Bible or the Qur'an), and you should consistently use footnotes indicated by superscript numbers ONLY.

Footnote style has been given above. Note that footnote numbers should always come after any punctuation mark at the end of the word they attach to; thus, it is correct to write a footnote like this, but wrong to write it like this. One of the advantages of superscript numbered footnoting is that it allows you to make tangential comments, as in this example.

When you refer to the same source several times in a row, you can use "Ibid." and the page number for all subsequent notes after the first. If you are referring to the same page number in several successive notes, then "Ibid." alone is sufficient.

If you cite source A, then cite one or more other sources, and then return to source A, it is best to repeat only the author’s name, a shortened title, and the page number cited, rather than to repeat the full citation. See the footnotes attached to this paragraph (notes 6-9) for examples.

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1 Random correct placed footnote.
2 Random incorrectly placed footnote.
3 Constance Prevarication, The Book of Tangential Comments (Dargaville: Primrose Path Publications, 2004), 27. It is interesting to note that in this recent work, Prevarication reverses her previous hard-line stance on the literary sidetrack, and not only countenances it in principle, but herself indulges in it extensively in practice.
4 Ibid., 36. [This means the reference is to the same source, but with a different page number.]
5 Ibid. [This means page 36, exactly like the preceding footnote.]
8 Madan, Non-Renunciation, 38-40.
In other words, only use abbreviated citations where you are citing the same source more than one time. Avoid old abbreviations like *loc. cit.*, *op. cit.* and so on, which can require the reader to keep track of sources over a number of references and pages, and are thus confusing.