

Course Syllabus

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REL 321: Religion in America

Course and Faculty Information

Course Description:

In this course, we'll trace the history of religion in the United States from the Early Republic to the present day. We'll focus on key case studies and turning points during this two-and-a-half century span, highlighting the ways religion has intersected with politics, gender, race, and social movements. Engaging both the work of scholars and primary source documents, we will develop a critical understanding of the role religions and religious people have played in making the United States what it is today. Topics include: Christian pluralism in the Early Republic, Native American religions, the birth of Mormonism, Christianity and the slave experience, religion and social justice, and the so-called "culture wars" of the late 20th century.

Credits: 3

Prerequisites: ENG 102, 105, or 108 with C or better; minimum 24 hours OR Visiting University Student

Instructor: Matthew Casey, PhD

Contact Info: mpcasey1@asu.edu (<mailto:mpcasey1@asu.edu>)

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Learning Objectives

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify key turning points in the history of religion in the United States.
2. Interpret the religious beliefs and practices of different faith communities.
3. Analyze the interactions between faith, society, and politics.
4. Apply a religious studies approach to the history of the United States.

Course Materials

All course readings and other materials are provided in digital format, through the Canvas course. There are no textbooks or other materials to purchase for this course.

Assignments

Perusall (x4) - 75 pts each = 300 pts total

- Close reading of primary and secondary sources. Students make comments directly on the documents and can interact with the comments and questions posed by the peers in their Perusall group.

Canvas Discussion (x4) = 25 pts each = 100 pts total

- Peer discussions rooted in the critical analysis of course materials (readings/videos, etc)

Exams (x3) - 200 pts each = 600 pts total

- 15 Multiple Choice/Fill-in the Blank Questions (10 pts each)
- 1 Essay Question (50 pts)

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/TA and peers
- create a study and/or assignment schedule to stay on track
- access **ASU Online Student Resources** (<https://goto.asuonline.asu.edu/success/online-resources.html>)

Grading

Your grade will be determined based on the following grading schema:

| Grade | Percentage | Points Range |
|-------|------------|--------------|
| A+ | 100% - 97% | 970 - 1000 |
| A | <97-94% | 940 - 969 |
| A- | <94-90% | 900 - 939 |
| B+ | <90-87% | 870 - 899 |
| B | <87-84% | 840 - 869 |
| B- | <84-80% | 800 - 839 |
| C+ | <80-76% | 760 - 799 |
| C | <76-70% | 700 - 759 |
| D | <70-60% | 600 - 699 |
| E | <60% | 0-599 |

Weekly Schedule

Introductory Module: Welcome and Second Great Awakening

Materials:

- Watch
 - Lecture: Introduction
 - Lecture: The Second Great Awakening
 - Documentary PBS Frontline, *Got in America: Part Two, A New Nation* (Documentary, 56 minues)
- Read
 - Selections from: Dorsey, Jennifer Hull, McBride, Spencer W, editors. "Introduction." New York's Burned-over District. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2023.

Assignments:

- Introductory Discussion
- Perusall 1

Module 1: Christianity Enslaved, The Denmark Vesey Affair

Materials:

- Watch
 - Lecture: Christianity Enslaved: The Denmark Vesey Affair
- Read
 - Selections from: Egerton, D. R., & Paquette, R. L., eds. The Denmark Vesey Affair : A Documentary History. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2017.

Assignments:

- Discussion Board
- Exam 1

Module 2

Materials:

- Watch
 - Lecture: The Ghost Dance
- Read
 - Warren, Louis. "Wage Word in the Sacred Circle: The Ghost Dance as Modern Religion." Western Historical Quarterly 46 (2015): 141-168.

Assignments:

- Perusall 2

Module 3: The Azusa Street Revival

Materials:

- Watch
 - Lecture: The Azusa Street Revival
- Read
 - Gastón Espinosa, "Tongues and Healing at the Azusa Street Revival," an introduction to and presentation of the primary source document "Fire on the Street," by Adolfo C. Valdez.

Assignments:

- Perusall 3

Module 4: From Immigrant Religions to American Religious

Materials:

- Watch
 - Lecture: From Immigrant Religions to American Religions
- Read
 - The Pittsburgh Platform of American Reformed Judaism, 1885
 - Pope Leo XIII, Concerning New Opinions, Virtue, Nature and Grace, With Regard to Americanism, 1899

Assignments:

- Discussion Board
- Exam 2

Module 5: The Religious Antiwar Movement

Materials:

- Watch
 - Lecture: The Religious Antiwar Movement
- Read
 - Martin Luther King Jr. "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence" (April 4, 1967)
 - "Strange Logic on Civil Rights," San Antonio Press (April 4, 1967)
 - "Dr. King's Error" New York Times (April 7, 1967)

Assignments:

- Perusal 4

Module 6: The Age of Pluralism

Materials:


- Watch
 - Documentary: Freemont, USA. *The Pluralism Project*. Harvard University (2009)., 57 minutes
- Read
 - Ryan P. Burge, "Chapter 1: What Does the American Religious Landscape Look Like?" *The Nones: Where They Came From, Who They Are, and Where They Are Going*, Second Edition. Augsburg Fortress Press, 2023.

Assignments:

- Discussion Board
- Exam 3

Submitting Assignments

All assignments, unless otherwise announced, **MUST** be submitted to the designated area of Canvas/Perusall. Please do not submit assignments via email unless told to do so by the Instructor or TA.

Assignment due dates follow Arizona Standard time. Click the following link to access the **Time Converter**  (<http://www.thetimezoneconverter.com/>) to ensure you account for the difference in Time Zones. Note: Arizona does not observe daylight savings time.

Grading Procedure

Grades reflect your performance on assignments and adherence to deadlines. Grades on assignments will be available within five days of the due date in the Gradebook.

Late or Missed Assignments

Be sure to notify the instructor before the due date if you are unable to submit the assignment on time.

Scores for unexcused late assignments will be deducted 15% for each day late.

Follow the appropriate University policies to request an **accommodation for religious practices** (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd304-04.html>) or to accommodate a missed assignment **due to University-sanctioned activities** (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd304-02.html>).

Communicating With the Instructor

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.

Email questions of a personal nature to your instructor. You can expect a response within 48 hours.

Email

ASU email is an **official means of communication** (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm107-03.html>) 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.

Communication Expectations (Netiquette)

Learning takes place best when a safe environment is established. Students enrolled in this course have a responsibility to support an environment that nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engaged, honest discussions. Doing so will effectively contribute to our own and others intellectual and personal

growth and development. We welcome disagreements in the tolerant spirit of academic discourse, but please remember to be respectful of others' viewpoints, whether you agree with them or not. The following are some guidelines to consider when engaging in online discussion and discourse:

- **Be kind and polite.** Be mindful of your tone and do not make fun of another person for any reason.
- **Be respectful.** Being part of an academic community means being exposed to diverse perspectives and viewpoints. Be respectful in all situations and in your critiques. If you wouldn't say it face to face, don't say it online
- **Be wary of sarcasm.** In person, sarcastic comments can be funny and break up a tense situation. Online, it's hard to tell the difference between when someone is being sarcastic and when someone is genuinely being rude.
- **Avoid stereotyping.** Just because someone holds view X, and some people you know of who hold view X also hold view Y, doesn't mean that holding view X means holding view Y.
- **Use proper grammar and spelling.** Typos and basic spelling mistakes will happen, but if it's detracting from your message, it can be difficult to figure out what you mean. Also, you should avoid using all caps as this can imply shouting in the online environment.

ASU Online Course Policies

View the [ASU Online Course Policies \(https://asuonline-dev.asu.edu/qm-template/CanvasQM/qm-policies.html\)](https://asuonline-dev.asu.edu/qm-template/CanvasQM/qm-policies.html)

Inclusive Environment

Throughout this course, you may be presented with ideas or perspectives that you are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with. We encourage you to critically examine these ideas and take risks by offering your own experiences and perspectives through civil discourse. In return, I will work to foster and create an environment where you feel supported in taking these risks.

When possible, human biases were addressed in the design of this course. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion, please reach out to me with suggestions on how I can further improve this course for you or for others.

Inclusion and Accessibility Statements

View the [Accessibility section \(https://canvas.asu.edu/courses/183754/pages/asu-online-student-accessibility-information\)](https://canvas.asu.edu/courses/183754/pages/asu-online-student-accessibility-information) to review accessibility statements for common tools and resources used in ASU Online courses.

If any other tools are used in this course, links to the accessibility statements will be listed below this sentence.

View the Statement of Inclusion policy listed in the [ASU Course Policies \(https://asuonline-dev.asu.edu/qm-template/CanvasQM/qm-policies.html\)](https://asuonline-dev.asu.edu/qm-template/CanvasQM/qm-policies.html) page.

Course Access

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