

This report is due on **October 9th**, in class. The requirements are the same as before, that it should be between four to six pages of typed prose (double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins all around). I must emphasize yet, again, that I am looking for **a serious engagement with the readings as (other than class participation, which is not uniform) THIS IS MY ONLY WAY OF KNOWING HOW YOU UNDERSTAND THE CLASS READINGS.**

!! PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY !!

For this report, I am asking you to write a review of Bruce Lincoln's book, using the following question to guide that review:

Lincoln appears to emphasize the importance of timeless religious texts as against Asad's historicization of religion as a category of analysis. Which do you think provides a better way of understanding the relationship between religion, power and politics, and why?

In answering this question, I would like you to compare Lincoln's understand of religion with some of our previous readings, for example the arguments made by Talal Asad and Peter van der Veer. In contrast to these scholars, Lincoln sees certain texts (the Quran and the Bible in particular) as timeless lenses through which religious maximalists understand and represent their religiosity. In big, broad, strokes this can be represented as the difference between HISTORY and RELIGION, between TEMPORALITY and TRANSCENDENCE. In actuality of course, there is a lot of religion and transcendence in van der Veer, and a lot of history and a great sense of context in Lincoln's work.

I would advise you to frame an explicit argument/thesis on the question posed to you, which can also be a critique of the very premise of this question. Whichever "side" you take, however complex your arguments, **I would like you to keep in mind that this is primarily a review of *Bruce Lincoln's book, and his arguments.*** I am, however, looking for a **critical analysis** of this text, where you not only demonstrate your full understanding of Lincoln's own arguments, but also be able to question or defend them from critique (explicit or implicit) from other intellectual points of view. You MAY, but do not have to, consider the following in writing your review.

1. The sort of texts used by religious maximalists (Christian and Islamic) in constructing their arguments.
2. The extent to which historical circumstances drive maximalist agenda.
3. The extent to which the demarcation of religion as a sphere of human endeavor separate from "this-worldly" concerns is in itself a product of European history, and the role of colonialism in universalizing this idea. This is Asad's argument, which appears to be accepted by Lincoln.