REL 3120

Religion in America

Section: U01

Hybrid/Certified

Spring Term 2027

Course Meeting Information

This is a Hybrid/Certified Course, with weekly on campus meetings

Fridays 12:30PM - 1:45PM

Charles E. Perry (PC) 438
Course Time Zone: Eastern Time (ET). Course due dates and times are according to this time zone.

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

Religion is not going away! In fact, its role in American life is as significant as it has ever been. In this course we will explore religion in the United States of America from colonial times to the present. We'll see what has changed and what has remained basically the same. We will give attention to the rich diversity of religious expressions and religious communities and see how they have interacted with one another. We'll use a variety of tools, including theology, anthropology, phenomenology and sociology to understand and analyze the ways in which religion has functioned in American life. We'll give special attention to (1) religion and politics, (2) cosmology (world views), (3) community, and (4) religious practice. We'll learn how religion has shaped the wider culture of America and, in turn, been shaped by it.

As this is a hybrid course, the learning will take place in two components: (1) asynchronous learning activities, and (2) in-class interaction (lecture and discussion). The basic design of the course allows you to learn the historical facts on your own from the textbook, primary source documents, videos, and an illustrated outline of slides, leaving the in-class time for exploration of the deeper meaning and contemporary application of the material.

Your asynchronous work will insure that our class sessions are lively learning opportunities. To insure that you are armed with the basic facts, there will be an online quiz on each week's reading from the textbook. To

further prepare you for the in-class session, and you will write a brief online post on a question that you are given (150-300 words), which you will use in the class discussion.

For one of the in-class sessions, you will give a 5-7 minute presentation on an online religious service, based on detailed notes which you have prepared. Details for this assignment are in Canvas.

Textbook and Course Materials

American Religious History

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Amanda Porterfield, editor

Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell

Publication Date: 2008

Copyright Date: 2002

ISBN 10: 0-470-69281-2

ISBN 13: 978-0-470-69281-3

Chapters/Pages: Entire book

Religion in American History

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Amanda Porterfield John Corrigan, editors

Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell

Publication Date: 2010

Copyright Date: 2010

ISBN 10: 1-4051-6138-8

ISBN 13: 978-1-4051-6138-1

Chapters/Pages: Entire book

Panther Book Pack

Get all required course materials for $22 per undergrad credit hour through Panther Book Pack. You'll be charged automatically unless you opt out within 3 days after the add/drop deadline.

For more details, to compare costs, and to learn how to access your course materials, visit the Panther Book Pack information page on FIU OneStop.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- Understand and respect the diversity of religious expressions in the history of the United States, including Christianity (Protestant and Catholic), indigenous religions, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism and others.
- Build a base for a lifelong understanding of religion in American culture.
- Understand how religion, politics and the wider culture have interacted throughout American history, each influencing the others.

- Know what the major religious expressions in the US have thought about God(s), the world and human beings.
- Know the basic history of the principle religious communities that have lived in the territory of the USA.
- Gain a deeper understanding of the ways that people in the USA have practiced their religion, including rituals, customs and social interactions.

Expectations of this Course

This is a hybrid course, meaning half of the coursework will be conducted in class, on campus, with the remaining half conducted out of class, including in this Canvas course. Expectations for performance in hybrid courses are the same as in a traditional course. Hybrid courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

Students are expected to:

- **review the getting started page** located in the course modules;
- **introduce yourself to the class** during the first week by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion;
- **take the practice quiz** to ensure that your computer is compatible with the learning management system, Canvas;

- **interact online** with the instructor and peers;
- **review and follow the course calendar** and weekly outlines;
- **Attend class sessions** in person as scheduled;
- **log in** to the course 3 **times** per week;
- **respond to discussions** by the due date specified;
- **respond to emails** within 2 **days**;
- **submit assignments** by the corresponding deadline.

The instructor will:

- **log in** to the course 6 **times** per week;
- **respond to emails** within **24 hours**;
- **grade assignments** and/or provide feedback within 2 **days** of the assignment deadline.

Assignments & Assessments

Discussion Preparation Posts

Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

Discussion and Preparatory Post Expectations

- Answer the question posed in the Discussion Preparation

assignment in a way that will make a valuable contribution to a class discussion on this topic. You may actually read your post as part of the class discussion, but it is hoped that the in-class discussion will move beyond simply reading prepared posts as our ideas spur one another to deeper reflection.

- Posts must be made before the start of the class. They will remain available for viewing by the class until the final exam as a reminder of some of the points raised in discussion.
- For each discussion, the post will count as 50% of the grade and actual in-class discussion participation will count for 50%.Consult the Discussion Preparatory Post rubric for grading criteria and ratings.
- The weight of the 10 discussion assignments will be 35% of your course grade, so be sure and give proper attention to this aspect of the course.
- The next discussion preparation assignment will be available after each class. This means you will have only one week to complete the preparatory post, so that the material will be fresh in your mind for the discussion.
- Your grade for each discussion session will be calculated within two days of the discussion.

Quizzes

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the Practice Quiz from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet.

- Since you are responsible to master the basic facts (events, names, dates, etc.) during your non-class learning time, there will be a quiz for every chapter in the textbook.
- You may use the illustrated slide deck to help you master the material in the textbook.
- Each quiz is 10 questions and the time limit is 20 minutes.
- The 16 quizzes, taken together, will consist of 15% of your course grade.
- You will be able to see the results of your quiz and you can use the quiz for review for the midterm and final exams.
- Your quizzes will be graded automatically.

Online Religious Service Observation

- Each student will observe online the religion service of a religion with which they are unfamiliar.
- I have chosen to make this an online visit since there may be ethical problems with live attendance in a religious

service by someone who is not a sincere participant.

- Each student will present a report of their online visit based on detailed notes in one of our in-class sessions. We will create our schedule during the first week of class.
- Please consult the instructions for detailed note-taking and the grading rubric in the assignment description.

Grading

Course Grades Distribution Table

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Weight
Quizzes	16	10	15%
Discussion and Prep Post	10	100	35%
Online Service Observation	1	100	10%
Midterm Exam	1	150	20%
Final Exam	1	150	20%

Letter Grade Distribution Table

Letter Grade	Sample Range %

Letter Grade	Sample Range %
A	95 to 100
A-	90 to 94
B+	87 to 89
B	83 to 86
B-	80 to 82
C+	77 to 79
C	73 to 76
C-	70 to 72
D+	67 to 69
D	63 to 66
D-	60 to 62
F	0 to 59

Proctored Exams

Please note that the information contained in this section applies only if your course requires a proctored exam.

Through a careful examination of this syllabus, it is the student's responsibility to determine whether this online course requires proctored exams. Please visit our Student Proctored Exam Instructions webpage for important information concerning proctored exams, proctoring centers, and important forms.

Schedule of Topics

Module 1 - Where We Are Now

In this module we'll get an overview of the religious situation in America today. We'll also look at how our semester-long study of religious history can help us understand the present with greater depth and clarity.

Videos: Pew Survey, Christian Nationalism, James Talarico, American Pope, Zohran Mamdani

Module 2 - Religion & Politics (1492-1692)

In this module we will begin our investigation of how religion and politics have interacted in American history and we'll look at a classic example of how earlier religious elements have persisted over the course of American history.

Readings: Textbook: Chapter One; Documents: John Winthrop

Videos: Dr. Foltz, Ronald Reagan

Quiz: Chapter 1

Discussion: Speech on the Arbella

Module 3 - Cosmology (1492-1692)

In this module we will look at the clash of worldviews that characterized this period and take a close look at one its the most controversial moments, the Salem witch trials.

Readings: Textbook: Chapter 2; Documents: Hutchinson, Mather;

Video: Witch Hunt in Salem

Quiz: Chapter 2

Discussion: Witchcraft in Salem

Module 4 - Community and Practice (1492-1692)

In this module we will focus on the cultural clash between European and Native American communities and religions and reflect on the implications for our present religio-cultural realities.

Reading: Textbook: Chapters 3 and 4; Documents: Williams

Videos: Clash in 1634, Black Robe, Native religions, Hassanamesit, Southwest Missions, Hopi

Quizzes: Chapters 3 and 4

Discussion: Native American and European Religion

Module 5 - Religion and Politics (1692-1803)

Religion and politics are always intertwined in fascinating and consequential ways. In this module we will see what was unique about the interaction of religion and politics during the period of the founding of this nation.

Reading: Textbook, Chapter 5; Documents: Jefferson, de Tocqueville

Video: Whitefield

Quiz: Chapter 5

Discussion: Religion and the Founding of the US

Module 6 - Cosmology (1692-1803)

In this module we will look at the diversity of world views held by Americans in the early modern period. An eminent visiting professor will lead us on a deep dive into the mind of one of its most important religious figures.

Reading: Textbook, Chapter 6; Documents: Edwards

Videos: Liberalism, Jewish history

Quiz: Chapter 6

Discussion: Led by visiting professor

Module 7 - Community (1692-1803)

In this module we will look at the development of a diversity of religious communities and will discuss the issues surrounding Native American revival movements and the arrival of Catholic immigrants in a largely Protestant culture.

Reading: Textbook: Chapter 7; Documents: Handsome Lake

Videos: Catholics, Pre-1960s Catholicism

Quiz: Chapter 7

Discussion: Catholicism (Ungraded)

Midterm Exam

Module 8 - Practice (1692-1803)

In this module we will survey the religious practices of the diverse religious communities and give special attention to one of the most important of American religious traditions: revivalist evangelical Protestantism.

Reading: Textbook, Chapter 8; Documents: Finney

Videos: Awakenings, Black Church

Quiz: Chapter 8

Discussion: Awakenings

Module 9 - Religion and Politics (1803-1898)

In this module we will survey the many ways that religion and politics interacted in life of the American republic, and we will focus on one of the most troubled and troubling: religion and slavery.

Reading: Textbook, Chapter 9, Document: Slavery and the Bible

Videos: Slavery, Free Blacks

Quiz: Chapter 9

Discussion: Slavery

Module 10 - Cosmology (1803-1898)

In this module we will look at the early clash between traditional religion and the acids of modernity. We will focus on the Jewish tradition as a model of continuity and change.

Reading: Textbook, Chapter 10; Documents: Emerson, Wise, Pratt, Addams

Video: Jewish Life

Quiz: Chapter 10

Discussion: Judaism

Module 11 - Community and Practice (1803-1898)

This module will survey the remarkable innovation and change in the communities and religious practices of this period of "American Empire" and will focus on the birth and the arrival of religions new to America.

Reading: Textbook, Chapters 11 and 12; Documents: Lee, Dickenson, Eddy

Video: Swami Vivekananda

Quizzes: Chapters 11 and 12

Discussion: New Religions

Module 12 - Religion and Politics (1898-Present)

This module will explore the diversity of political expression of religion in America. It will have special relevance to understanding the way that religion functions in America today.

Textbook: Chapter 13; Documents: King, Malcolm X, Murray, Reed

Videos: Taylor, Wagner

Quiz: Chapter 13

Discussion: Politics on the Right and Left

Module 13 - Cosmology (1898-Present)

This module will explore deeply the clash of religious and secular world views that have defined the American spiritual scene, giving rise to both innovation and fundamentalist reaction. Hopefully, it will give us some solid tools for analyzing and participating in what can often become passionate debates.

Reading: Textbook, Chapter 14; Documents: James, Scofield, Machen, Black Elk, Ginsberg, Daly

Videos: Inherit the Wind (Trailer), Daly

Quiz: Chapter 14

Discussion: Theological Liberalism and Conservatism

Module 14 - Community and Practice (1898-Present)

This module will bring us up-to-date on the community life and practices in America amid the dizzying array of changes related to immigration, urbanization, suburbanization, commercialization, and globalization. We'll also discuss what we've learned about religion in today's America though our five-hundred-plus sweep of American religious history.

Reading: Textbook, Chapters 15 and 16; Documents: Day, Kaplan, Silko, Ruether, Frankiel, Epstein

Videos: Tribes with Catholicism, Jainism, Fajr

Quizzes: Chapters 15 and 16

Module 15 - Review and Final Exam

Final Exam

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via **the Canvas Inbox**. Check out the Canvas Guide to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using the Canvas Inbox.

I will respond to all correspondence within 2 **days**.

Policies & Resources

Before starting this course, please review the Policies & Resources Page in Canvas, which includes comprehensive information on various University and Course Level Policies, such as:

- University Policies
- Accessibility and Accommodations
- Online Etiquette
- Technical Requirements and Skills

- Computer & Digital Literacy Skills
- Course Technology Accessibility Statements and Privacy Policies
- Academic Integrity
- Copyright Statement
- Nondiscrimination Statement
- Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Fair Use Policy

Nondiscrimination Statement

The **Office of Civil Rights (OCR)** is responsible for ensuring that FIU maintains a workplace and learning environment free from discrimination, where current and prospective faculty, staff, and students are treated equitably. If any student, employee, or applicant has a sincere and reasonable belief that they have been discriminated against or harassed based on age, color, disability, marital status, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, retaliation, sex, or any other protected category, they can report their concerns to the OCR team through report.fiu.edu.