

An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion

By James Cox

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In this thoroughly revised edition, James Cox provides an easily accessible introduction to the phenomenology of religion, which he contends continues as a foundational method for the academic study of religion in the twenty-first century.

After dealing with the problematic issue of defining religion, he describes the historical background to phenomenology by tracing its roots to developments in philosophy and the social sciences in the early twentieth century. The phenomenological method is then outlined as a step-by-step process, which includes a survey of the important classifications of religious behaviour. The author concludes with a discussion of the place of the phenomenology of religion in the current academic climate and argues that it can be aligned with the growing scholarly interest in the cognitive science of religion.

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Editorial Review

Review

"James Cox's *Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion* offers a rich and important introduction to the theory and practice of the academic study of religion. Its discussion of definitions of religion and the relationship between believing and doing religion should be read by everyone interested in religion." — Graham Harvey, The Open University, UK

"This is a clearly written, newly updated and extended introduction to how phenomenology of religion can be located within the history of the study of religions from some of the foundational thinkers to the contemporary cognitive science of religion. Cox is not just a theorist but shows how good method can be put into practice and ends his chapters with focused questions for discussion which are stimulating for student and tutor alike. What is unique about the volume is its careful exploration of how to engage in the practice of phenomenology. This attention to practical application of a method, which is explained in stages, is then also illustrated with precise case studies from African religious traditions drawn from the investigations of students with whom Cox worked at the University of Zimbabwe. It deserves to be on the book list of every undergraduate course on the study of religions." — Peggy Morgan, University of Oxford, UK

"This book provides a lively and authoritative introduction to phenomenological methods for studying religion, written in a clear and lucid style by a leading exponent. Both theoretically alert and practical to use, it is enhanced by the author's extensive experience of teaching and research across three continents." — Steven Sutcliffe, University of Edinburgh, UK

"*Expressing the Sacred: An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion* was published in 1992 by the University of Zimbabwe Publications in Harare, and in a second edition in 1996. Here Cox has thoroughly revised and updated the information, retaining the informal style that beginners appreciated. The textbook introduces students to the academic study of religious communities from the perspective of phenomenology, which he believes maintains an essential place in the discipline despite the attacks on it over the past two or three decades. Among his topics are defining religion, stages in the phenomenological method, myths and rituals, religious practitioners and art, and the special case of belief." -Eithne O'Leayne, *BOOK NEWS, Inc.*

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About the Author

James Cox is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Edinburgh, UK.

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