

REL 320: American Religious Traditions

Course and Faculty Information

Course Description: Examines the formation, development, and interaction of major American religious traditions (indigenous, African American, Asian American, and Euro-American).

Credits: 3

Prerequisites: None

Instructor: Chas. H. Barfoot

Contact Info: cbarfoot@asu.edu

Course Learning Outcomes

At the completion of the course, students will:

Be knowledgeable about four large, broad categories of uniquely American religious thought.

Be able to use interdisciplinary approaches to the study of religion--primarily sociology and history.

Be able to research a particular religious tradition in each of the four broad categories of American religious thought.

Textbook

Finke & Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005*. ISBN: 978-0813535531.

Buying or Renting Books: Books are available at ASU campus bookstores, which offer free shipping. If a book is out-of-stock, however, I do not recommend asking the campus bookstores to backorder it for you, because books often do not arrive until after class begins.

If books are out-of-stock at the ASU Tempe campus bookstore, there are two other stores adjacent to campus:

[Student Book Center](http://www.studentbookcenter.com)[Links to an external site.](#) www.studentbookcenter.com[Links to an external site.](#) 704 South College Avenue (480) 966-6226

The College Store [Links to an external site. www.collegestoretempe.com](http://www.collegestoretempe.com) [Links to an external site.](http://www.collegestoretempe.com) 1015 South Rural Road, (480) 894-4400

Books are also available online, and -- if you have waited to the last minute -- you can arrange for expedited shipping. Used books are available online from <http://www.amazon.com> [Links to an external site.](http://www.amazon.com) and other vendors. Used books take longer to arrive than new books. Books can be rented from <http://www.chegg.com> [Links to an external site.](http://www.chegg.com) and other online vendors.

Course Access

Your ASU courses can be accessed by both my.asu.edu [Links to an external site.](http://my.asu.edu) and asu.instructure.com; bookmark both in the event that one site is down.

Computer Requirements

This is a fully online course; therefore, it requires a computer with internet access and the following technologies:

- Web browsers ([Chrome](#) [Links to an external site.](#), [Mozilla Firefox](#) [Links to an external site.](#), or [Safari](#) [Links to an external site.](#))
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) [Links to an external site.](#) (free)
- Webcam, microphone, headset/earbuds, and speaker
- Microsoft Office ([Microsoft 365 is free](#) [Links to an external site.](#) for all currently-enrolled ASU students)
- Reliable broadband internet connection (DSL or cable) to stream videos.

Note: A smartphone, iPad, Chromebook, etc. will not be sufficient for completing your work in ASU Online courses. While you will be able to access course content with mobile devices, you must use a computer for all assignments, quizzes, and virtual labs.

Grading

Grades reflect your performance on assignments and adherence to deadlines. Grades on assignments will be available within 72 hours of the due date in the Gradebook. An A+ final grade is achievable by: not missing any points in assignments 1--4 and by *greatly exceeding expectations* in the final paper. **If you score a perfect 100%, please don't email me requesting a grade change because you are "only 1 point away from an A.+" Congratulations! You got full credit for your work.** Only *exceptional* papers that *greatly exceed expectations* will earn the extra bonus point. Your grade will be determined based on the following grading schema:

Grade	Percentage
A+	101%
A	100-94%
A-	93-91%
B+	90-88%
B	87-84%
B-	83-81%
C+	80-78%
C	77-71%
D	70-61%
E	<60%

As of Spring 2019, I can no longer write letters of recommendation except for the following requirements: *students must have taken a minimum of two classes with me. And at least one of the classes must have earned an A+.* I am continually bombarded with letter requests but due to a heavy teaching and writing schedule it is simply impossible for me to keep up with the demand for letters that fall outside of these two requirements.

Papers

For all papers the guidelines are few and simple:

1. Double-space with 11 or 12 size Times New Roman font. Points are deducted for wrong size & font.
2. Use in-text parenthetical citations for quotes or simply cite the online resource material that you used.
3. Any act of academic dishonesty such as copying another paper or plagiarism results in instant failure of the class. (Unfortunately, this has happened too many times!) ASU's *Turnitin* program, a plagiarism detection service, checks all submitted papers.
4. Since this is a very large online class with generous deadlines, late work is not accepted--except in dire, documented emergencies.
5. Longer is always better than shorter!

Submitting Assignments

All assignments, unless otherwise announced, **MUST** be submitted to the designated area of Canvas. Do not submit an assignment via email.

Assignment due dates follow Arizona Standard time. Click the following link to access the [Time ConverterLinks to an external site.](#) to ensure you account for the difference in Time Zones. Note: Arizona does not observe daylight savings time.

Late or Missed Assignments

Notify the instructor **BEFORE** an assignment is due if an urgent situation arises and you are unable to submit the assignment on time.

Follow the appropriate University policies to request an [accommodation for religious practicesLinks to an external site.](#) or to accommodate a missed assignment [due to University-sanctioned activitiesLinks to an external site.](#)

Help

I cannot assist you with technical help. For technical support, use the Help icon in the black global navigation menu in your Canvas course or call the ASU Help Desk at [+1-\(855\) 278-5080](#). Representatives are available to assist you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Student Success

To be successful:

- check the course daily.
- read announcements.
- read and respond to course email messages as needed.
- complete assignments by the due dates specified.
- communicate regularly with your instructor and peers.
- create a study and/or assignment schedule to stay on track.
- access [ASU Online Student ResourcesLinks to an external site.](#)

Communicating With the Instructor

Email questions to your instructor. Email me directly--not through Canvas--at cbarfoot@asu.edu

Community Forum

This course uses a discussion topic called "Community Forum" for general questions and comments about the course. Prior to posting a question or comment, check the syllabus, announcements, and existing posts to ensure

it's not redundant. You are encouraged to respond to the questions of your classmates.

Chat

The Chat tool in Canvas allows students and teachers to interact in real time. Use Chat only for informal course-related conversations unless your instructor informs you otherwise. Chat is not ideal for questions about assignments; instructors are not required to monitor it and conversations may be buried or lost.

Email

ASU email is an [official means of communication](#)[Links to an external site.](#) among students, faculty, and staff. Students are expected to read and act upon email in a timely fashion. Students bear the responsibility of missed messages and should check their ASU-assigned email regularly.

All instructor correspondence will be sent to your ASU email account.

ASU Online Course Policies

View the [ASU Online Course Policies](#) [Links to an external site.](#)

Syllabus Disclaimer

The syllabus is a statement of intent and serves as an implicit agreement between the instructor and the student. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. Remember to check your ASU email and the course site often.

Title IX

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the bases of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/>

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services,

<https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>, is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

Accessibility Statement

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, professional disability specialists and support staff at the Disability Resource Center (DRC) facilitate a comprehensive range of academic support services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

[Qualified students with disabilities may be eligible to receive academic support services and accommodations \(Links to an external site.\)](#). Eligibility is based on qualifying disability documentation and assessment of individual need. Students who believe they have a current and essential need for disability accommodations are [responsible for requesting accommodations and providing qualifying documentation \(Links to an external site.\)](#) to the DRC. Every effort is made to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

Qualified students who wish to request an accommodation for a disability should contact their campus DRC.

Tempe Campus

<http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/> [\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

480-965-1234 (Voice)

480-965-9000 (TTY)

West Campus

<http://www.west.asu.edu/drc/> [\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

University Center Building (UCB),
Room 130

602-543-8145 (Voice)

Polytechnic Campus

<http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/> [\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

480-727-1165 (Voice)

480-727-1009 (TTY)

Downtown Phoenix Campus and ASU Online

<http://campus.asu.edu/downtown/DR>
[C \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

University Center Building, Suite 160

602-496-4321 (Voice)

602-496-0378 (TTY)

Module 1: Writing Assignment:

A 3-page paper on the major thesis of the book. Who are the *specific* 'winners' and *specific* 'losers' and why? (Found in the first 100 pages) How is this book helpful in our understanding of American Religious Traditions? Also include at least one large paragraph of a summary of the Video Lecture.

It is very important that you purchase and use the text for the first paper. It is essential to understanding the entire course. **You do not have to read the book word for word.** That is difficult in any academic setting. **Read for the thesis and examples and read so that you can write your paper on what the specific assignment calls for.** I, also, need to see page numbers from the text in your paper. Example: (p.12) I do not need author names, year of publication and title--just the page #. Short, pithy quotes from the text creatively show page numbers. All assignments are most specific and clear. Your papers also need to be specific and clear. You cannot pass the course without completing this assignment on time. You have a most generous deadline.

POINTS: 20

DUE:

Module 2: Writing Assignment

EXAMPLES--SELECT ONE

1. **Church of God in Christ**
2. **International Church of the Foursquare Gospel**
3. **Metropolitan Community Churches**

WRITE: Select **one** of the above examples. Do a quick on-line search looking for a website on the church/organization--NOT Wiki! Write a 3-page paper on the movements founder, polity (how it is governed) theology (beliefs) and whether it is a 'winner' or 'loser'--growing or dying. Also include at least one paragraph of a summary of the Video Lecture. **Please use the following outline for your papers:**

- A. Founder
- B. Polity
- C. Theology
- D. Winner/Loser
- E. Video Lecture

POINTS: 20

DUE:

Module 3: Writing Assignment

EXAMPLES--SELECT ONE:

1. Disciples of Christ (The Christian Church) (If you select the Disciples, please view the Video Discussion, below, and reference it in your paper by summarizing it in a large paragraph.)

2. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS).

3. Seventh-day Adventist Church (If you select the Adventists, please view the Video Discussion, below, and reference it in your paper by summarizing it in a large paragraph.)

WRITE: Select **one** of the above examples. Do a quick on-line search looking for a website on the church/organization. Write a 3-page paper on the movements founder, polity (how it is governed) theology (beliefs) and whether it is a 'winner' or 'loser'--growing or dying. Also include at least one paragraph of a summary of the Video Lecture. **Please use the following outline for your papers:**

A. Founder

B. Polity

C. Theology

D. Winner/Loser

E. Video Lecture

POINTS: 20

DUE:

Module 4: Writing Assignment

WRITE: Option A, Pluralism: Write a 3 page paper on the following:

1. According to Alan Race, what are the three major positions on pluralism?
2. How did Schleiermacher view religion and what contribution did he make in understanding pluralism?
3. And is Pluralism possible today in a Divided America?

Option B, Liberalism: Do a quick on-line search looking for a website on the United Church of Christ (UCC). Write a 3-page paper on the movements

founder(s), polity (how it is governed) theology (beliefs) and whether it is a 'winner' or 'loser'--growing or dying. Also include at least one paragraph of a summary of the Video Discussion.

POINTS: 20

DUE:

Module 5: Writing Assignment

WRITE: A 4–5-page paper on an example of a 'winning'--growing religious group (any subject covered in the course) and a 'losing' or declining group and the reasons for both. Also, what is the major reason (your educated opinion) for the differences between the 2007 and 2014 religious' landscapes? All the charts and statistical data under Module 5 are very good resources. **(Option A, 4-5 pages)**

Also, you may choose to use the 5th--7th Announcements (in the Announcement section of Blackboard. There are three timely articles: Franklin Graham and the religious right in CA, A far left United Church of Christ congregation in Oakland, CA and an article on consensus building in the age of Trump. What is the future of American Christianity with either the far left or far right? Is a consensus possible in American religion or are Americans too polarized and divided over issues of sexuality, gender and race? **(Option B, 4-5 pages)**

(Option C, 4-5 pages) Analyze the decline of the Liberal/Progressive United Church of Christ.

[the united church of christ: a statistical profile - UCC Files](#)

(Option D, 4-5 pages) You, can also write on all of the above. (A--C)

(Option E, 4-5 pages) You can attempt to see what the predominate religion is found among the members of Congress. (Pew PDF--the 8th Announcement in Announcement section of Blackboard)

(Option F, 4-5 pages) Compare and contrast the following two local church websites: fcc-houston.org and www.2911church.com/ In your analysis cover the following: 1. Based on browsing their websites, which church would you attend and why? 2. Does the church you chose belong to a denomination? Is it a winning or losing denomination? 3. Which minister is

more appealing and or inviting? 4. Which church more closely represents pop culture? 5. What are the major differences between these two churches?

POINTS: 20 (21)

DUE: