

Rel 111: Religion in Modern America

Fall 2016

Prof. Luft
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Office: CCC 489A
Office hours: Mon 3:30–4:30
Tues. 2:00–3:00

Required Texts

- Charles Lippy and Eric Tranby, *Religion in Contemporary America* (2013) (Rental book)
- Course pack (available in the bookstore)

* Students are expected to bring readings to class the day they are assigned to be discussed.

Course Description

Surveys the diversity of religion in modern America, with particular emphasis upon issues of pluralism, tolerance and inclusion, and with attention to the ways in which America's increasing religious diversity impacts debates concerning politics, law, education, public space, medicine, and culture.

Gen Ed and Rel 111 Learning Outcomes

1. **Describe the various dimensions of diversity and marginalization within the United States.** Students will satisfy this learning outcome by being able to:
 - a. Identify and describe historical, cultural, and legal events since the late 19th century that shaped the map of contemporary religion in America.
 - b. Differentiate common tropes in rhetoric denouncing religious immigrants and outsiders in the US since the late nineteenth century, such as Catholics, Jews, Mormons, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and others.
2. **Explain the means by which one or more persistently marginalized groups in the U.S. have negotiated the conditions of their marginalization.** Students will satisfy this learning outcome by being able to:
 - a. Describe how marginalized religious groups in late 19th century America that were perceived as outsiders shifted toward becoming perceived as more “mainstream” over the course of the 20th century.
 - b. Assess common political assertions about contemporary religion in the United States (such as whether the US is a “Christian nation”) by employing historical and statistical data of contemporary religion in America gleaned from our coursework.

**Requirements
and Expectations**

1. **Preparation:** Students should complete the assigned readings and bring the readings with you to class every day. Our ability to analyze texts critically depends on your having the material in front of you. Failure to bring assigned readings to class will cause you to be unprepared for class and negatively impact your grade.
2. **Participation:** Good participation requires active reading of the assigned texts, engagement with the materials in class, thoughtful involvement in class discussions, and active listening to your classmates. Further, if you have a cell phone, please be conscientious about turning off at the start of class.
3. **Civility:** Students are expected to show respect for course content, classmates, and opinions that may differ from their own in deference to the educational atmosphere. Civil discourse means that we can disagree and challenge colleagues while maintaining an atmosphere of respect for people and ideas.
4. **Due Dates:** Missed quizzes and exams cannot be made up unless arrangements have been made prior to the absence. Papers due throughout the semester cannot be made-up or submitted late. Students who miss an assignment because of illness or serious emergency should contact me as soon as possible. Students who know ahead of time that they will be absent should speak to me at least a week prior to the absence.
5. **Communication:** During the semester, if a personal event or circumstance impacts your ability to succeed in our course, please come speak to me right away—before the problem becomes insurmountable. If you have a learning disability that might impact your work in our course, please speak to me in person (not via email) at the beginning of the semester.

Email Policy

As a general rule, it is unwise to email me if you have a time-specific question (e.g., “What’s on the exam on Monday?”) Also, do not email me because you want to know what you missed in class. For concerns such as these, speak with me in person.

Good reasons to email me include:

- Letting me know about a technical problem with D2L that is affecting your preparation for an upcoming class,
- Scheduling a time to meet face-to-face,
- Informing me as to why you missed class,
- Sharing your personal thoughts about our course material.

* When emailing me, always include the name of our class and section in your subject line.

Attendance Policy

It is expected that you will arrive to class each day and on time. Over the course of the semester, you may miss three class periods (for whatever reason) without penalty. Students who miss more classes can expect to lose 3% percentage points from their final grade for each absence. If you have a severe illness or personal emergency that will affect your attendance, speak with me outside of class.

Tutoring- Learning Center

The TLC is an excellent service every student should use. One-on-one tutors can help with writing papers, reading challenging assignments, preparing for exams, lab reports, resumes, research papers, and personal statements. To sign up, call 346-3568 or stop by the bottom floor of the Media Resource Center, room 018.

Academic Integrity

The full text of the Community Rights and Responsibilities guidelines is available online in the Rights and Responsibilities section at: www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs. Students will be expected to adhere to all university expectations.

In particular, please familiarize yourself with the definition of plagiarism and the disciplinary process. According to chapter 14 section 3 of the Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures, "Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to: cheating on an examination; collaborating with others in work to be presented, contrary to the stated rules of the course; submitting a paper or assignment as one's own work when a part or all of the paper or assignment is the work of another; submitting a paper or assignment that contains ideas or research of others without appropriately identifying the sources of those ideas...."

If you have questions about this policy, contact me. Infractions will be reported to the university and the minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment, although more severe infractions may be assessed.

To ensure a fair assessment process in this course, students will be required to submit their papers to the D2L dropbox prior to the due date in class. D2L has plagiarism detection software, and will flag papers that are derivative of published texts, websites, and other student writing.

Assignments

Class Participation.....	5%
Interview project.....	20%
Blog	25%
Midterm.....	25%
Final Exam	25%

Final exam: Dec 16, 2:45–4:45

Rel 111 (Fall 2016)

Week 2

Mon Sept 12	<u>Defining Religion</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Read: RICA, chap 1, “Defining and measuring religion”
Wed Sept 14	<u>Explaining Religion</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Read: RICA, chap 2, “Contemporary views and theories of religion”

Week 3

Mon Sept 19	<u>Blogging Religion in Modern America</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting today in the Library, Third Floor, Room 316. <input type="checkbox"/> Write blog post #1: By the end of class today, you will have created your first blog post, which will indicate that you have mastered some basic blogging skills. Title: Blogging Practice Minimum length: none. Due date: Sept 19
Wed Sept 21	<u>Pluralism, Tolerance, and American Religion</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Write blog post #2: Prior to class today, visit The Pew Forum Religious Landscape Study . Peruse the site for some statistic about religion in contemporary America that you find interesting, surprising, confusing, curious, enlightening. Then, write a two-hundred word blog post reflecting one or more aspects of these religion statistics. Why did you find it interesting (surprising, confusing, etc.)? What questions did these statistics raise? What questions does this data raise in your mind? Your blog will be assessed based on the rubric posted on D2L. The Pew Forum Religious Landscape Study can be found here: http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/ Title: Religion in America Statistics Minimum length: 200 words. Due date: Prior to class, Sept 21

Week 4

Mon Sept 26	<p><u>Studying American Religious History</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Read: RICA, chap 3, “The changing faces of religion”<input type="checkbox"/> Write blog post #3: Prior to class today, choose one of the discussion questions from chapter 3 (on pages 42-43) and respond in blog post. At the top of the blog, indicate which question you are answering. <p>Title: Changing Faces of History Minimum length: 200 words. Due date: Prior to class, Sept 26</p>
Wed Sept 28	<p><u>Protestantism</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Read: RICA, chap 4 (Mainline Protestantism: The Erosion of Cultural Dominance)<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Will Herberg’s Protestant-Catholic-Jew” [coursepack]

Week 5

Mon Oct 3	<p><u>Evangelicalism</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Read: RICA, chap 5 (The Evangelical Surge)<input type="checkbox"/> Write blog post #4: Find a news event in the last year that is an example of the Culture Wars thesis, described in our textbook on pages 120-124. Use the news sources provided on D2L (or use your own news source.) What is the fight over? Describe, in a non-biased way, the argument from both sides. Then, reflect on this story. Does this story represent a recent trend, or something that Orthodox and Progressives have been arguing about for decades? Do you think this issue will be resolved at some point? If so, how? What is your opinion about this issue? Your blog will be assessed based on the rubric posted on D2L. <p>Title: Religion and the Culture Wars Minimum length: 200 words. Due date: Prior to class, Oct 3</p>
Wed Oct 5	<p><u>Introducing to Judaism</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Read: RICA, chap 7 (Contemporary Judaism)<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Meszler, “Beliefs in a Progressive Judaism” [coursepack]

Week 6

Mon	<u>Judaism in America: Primary Documents</u>
Oct 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Read: Benjamin Roth Warns his Emigrant Son about the Dangers in America, 1854 [coursepack]<input type="checkbox"/> Read: “Abraham Cahan Shows How American Life Shattered a Jewish Immigrant’s Traditional Faith” (1916) [coursepack]<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Excerpt, Henry Ford, “Candid Address to Jews on the Jewish Problem” [coursepack]
Wed	<u>Judaism in America: Contemporary Anti-Semitism</u>
Oct 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Write blog post #5: Spend some time perusing the anti-semitic website www.jewwatch.org. Compare and contrast the claims on jewwatch.org with the examples of anti-Semitism we studied from a century ago. What has remained the same? What has changed? Your blog will be assessed based on the rubric posted on D2L. <p>Title: Anti-Semitism Then and Now Minimum length: 200 words. Due date: Prior to class, Oct 12</p>

Week 7

Mon	<u>Catholicism</u>
Oct 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Read: RICA, chap 6 (American Catholicism: A “Ghetto” Church No More)<input type="checkbox"/> Write Blog post #6: Find a current news event regarding Catholicism. Draw comparisons between the news event you found and chapter 6. What does this news story teach us about American Catholics or about religion in America more broadly? Your blog will be assessed based on the rubric posted on D2L. <p>Title: Catholics in the News Minimum length: 200 words. Due date: Prior to class, Oct 17</p>
Wed	<u>Catholics in America</u>
Oct 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Read: excerpt, Dorothy Day, <i>From Union Square to Rome</i> (1939) [coursepack]<input type="checkbox"/> Read: C. Stanley Lowell Explains His Fear of Catholics in 1960 [coursepack]<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Cesar A. Chavez, “The Mexican-American and the Church” (1968) [coursepack]

Week 8

Mon Oct 24	Midterm Exam
Wed Oct 26	<u>Religion and Politics</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Read: RICA, chap 9 (Religion, Politics, and Government)

Week 9

Mon Oct 31	<u>Religion, Law, and Culture Wars</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Patheos: Everything You Need to Know about Town of Greece vs. Galloway [coursepack] <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Redstate: Town of Greece v. Galloway: A Primer [coursepack] <input type="checkbox"/> Write blog post: Using any of the news sources listed in our D2L page, find a current event that relates to any issue discussed in chapter 9. Write a blog post in which you summarize the article and explain how the story relates to our reading. Address one or more of these questions: <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Why did you choose this story? Does this story teach us anything about how religion has changed in contemporary America? Current challenges in religion in America? Which culture war do you think will get resolved in the future? What does this event teach you about religion in America and politics? What questions are you still pondering?</p> Your blog will be assessed based on the rubric posted on D2L. Title: Religion and Politics Minimum length: 200 words. Due date: Oct 31 To access the “religion in the news” websites, go the “content” heading in D2L and open the “religion in the news” folder. You should stick to one of these sources, unless you have approved a different source. Even when using these links, be sure you are reading a news item and not an editorial or commentary.
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Wed	<u>African American Religion</u>
Nov 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: RICA, chap 11 (African American Religion) <input type="checkbox"/> Read: excerpt, Martin Luther King, Jr. <i>Nonviolence and Racial Justice</i> (1957)" [coursepack] <input type="checkbox"/> Read: "Martin Luther King, Jr. Preaches on the Power of Love, 1963)" [coursepack]

Week 10

Mon	<u>African American Religion: Primary Documents</u>
Nov 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: excerpt, Malcolm X, <i>God's Judgment of White America</i> (1963) [coursepack] <input type="checkbox"/> Read: excerpt, Malcolm X, <i>Letters from Abroad</i> [coursepack] <input type="checkbox"/> Read: "Christianity Today Criticizes Black Americans' Intimidation of White Churches, 1969" [coursepack]

Wed	<u>Mormonism</u>
Nov 9	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: RICA, chap 14 (The Mormon Perspective)

Week 11

Mon	<u>Mormonism day 2</u>
Nov 14	<input type="checkbox"/> No class today! <input type="checkbox"/> Watch video: "Frontline: The Mormons" <input type="checkbox"/> Complete online D2L quiz on the video prior to 5:00 PM today.

Wed	<u>Hinduism</u>
Nov 16	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Larson, "Hinduism in India and America" [coursepack]

Week 12

Mon	<u>Hindus in America</u>
Nov 21	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Daggett, "The Heathen Invasion of America" [coursepack] <input type="checkbox"/> Read: "Prema Kurien Explains Hindus' Adjustments to American Life" [coursepack]

Wed Nov 23	<p><u>The New Age</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read: RICA, chap 13 (Faiths on the Margins) <input type="checkbox"/> Write Blog post: <u>DUE BEFORE CLASS TODAY</u>. Visit www.scientology.org and spend about 20 minutes watching official videos on the site. Which videos did you watch? Based on them, to whom do you think Scientology would appeal? Why are new religious movements like Scientology so controversial? Your blog will be assessed based on the rubric posted on D2L. <p>Title: New Age Religion Minimum length: 200 words. Due date: <u>Prior to class today</u>, Nov 23</p>
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Thanksgiving Recess (Nov 24 through Nov 27)

Week 13

Mon Nov 28	<p><u>Buddhism</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Eckel, “Buddhism in the World and America” [coursepack]
Wed Nov 30	<p><u>Buddhism in America</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Tom Tweed’s “Who is a Buddhist? Nightstand Buddhists and Other Creatures” [coursepack]

Week 14

Mon Dec 5	<p><u>Muslims in America</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Time Magazine, “Islam in America” [coursepack]
Wed Dec 7	<p><u>Muslims in America</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Esposito, “Islam in the World and in America” [coursepack]

Week 15

Mon Dec 12	<p><u>Muslims in America</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read: “Kambiz GhaneaBassiri Explains Muslims Mixed Feelings About American Culture” [coursepack]
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read: “Richard Wormser Describes Pressures on Muslim Teenagers in American High Schools, 1994” [coursepack] <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Simmons, “Striving for Muslim Women’s Human Rights” [coursepack] <input type="checkbox"/> Write blog post: Visit the anti-Muslim website, www.jihadwatch.org. Spend some time perusing the entries, which date back more than a decade. Then, write a blog post comparing how the anti-Muslim sentiment on this website compares with hostility to other religious communities we studied this semester. Your blog will be assessed based on the rubric posted on D2L. <p>Title: American Islamaphobia Minimum length: 200 words. Due date: Dec 12</p>
<p>Wed Dec 14</p>	<p><u>Religious Pluralism</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read: RICA, chap 19 (Is America a Christian Nation?) <input type="checkbox"/> Write Blog post: After reading chapter 19, explain in your own words why the authors of our textbook chose to end their book with the question, “Is America a Christian Nation?” Then, answer the question. Is America a Christian nation? Why or why not? Your blog will be assessed based on the rubric posted on D2L. <p>Title: Is America a Christian Nation? Minimum length: 200 words. Due date: Dec 14</p>