



## Critics Not Caretakers: Redescrining the Public Study of Religion (Suny Series, Issues in the Study of Religion)

*By Russell T. McCutcheon*

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- Sales Rank: #828842 in Books
- Brand: Brand: State University of New York Press
- Published on: 2001-03-29
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.02" h x .66" w x 5.87" l, .85 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 290 pages

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

McCutcheon makes a strong case that the study of religion is deeply flawed, and that there are important ramifications for current society and politics in these flaws. Agree or disagree with it, this book provokes the reader to think. McCutcheon's work stands alone as a critique of the pathologies of Religious Studies.

Timothy Murphy, Case Western Reserve University

Critics Not Caretakers represents a new paradigm in the study of religion. All serious students of theory and method in Religious Studies will need to come to terms with McCutcheon's stimulating and challenging critique of the mainstream tradition. William E. Paden, author of *Religious Worlds: The Comparative Study of Religion*

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### **From the Back Cover**

Argues that the study of religion must be rethought as an ordinary aspect of social, historical existence, a stance that makes the scholar of religion a critic of cultural practices rather than a caretaker of religious tradition or a font of timeless wisdom. From a general introduction written for a wide audience and a theoretical essay that outlines the basis of an alternative, socio-rhetorical approach to studying religion, the book moves on to a series of dispatches from the theory wars, each of which uses the work of such writers as Karen Armstrong, Walter Burkert, and Benson Saler as a point of entry into wider theoretical issues of importance to the field's future. The author then examines the socio-political role of this brand of critical scholarship--a role that differs dramatically from the type of sympathetic caretaking generally associated with scholars of religion who feel compelled to "go public." Concluding the work is a consideration of how scholars as teachers can address issues of theory and critical thinking in the undergraduate classroom. Written with verve, *Critics Not Caretakers* provides a viable alternative for all those dissatisfied with the covertly political, liberal humanist approach that currently dominates the study of religion.

### **About the Author**

Russell T. McCutcheon is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Southwestern Missouri State University and the author of *Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse on Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia*.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

**Joseph Cobble:**

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