

RELIGION IN AMERICA
Comparative Religious Studies/Humanities 191
Prof. Jennifer Rycenga

TR 8:00 - 11:10 am

BBC 130

San José State University

Summer Session 2006

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Office Hours: by appointment, after class

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

From the bountiful religious insights of Native Americans, to the dreams of religious freedom developed by many newcomers to these shores, this course will examine how religions in America have blossomed, migrated, transformed, and developed -- both in conjunction and in struggle with each other. By studying the religious conflicts and hopes of the peoples of this continent, we will develop critical methodologies for reading and evaluating spiritual and historical ideas, movements and writings. The course will focus on American religious creativity and diversity, with special interest in the interactions of different religions under conditions of cultural adaptation, immigration, oppression, and political-economic circumstances. The syllabus blends chronological history with experiential voices and thematic explorations. For this intensive summer session we will focus on the concept of American "civil religion" in current political and cultural debates.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:

Most of the course will be in the form of lectures and discussion. Student participation is presumed. Written work will include a short written essay, three quizzes, and a take-home final, as well as regular class work.

BOOKS AND MATERIALS:

Gaustad and Schmidt *The Religious History of America*
Class Reader **functions as our daily textbook**

Reader available at Maple Press, located at E. San Carlos b/w 10th and 11th, 297-1000.

The other books originally ordered for this class will not be used (Covington, Andrews).

Return them as soon as possible for a full refund if you already bought them.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

1. **Tuesday, June 6** - Introduction to the Class: Geography and Location, Basic Terms, History Outline, "Civil Religion;" Native American Religious Themes. In-class writing (ungraded)
2. **Thursday, June 8** - Native American Religions

READING: go over syllabus, reader pages 1-114

3. **Tuesday, June 13** - European Contact: 1492 and introduction to Christianity - The Conquest of Mexico
READING: reader 115-127; Gaustad and Schmidt 3-29
ASSIGNMENTS: in-class quiz #1 (closed book, study guide on June 8)
4. **Thursday, June 15** – Field Trip: Coyote Hills and Mission San José
READING: reader 128-137
logistics will be arranged in class June 13
5. **Tuesday, June 20** - 1500-1800: European Contact and Colonies: Slavery, Resistance, Revivals, Revolutions
ASSIGNMENTS: Essay on field trip and cosmological comparison due
READING: reader 138-174; Gaustad and Schmidt 30-118
6. **Thursday, June 22** - 19th century I: Transcendentalism and Abolitionism, Shakers and Women's Rights
READING: reader 175-208
7. **Tuesday, June 27** - 19th century II: The Revivals and the New Religions - Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Latter-Day Saints, Christian Scientists, Theosophists and the Occult, the Ghost Dance
READING: reader 209-221; Gaustad and Schmidt 121-205
ASSIGNMENTS: in-class quiz #2 (open book, open note, closed neighbor, closed computer)
8. **Thursday, June 29** - Immigration from Europe: Catholicism and Judaism
READING: reader 223-230; Gaustad and Schmidt 209-230
- X. **Tuesday, July 4** - No class because of holiday
READING: review the Bellah
ASSIGNMENTS: work on civil religion paper
9. **Thursday, July 6** - Immigration and Counter-Culture: Islam and Asian Religions in North America - Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism
READING: reader 235-258
ASSIGNMENTS: paper due on biographical figure
10. **Tuesday, July 11** - The Social Gospel and the Fundamentalists: Left vs. Right in American Religion
READING: reader 222, 234, 259-265, 286-305; Gaustad/Schmidt 231-325

12. **Thursday, July 13** - Religious Creativities in Contemporary America: Native American Renaissance, Lesbian and Gay Religions, Latino Religions, and New Age Syncretisms

READING: reader 266-285; Gaustad and Schmidt 329-431

ASSIGNMENTS: Paper on Civil Religion due; discussion and sharing of research will constitute final exam

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING:

This class is **INTENSE** in every sense of that word (extreme, emphatic, acute, strong, vehement, severe, strenuous, earnest, difficult, very great, concentrated, fervent, ardent, deep, profound). You are hereby warned - we will work **hard** in these six weeks - you and me both! **Taking another course simultaneously is not recommended!**

Almost every day there will be work evaluated from each student. This takes the form of quizzes (announced ahead of time, with a study guide), an essay on the first field trip (instructions will be given), a short research paper on a biographical figure, a paper on civil religion, and classroom writing/discussion.

Writing Assignments: Instructions will be given for the essay on the field trip and the civil religion paper. The biographical research paper instructions are included in the reader

Exams: There will be two in-class quizzes on vocabulary and basic ideas covered in readings and lectures. All quizzes will allow a range of choice to the student. There will be study guides for each quiz. Make-up quizzes are strongly discouraged.

In-class work: Given the intensive format, attendance and participation are crucial! You must attend every session, every day. There will be small group discussions, in-class response writing, and full class discussions, in which your participation will be monitored.

Office Hours and Appointments:

Given the intensive format, I will set office hours for the hour after class. However, I am often on campus earlier in the day; if this is convenient to your schedule, we can make an appointment. I am also happy to have lunch with students after class

Grading:

Quiz One	10%
Quiz Two	15%
Class Writing and Participation	10%
Essay on Field Trip	15%
Research Paper	25%
Civil Religion Paper/Final	25%

Bibliography -- some classics in the study of American religion (not an exhaustive list!)

This list also illustrates two kinds of bibliographic form. First is an MLA format, with annotations (annotations are not necessary in a paper assignment bibliography).

Eliade, Mircea, and Ioan P. Couliano, with Hillary S. Weisner., *The Eliade Guide to World Religions*. San Francisco: Harper, 1991. This one-volume work contains thumbnail sketches of thirty-three major world religions. It is derived from the standard reference work, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, also edited by Eliade.

Melton, Gordon J., ed. *The Encyclopedia of American Religions*. Third Edition. Detroit: Gale Research, 1989.

Albanese, Catherine L. *America, Religions and Religion*. Second Edition. Belmont CA: Wadsworth, 1992. A very thorough textbook, arranged historically, with strong basic bibliographies on each theme.

Marty, Martin. *Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1984. A readable narrative history of American religion.

Bloom, Harold. *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992. A maverick examination of commonalities in American religion, which Bloom interprets as a national style of gnosticism.

Long, Charles. "The Oppressive Elements in Religion and the Religions of the Oppressed." *Harvard Theological Review* 69, nos. 3-4 (1976): 397-410. An analysis of the double-edged nature of religion by a premier scholar of African-American religion.

Carson, Clayborne. "Martin Luther King, Jr., and the African-American Social Gospel." in *African-American Christianity: Essays in History*, ed. Paul. E. Johnson. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

These second items are in a social science format:

Adler, Margot
1986 *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and other Pagans in America Today*. Revised and Expanded Edition. New York: Penguin/Arcana.

Deloria, Vine
1994 *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*. Updated Edition. Golden CO: Fulcrum.

Nash, June
1978 *The Aztecs and the Ideology of Male Dominance*. *Signs* 4:2:349-362

Brown, Karen McCarthy
1991 *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Taves, Ann
1997 *Sexuality in American Religious History*. in *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, ed. Thomas A. Tweed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 27-56.

The Rycenga Grading Shorthand:

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
?	unclear, vague, I don't understand
√	good point
√+	very good point
√...	the seed of a good point - needs development
...	underdeveloped idea (not necessarily a good or bad idea...perhaps because it is too underdeveloped to tell!)
NB	"nota bene" - note well, take notice - used when you have isolated an important moment in an argument, or made a crucial point
!	intentionally funny or especially clever idea
!?	funny, but I'm not sure if it was intentional or accidental
X	incorrect information
» Sp	a word is misspelled in the line to which the arrow points.
» Gr	the sentence which begins on that line contains a grammatical error.
» P	the sentence which begins on that line contains a punctuation error.
0	when a word or an empty space is circled, it means that a word is missing, incorrect, unnecessary, etc.
∴ or ∴?	this is the scientific symbol meaning "therefore;" when used (often with a question mark) it means that the logical consequence of an idea is missing

Grading Scale

A+			
A			
A-			
A-/B+			
A/B or AB			
	B+		
	B		
	B-		
	B-/C+		
	B/C or BC		
		C+	
		C	
		C-	
		CD	
			D+
			D
			D-
			F

Common Religious Studies Misspellings

I don't subtract for spelling when errors are incidental, but when they become endemic, I get annoyed. If I detect that you don't care about the work you hand in, I get very annoyed indeed. The words listed below are errors that not only occur commonly, but won't be detected by Spell Check. Please watch for them!

CORRECT

aisle (passageway)
allot (v. divide and distribute)
altar (n., platform used in ritual)
angel (heavenly being)
Arminian (a Protestant theology)
ascetic (strict, severe, self-denying)
border (boundary line)
bored (uninterested)
covenant (agreement)
dual (having two parts)
eerie (weird, uncanny)
flee (v. escape, run away)
hallow (v., make holy)
holy (adj., sacred)
immanent (internal, within)
immanent (internal, within)
meditation (contemplation)
midst (in the middle of)
parish (ecclesiastical subdivision)
peers (people who are equals)
prophet (person who speaks for god)
public (open to the entire community)
reign (royal rule, authority)
rigid (inflexible, strict, severe)
rite (ceremony, ritual)
sacred (holy, religious)
satan (chief demon in Christianity)
suffering (pain)
veil (covering for face and head)
warrior (one who engages in war)
wretched (miserable)

INCORRECT

isle (island)
a lot (many [two words])
alter (v., to change)
angle (point where lines meet)
Armenian (about the region of Armenia)
aesthetic (concerning beauty)
boarder (lodger, renter)
board (a piece of wood)
convent (nuns' residence)
duel (contest or combat b/w two people)
Erie (Great Lake; Native Amer. tribe)
flea (n. tiny biting insect)
hollow (adj., empty)
holly (a shrub w/ spiny leaves & berries)
imminent (impending)
eminent (distinguished)
mediation (negotiation)
mist (light fog, dew)
perish (v. to die, to be destroyed)
piers (places to dock boats)
profit (benefit, financial gain)
pubic (of or near the groin)
rein (strap or harness)
ridged (having a raised edge)
right (correct)
scared (afraid)
satin (a highly smooth textile)
suffrage (right to vote)
vale (meadow)
worrier (one who worries excessively)
retched (vomited)

BEWARE OF CONFUSING THESE COMMON WORDS

accept (to respond affirmatively)	except (to exclude, leave out)
belief (noun)	believe (verb)
beliefs (plural noun)	believes (verb)
coarse (lacking in delicacy)	course (a route or class taken, of course!)
creation (the act of creating)	creationism (literal belief in Genesis)
descent (lineage, or going downward)	decent (fitting, passable)
devote (verb)	devout (adjective)
diseased (ill)	deceased (dead - i.e., more than just ill)
doomed (fated to a bad end)	domed (covered with a circular roof)
form (shape; noun and verb)	from (preposition)
gentle (mild, kindly, not rough)	gentile (not Jewish)
halo (nimbus, light encircling a head)	hallow (make holy)
insight (excellent perception)	incite (to urge on)
lose (when you misplace something)	loose (not tight)
performed (done, acted)	preformed (already formed)
prayer (noun) prayers (plural noun)	pray (verb) prays (verb)
spirituality (one's religious character)	spiritualism (belief in spirits of the dead)
sight (the power of seeing) site (a location)	cite (to quote)
verses (plural of verse)	versus (opposing, vs.)

rev. 5/03