

RS 219 RELIGION IN AMERICA Fall 2014 Renison University College
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00-2:20 p.m., Renison classroom 0201
Professor Jeff Wilson: jeff.wilson@uwaterloo.ca, 884-4404 x28625
Prof. Wilson's Office hour: Tuesdays 2:45pm and by appointment in Renison 1412
A helpful link to consult before sending email to your professors:
<http://web.wellesley.edu/SocialComputing/Netiquette/netiquetteprofessor.html>

Description:

Compared to other industrialized Western nations, the United States of America has a strikingly high level of both religious adherence and religious diversity. In this course we will explore the development of religion in America, from pre-colonial times to the modern day. While it is impossible to discuss all of the thousands of different religious groups in American history, we will survey many of the largest and most important, including the Puritans, Quakers, Catholics, Episcopalians, Baptists, Unitarians, Jews, Mormons, Buddhists, and Muslims. We will pay particular attention to the interaction of religious beliefs and wider American society, such as Christianity's contributions to the major wars of America, the role of religion in the struggle for civil rights, the tension between the secular government enshrined in the Constitution and the highly religious nature of American culture, and the way forces such as immigration and discrimination shape religious phenomena.

Objectives:

- 1) Students will become familiar with the religious history of the United States.
- 2) Students will gain a sense of the role religion has played in such issues as immigration, war, the struggle for civil rights, and tensions between secular and religious currents in American society.

Required texts:

There is one required textbook for this course: *American Religions: A Documentary History*, by R. Marie Griffith. Additional readings may also be distributed in class or posted to the course Learn site. Students are expected to bring the textbook to class so it may be discussed.

Marking:

Course marking for RS 219 consists of two in-class tests (25% each), ten short primary source papers (30%), attendance (10%) and participation (10%), i.e. involvement in class discussions. Students are highly encouraged to come to the professor's office hour with questions or for further discussion of the materials (a helpful tip: students who utilize professors' office hours intelligently—no matter the student's level of aptitude—almost always perform better on tests and papers than they would have otherwise).

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend every scheduled class, and attendance will be taken (this includes the in-class exam days). Failure to do so without an acceptable excuse will result in a lower grade. There are two types of excusable absences. Anticipated excused absences include the following: 1) The student is away from campus representing an

official university function, (e.g., participating in a professional meeting, as part of a judging team, or athletic team). A note from a University faculty or staff member (such as your coach) must be provided PRIOR to the absence. 2) Required court attendance. A note certified by the Clerk of Court must be provided. 3) Religious observances. The student must notify the professor and obtain permission PRIOR to the holiday. 4) Required military duty. A note from the student's commanding officer is required.

Emergency absences include the following: 1) Serious illness or injury. A note must be provided by an attending physician. 2) Death or serious illnesses in the family when documented appropriately. An attempt to verify deaths or serious illness may be made by the instructor. In all cases the reason for the unexpected absence must be reported to the instructor within one week of the student's return to class.

Written assignments:

There is no research paper required for this course. Instead, students will write ten response papers to the required readings that examine aspects of those readings in depth. Papers will be 650-1000 words in length, double-spaced, with 12-point type, black ink, and one-inch margins. They are due at 1pm on the day that each is assigned. Papers are to be uploaded to the course Desire2Learn site, NOT emailed to the instructor. Late papers will not be accepted.

You may only hand in one paper per class, but you may write about more than one reading in each paper (for instance, if two qualifying readings are assigned for one day, you may discuss both of them in the same paper). However, papers that discuss more than one reading are expected to say something substantial about each reading, and will typically be longer than papers on only a single reading. You may also refer to any films, lectures, or guest speakers if relevant, but this is in addition to discussing the readings, which are to be the central concern of each paper.

Recipe for successful papers: Be focused. It is not possible to address all of the ideas in all of the assigned readings in an approximately 2-3 page essay. Address one specific quote or idea to focus your essay. Also, avoid summarizing or reiterating an article—**this is not a book report**. Analyze a specific point in the text. Perhaps you'll want to connect a quote to larger themes of the course. **Make an argument and supply evidence for your claim**. Successful papers indicate engaged thinking. **Do not simply state your opinion about the correctness of an idea or practice or compare it to your own ideas/experiences**—this is a history and culture course, not a theology one. We are not here to judge the merits of American religions but to understand them as fully as possible. If you consult outside sources, cite them properly. If you are uncertain about a paper, you can always show it to me before handing it in and we can discuss whether it needs to be changed or improved to qualify as an acceptable paper.

I urge you to make use of the following link: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/resources>. It has many resources to assist you as you work to improve your paper-writing craft. Students are especially pointed to the sections on "College Writing," "Passive Voice,"

“Conclusions,” and “Argument.” After your paper has been marked, it will be helpful to again consult the resources at this link to learn more about the mistakes that were flagged.

Etiquette:

If you register for the course after lectures have already begun, you are responsible for finding out what you missed. There is no make-up work allowed in this course.

If the textbook sells out, you should borrow copies off your classmates while you wait for the bookstore to restock. You can also ask the instructor about borrowing materials or getting photocopies in the meantime.

Laptops and all other electronic devices are to be turned off and stowed away during class time. You may use paper to take notes if you wish.

Students may eat and drink during class so long as it does not distract anyone else in the classroom. Therefore you should avoid smelly foods or noisy packaging.

Class begins at 1pm and ends at 2:20pm. Students who are not seated by 1pm will be marked late; students who leave before 2:20pm will be docked in their attendance mark. If you are unable to be in class by 1pm or unable to stay until 2:20pm, you should register for a different course instead.

Late assignments are not accepted.

Please read this syllabus very carefully. Nearly any question you may have about student responsibilities is covered here. While this course outline is not a contract, it is the guideline that we will use to manage our course, and changes will only be made in necessary circumstances and in consultation with the class.

Turnitin.com:

Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. Students may decline to use Turnitin by completing an additional assignment. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about the arrangements for the use of Turnitin in this course.

Academic Integrity:

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Academic Integrity website (Arts):

http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (UW):

<http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>

SCHEDULE

Tuesday, September 9: Introduction

Reading: xx-xxiv

Thursday, September 11: Themes in the Study of Religion in America

Reading: none

Tuesday, September 16: Native Americans

Reading: 341-352

Thursday, September 18: Catholic Missions

Reading: 2-3

Tuesday, September 23: Puritans and Other English Colonists

Reading: 4-19

PAPER DUE ON A SELECTION FROM PAGES 341-352, 2-3

Thursday, September 25: Quakers, Germans, and Other Agents of Diversity:

Reading: 37-63, 73-90

Tuesday, September 30: The First Great Awakening and Its Opponents

Reading: 91-109

PAPER DUE ON A SELECTION FROM PAGES 4-19, 37-63, 73-90

Thursday, October 2: Revolution and Religion

Reading: 150-156

Tuesday, October 7: Slave Religion

Reading: 213-220

PAPER DUE ON A SELECTION FROM PAGES 91-109, 150-156

Thursday, October 9: The Burnt Over District and the Great Awakening

189-196

Tuesday, October 14: Mormonism

Reading: 164-172, 278-281, 377-382

PAPER DUE ON A SELECTION FROM PAGES 213-220, 189-196

Thursday, October 16: Midterm Test

Reading: none

Tuesday, October 21: Abolition and Civil War

Reading: 220-244

PAPER DUE ON A SELECTION FROM PAGES 164-172, 278-281, 377-382

Thursday, October 23: Liberal and Fundamentalists

Reading: 284-301, 309-321, 418-423

Tuesday, October 28: Jesus camp

Reading: none

PAPER DUE ON A SELECTION FROM PAGES 220-244, 284-301, 309-321, 418-423

Thursday, October 30: New Immigrants and Their Experiences

Reading: 352-377, 382-389

Tuesday, November 4: The American Jewish Experience

Reading: 148-150, 321-323, 434-447

PAPER DUE ON A SELECTION FROM PAGES 352-377, 382-389

Thursday, November 6: Civil Rights

Reading: 502-514

Tuesday, November 11: Counterculture and New Religious Movements

Reading: none

PAPER DUE ON A SELECTION FROM PAGES 148-150, 321-323, 434-447, 505-514

Thursday, November 13: Buddhism in America

Reading: 487-492, 571-584

Tuesday, November 18: American Civil Religion

Reading: Star-Spangled Banner, Flag Code (online)

PAPER DUE ON A SELECTION FROM PAGES 487-492, 571-584

Thursday, November 20: Islam: Changes and Challenges

Reading: 514-517, 602-606

Tuesday, November 25: New Muslim Cool

Reading: none

PAPER DUE ON A SELECTION FROM “STAR-SPANGELED BANNER,” “FLAG CODE,” OR PAGES 514-517, 602-606

Thursday, November 27: Final Test

Reading: none

Discipline:

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity [check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/] to avoid committing academic offences and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration, should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or Renison’s Administrative Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71, Student Discipline. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to this policy www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm . For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm .

Grievance:

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm

Appeals:

A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if grounds for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm .

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

Note for students with disabilities: The AccessAbility Services (AS) Office, located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term.

A respectful living and learning environment for all.

1. It is expected that everyone living, learning or working on the premises of Renison University College will contribute to an environment of tolerance and respect by treating others with sensitivity and civility.
2. Harassment is unwanted attention in the form of jokes, insults, gestures, gossip, or other behaviours that are meant to intimidate. Some instances of harassment are against the law in addition to Renison University College policy.
3. Discrimination is treating people differently because of their race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, colour, age, creed, marital status, or other personal characteristics. The Ontario Human Rights Code considers actions and behaviours rather than intentions.

4. If you experience or witness either harassment or discrimination, you may contact the Renison University College Harassment and Discrimination Officer at mmalton@uwaterloo.ca (519-884-4404, ext. 28628).