

Winthrop University
Department of Philosophy & Religious Studies
RELIGION 320: RELIGION IN AMERICA
Spring 2011
3 Credit Hours
TR 9:30-10:45 a.m. Kinard 312

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Open office Hours: TR 2-5 p.m.; WF 11a.m. -12 noon. You are free to drop in whenever I am in my office, but you may want to make an appointment outside regular office hours. I do my best to observe those hours consistently, but occasional meetings and other duties (particularly as chair of the department) necessitate (partial) cancellation of office hours. It's best to check with a quick call to make sure I'm in.

This syllabus is subject to change and adjustment as circumstances dictate. Changes are at the discretion of the professor but will be decided upon through discussion and consensus with class members.

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the historical development of religion and the life and practice of religious groups in what is now the United States. By the end of the semester students should be able to demonstrate that they are:

- aware of the larger flow of American religious history, including significant persons, movements, and events;
- able to discuss the interaction of religion with American culture in at least general terms -- that means, to have a sense of how religion has influenced culture and how culture has influenced religion in uniquely American ways;
- familiar with the several mainstream religious traditions in American culture as well as some that are more obscure and those religious ideas and movements that are rather peculiarly American;
- able to articulate their understanding of issues in the relationship of religion and the concerns of religious groups to American life and politics.
- In essence, a successful student should demonstrate that he/she can think historically about the phenomenon of religion in America.

Keeping up with the reading program can be demanding but should not be difficult. Falling behind will make it very difficult. As will be explained below, no research paper will be required for this course so that students can keep up with the reading and be prepared to discuss them in class and write reflectively on them in exams. A student may choose, however, to substitute a research paper for the final exam.

Our course can be used to count for the **Historical Perspectives** requirement in the Touchstone Program and aims to meet the following General Education goals that are intended as crucial components of the learning experience of all Winthrop University students.

- **Goal One: To communicate clearly and effectively in Standard English.**
 - This goal will be realized by students' success at discussing the material articulately in class and by written work that will assess not only their knowledge of content but their ability to write in clear, precise, concise, grammatically correct, and well-punctuated English.
- **Goal Three: To use critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a variety of research methods.**
 - This is met in students' inquisitive and critical discussion of the texts involved and the challenges they present and in their successful writing of reaction essays and examinations or research papers that go beyond the mere collection of information.
- **Goal Four: To recognize and appreciate human diversity (both past and present) as well as the diversity of ideas, institutions, philosophies, moral codes, and ethical principles.**
 - This goal is met when students successfully articulate their appreciation of both the differences and the similarities between their own world and that of earlier peoples and different approaches to belief and religion as well as the continuity and the development of thought for both individuals and institutions. They should also be able to understand and navigate the crossroads where their own worlds and values intersect or even collide with those of fellow students.

- **Goal Seven: To examine values, attitudes, beliefs, and habits which define the nature and quality of life.**
 - This goal will be realized as students find in the traditions, texts, and trends examined some of the fundamental questions, concerns, challenges, attitudes, successes, short-comings and beliefs that are part of the constant human search for identity and value.

Required Texts

Williams, Peter W. *America’s Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-first Century*. 3rd ed. Urbana – Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008.

Gaustad, Edwin. *Faith of the Founders: Religion and the New Nation 1776-1826*. 2nd edition. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004

Instruction

The course is built around lecture/presentation by the professor that depends heavily on student reaction to the assigned readings. Student questions are welcome at any time. Students will also be expected to participate actively by sharing their own perspectives and comprehension of the material through interaction with one another as well as with the professor.

Course Requirements

- **Attendance** – We have a total of 27 class sessions scheduled. You are allowed 6 absences without excuse. If you exceed 6 absences, you will receive an N for the course IF you withdraw before Wednesday, March 9; after that date you will receive an F or U. Excused absences require official documentation or prior approval from the professor. If you have a documented or approved excuse, you may negotiate an alternative deadline for an assignment or test. Otherwise, papers will not be accepted after the due date and time and there will be no opportunity to make up an exam.
- **Be on time** – coming late for class is disruptive and you may well be marked absent. Regardless of absence or lateness, you are responsible for all course material and requirements.

Examinations and Assessment

- Examinations will consist of a combination of short answer questions to test your knowledge of important facts and written essays to test your comprehension of information and your ability to critically analyze and interpret material.

Your final grade will be comprised of the following:

- 3 grades during the semester – 20% each = 60%
 - Preparedness and participation = 10%
 - Final comprehensive examination or research paper = 30%
- Total = 100%

The final exam will be given on the day scheduled with no exceptions unless you have a legitimate conflict with another exam, of which you and I will be notified by the registrar. In this case, please remember that it is your responsibility to resolve the conflict. Note that travel plans and work schedules do not warrant a change in schedule. If you want to substitute a paper for the final please discuss this with me to set up your project no later than April 5 and preferably much earlier. I will read and comment on drafts submitted by April 19.

The grade for a missed exam is zero (0). Making up a missed exam or having an extension on an assignment is possible only in circumstances for which you have written documentation. If you are representing the University in an official capacity on a day when an exam is scheduled, please let me know in writing ahead of time and we will find a mutually agreeable date and time for making up the exam.

Grading Scale: I will use the new +/- system for all grading.

A = 93-100	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69
A- = 90-92	B = 83-86	C = 73-76	D = 63-66
	B- = 80-82	C- = 70-72	D- = 60-62

There will be no extra credit work – decide now to work in a way that will achieve the grade you desire in order to maintain your GPA and scholarships, etc.

Academic Success Center

Winthrop's Academic Success Center is a free resource for all undergraduate students seeking to perform their best academically. The ASC offers a variety of personalized and structured resources that help students achieve academic excellence, such as tutoring, academic skill development (test taking strategies, time management counseling, and study techniques), group and individual study spaces, and academic coaching. The ASC is located on the first floor of Dinkins, Suite 106. Please contact the ASC at 803-323-3929 or success@winthrop.edu. For more information on ASC services, please visit www.winthrop.edu/success. Note that these services are not just remedial or for students who are failing. Good students become even better by becoming more focused on what makes them successful.

Students with Disabilities

Winthrop University is dedicated to providing access to education. If you have a disability and require specific accommodations to complete this course, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 323-3290. Once you have your official notice of accommodations from Services for Students with Disabilities, please inform me as early as possible in the semester.

Student code of conduct

As noted in the Student Conduct Code: "Responsibility for good conduct rests with students as adult individuals." The policy on student academic misconduct is outlined in the "Student Conduct Code Academic Misconduct Policy" in the online *Student Handbook* which can be accessed at <http://www2.winthrop.edu/studentaffairs/handbook/StudentHandbook.pdf>. Dishonesty is a serious offense in all its forms, whether lying about reasons for an absence or missed assignment or cheating on a test or misrepresenting borrowed material as your own. It can result in a failing grade on a test, assignment, or the course, or even dismissal from the university.

Use of Handheld and Wireless Technology

Be sure to turn off or mute your cell phone, pager, or other electronic devices. Use of these during class (for example, texting or checking messages or email) could be quite detrimental to your grade: 1st offense = a reminder; after that, each offense = 5 points off your final grade. If this becomes a problem, I reserve the right to ask you to leave the classroom with an absence counted against you.

Laptops may be used for taking notes but you must disable the wireless function and close all applications not relevant to course work. The same penalties for abuse apply here as for cell phones and I may forbid you to use a laptop in class.

See the full policy on this technology in the classroom for the College of Arts & Sciences at <http://www2.winthrop.edu/artscience/AppropriateUseApprovedPolicyMar2010.pdf>

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

(subject to change in accordance with pace and other conditions such as weather)

#	Day – Date	Topic and Reading Assignments
1	T Jan 11	Introductions, syllabus, etc. Pew Forum instructions
2	R Jan 13	Discussion of Pew Forum surveys. Studying Religion; features of American religion: W, Introduction: Telling Stories, pp. 1-11.
3	T Jan 18	Native American and African traditions: W, chapters 1 & 2
4	R Jan 20	Judaism: W, 3&4
5	T Jan 25	Eastern Orthodox & Roman Catholic Traditions: W, 5-7
6	R Jan 27	Reformation Traditions: Lutheran & Anglican: W, 8 & 9
7	T Feb 1	Reformation Traditions: Calvinism & Reformed Tradition; Radicals & Anabaptists
8	R Feb 3	Exam 1
9	T Feb 8	Early America: Anglicans, Puritans, Presbyterians & Others: W, 12-14
10	R Feb 10	Quakers & Methodists: W, 15-16
11	T Feb 15	Baptists and the Great Awakening: W, 17
12	R Feb 17	Origins of Modern Liberalism; Revolution and the Constitution: W, 18 & 22
13	T Feb 22	The Faith of the Founders: Gaustad, 1-2
14	R Feb 24	The Faith of the Founders: Gaustad, 3-4
15	T Mar 1	The Faith of the Founders: Gaustad, 5
16	R Mar 3	Exam 2
17	T Mar 8	The Second Great Awakening: W, 23 (cf. Gaustad, 6)
18	R Mar 10	Unitarianism, Transcendentalism, and Universalism: W, 28
	T/R Mar 15/17	Spring Break – no classes
19	T Mar 22	Restorationist, Millennial, and Communitarian Movements: W, 29
20	R Mar 24	Latter Day Saints (Mormons): W, 30 & 45
21	T Mar 29	Slave Religion & Religion in the South: W, 27 & 35
22	R Mar 31	Developments in African-American Religion: W, 40 & 51
23	T April 5	Exam 3
24	R April 7	The Social Gospel and reactions: W, 32 & 34
25	T April 12	Judaism in America: W, 38 & 46
26	R April 14	Roman Catholicism in America: W, 36, 48-49
27	T April 19	Islam in America: W, 52
28	R April 21	Asian Traditions in America: W, 53
	W April 27	8:00 a.m. Final Examination