

ASTRAL RELIGION

HPCA7007

ASSESSMENT

Written Assignments: 5000 words of written work

A note on assessment

Assessment methods are designed to test the extent to which you have satisfied the learning outcomes listed on the official module description. Masters level degrees are designed to teach certain qualities and skills. The core skills required by the MA in Cultural Astronomy are taught in the compulsory modules and the success with which you achieve them, as expressed by this module's learning outcomes, is assessed by the assessment tasks. Part of the assessment depends on the demonstration of knowledge and understanding. Most of the assessment criteria, though, evaluate your critical thinking, communication and analytical skills. The evidence is important but success at Masters' level depends on your ability to evaluate the evidence in order to advance a clear argument, using a critical appraisal of the evidence and scholarly material.

Please review the 'MA Writing and Reading Guidelines' and the guidelines for Writing Critical Reviews.

See the separate notice for submission dates

1. ONE 2000 WORD ASSIGNMENT (40% of total marks).

'Write a critical review of the Introduction (pp. xi-xvi) to Cumont, Franz, *Astrology Among the Greeks and Romans*, New York: Dover Publications 1960 [1911].

There are two versions of Cumont's work on line

You will need the PDF for citing page numbers

<http://www.archive.org/details/astrologyreligio00cumouoft>

Plain text is on line at

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/astro/arqr/arqr03.htm>

2. ONE 3000 WORD ASSIGNMENT (60% of total marks).

You should stay within 5% of the required word length.

For this assignment you should write a 3000-word essay on one of the following titles:

1. A key problem of Christian cosmology is the soul's relationship with the stars? Discuss
2. Plato said that astronomy led to knowledge of the gods. Consider the consequences of this statement.
3. In what sense are astrology's origins religious?
4. Were Indian concepts of the soul's journey or quest comparable to those in the West?
5. It has been argued that Hindu and Buddhist cosmology may share common origins with classical Greek cosmology (for example Platonic). Does the evidence of their teachings support this case?
6. Were Jewish attitudes to astrology more or less sympathetic than Christian ones? Explain your answer by reference to competing theories of the cosmos.
7. How important was Egyptian cosmotheism for later astral religion?
8. Compare and contrast three key examples of astral-religions, considering whether their similarities are more significant than their differences.
9. Is astrology a New Age religion?
10. Is astrology a material religion?
11. Taking one major tradition of astrology or astral religion from outside the 'western tradition' (defined as Greco-Roman and European) consider its beliefs and functions in relation to the theoretical literature on the nature of religion.

Your essay must:

- be clearly structured
- be fluently written, avoiding grammatical and punctuation errors
- make use of appropriate primary sources
- include a clear introduction setting out the question and your approach
- make reference to major protagonists in the field
- evaluate competing arguments
- recognise the problem of contested or incomplete evidence
- include clear and thorough referencing and bibliography according to the required format
- contain a clear conclusion

Please remember: you are expected to use primary sources.

The word count includes direct quotations, which should not comprise more than 10% of the total.

Remember: you may also use material from modules you have studied previously.

You should stay within 5% of the required word length.