

University of Waterloo

Term and year of offering: Fall 2024

Course number and title: RS 219 – Religion in America

Lecture times, building and room number: Tuesdays/Thursdays 10:00-11:30 am HH139

Instructor's name, office location, office hours, contact: Dr. Carmen Celestini,
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I will be available to meet with students by appointment, please ask after class or via email.

Course description:

What is “American Religion” in a nation that claims to uphold the values of religious freedom and separation of church and state, while simultaneously religions have helped to shape the laws, the politics, social movements, and the diversity of the nation. Religion in America is a vast subject, and one that cannot be studied in its entirety in this survey course. We will approach the study of some of the largest and most important religions, religious movements, and religious leaders in the history of the nation, while positioning these topics in both contemporary and historical events. Here we will see how religion has shaped America, its diverse population, and its politics and continues to do so, as religious beliefs impact the wider society. This course highlights American religious diversity and the complexities of American religious life. Focus will be paid to the role of religion in the major wars of America, in the Civil Rights Movement, slavery, and how the religious nature of America has impacted issues such as immigration and discrimination. We will also examine the role of the sacralization of America in popular culture both historically and in contemporary manifestations in Christian nationalism, moral panics, identity creation, and cultural imperialism

Course objectives:

- To provide students with an introductory survey of Religion in America, and the role of faith in American society, events, social movements, politics, and the greater world.

At the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Map various themes and trends in American religious history
- Provide a survey of major communities, thinkers, leaders, and themes in American religious history to the present

- Understand how religion, colonialism, and identity have intersected in American history, contemporary times, and culture
- Identify the complex interactions between religious belief and practice and the historical, political, cultural, economic, and intellectual context in which religious people inhabit and live their religion.
- Critically explore the role of religion in America including religious pluralism, freedom of religion, secularization, civil rights, politics, and international impact
- Writing, presentation, and research skills

Required texts (no purchase necessary): There is no text book for this course, but chapters are assigned from books available digitally through the UW library including:

Porterfield A. *American Religious History*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.; 2008.

Butler J. *Religion in Colonial America*. Oxford University Press; 2000.

Stein SJ. *The Cambridge History of Religions in America Volume I Pre-Columbian Times to 1790*. Cambridge University Press; 2012.

Djupe PA, Lewis AR, Sokhey AE. *The Full Armor of God : The Mobilization of Christian Nationalism in American Politics*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press; 2023.
doi:10.1017/9781009234078

Jenkins P. *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religions in American History*. Oxford University Press; 2000.

The Blackwell Companion to Nineteenth-Century Theology. Wiley-Blackwell; 2010:339-357.
doi:10.1002/9781444319972.ch16

The Cambridge Companion to Jewish American Literature. Cambridge University Press; 2003:31-49. doi:10.1017/CCOL0521792932.003

Yeager JM, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Early Evangelicalism*. Oxford University Press; 2022.

Davies DJ (Douglas J. *An Introduction to Mormonism*. Cambridge University Press; 2003.

Botting HDH, Botting GNA. *The Orwellian World of Jehovah's Witnesses*. University of Toronto Press; 1984. doi:10.3138/9781442664616

May IB. *God-Optional Religion in Twentieth-Century America: Quakers, Unitarians, Reconstructionist Jews, and the Crisis Over Theism*. Oxford University Press
doi:10.1093/oso/9780197624234.001.0001

Glaude ES. *African American Religion : A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press; 2014.

All other assigned readings will be available on LEARN in the weekly modules.

Course Slides:

The slides for each week's topic will be posted to LEARN in PowerPoint format.

Important Course Matters: Use of course materials

Important information

- The materials that make up this course are only for the use of students taking the class.
- They are not to be distributed to others, placed in a repository or sold.
- Please see the revised policy of the university on this and its application in
Policy 71 and 73
- Policy 71 is in regard to **Student Discipline**
- And Policy 73 deals with **Intellectual Property Rights**.

All the materials in the course are considered to be the instructor's intellectual property. To sell or distribute it in any way without the express permission of the instructor is a violation of Policy 71.

In Class and on Discussion Boards

The topic of religion can be difficult. People vary in sensibility, and some may feel uncomfortable with certain topics. Course materials have been carefully chosen, and the instructor will mention any material she feels might be triggering.

Student views on many of the topics we will discuss will be diverse. Differences of opinion may be expected to vary as it does among scholars. Discussion will be focused on understanding the various materials and the issues they raise. Students are expected to treat each other with respect.

Course Policies:

- **In the Classroom** – This is an introductory undergraduate seminar, meaning the course is not dependent on lectures only, but on your participation. For this class to succeed, all students must participate fully and collaborate with each other enthusiastically and respectfully. Participation and attendance are mandatory in this course. You must attend all classes to earn full marks for attendance. If you are ill or have a family or personal emergency you must provide documentation. Each unexplained absence will result in points being deducted from the attendance grade. To gain full marks for participation you will need to participate fully in class activities.
- **Attendance** – Your presence in class is mandatory. You should be aware that the best way to do well in this course is to attend every class, prepared, and attentive. Inevitably, at the

end of the semester, students who missed classes do poorly, while students who show up consistently do well. We cover a lot of material, we do a lot of exercises, in class and for that reason it is critical that you attend in order to do well. Attendance also means refraining from playing with your cell phone, reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, using other electronic devices or doing other coursework while in the classroom. If I need to speak with you about using devices for non-course-related activities if may affect your participation grade.

- Please bring laptops or pen and paper to take notes
- Use MLA format for written work: Times New Roman 12 pt, 1 inch margins, number your pages.
- Assignments are to be place in the drop boxes on LEARN. PLEASE, make certain your assignment is done and submitted before the box closes. ***No assignments will be accepted after the drop box closes.*** Students should ensure they have sufficient time as clocks vary in time and the drop box cut off time may not correspond to your clock. Further, students should be aware that all submissions to any drop box are time-stamped. Thus, depositing it in the incorrect drop box by ‘mistake’ will not help if the time-stamp is after the time due.
- **There are no ‘extra assignments’** that may be done as a substitute for a poor performance on an assignment or assignments not completed.

Students who require an extension must speak to the instructor **before** an assignment is due and provide a rationale for the extension. The instructor reserves the right to grant or not grant the extension. Should a student miss an assignment, a medical note or verifiable information must be provided.

Academic Integrity: I expect that the work you complete for this course will be your own. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any written assignment that borrows from other sources without giving proper credit or that is plagiarized in whole or in part from another source (including other student’s work) is grounds for an “F” on the assignment.

If due to Covid measures classes are not able to be held in person, I will provide online lectures synchronously. This means a class will be held virtually during the times the course was happening on campus. As there are no tests in the course, all assignments can be uploaded for grading.


Topics to be covered in lectures:

Date	Lecture Topic	Readings
September 5 Week 1	Overview of the course and class discussions	1. No Readings Assigned

September 10 Week 2	Introduction to the study of religion in America	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction in: Porterfield A, Porterfield A. <i>American Religious History</i>. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.; 2008. 2. Brekus CA. Contested Words: History, America, Religion. <i>The William and Mary quarterly</i>. 2018;75(1):3-36. doi:10.5309/willmaryquar.75.1.0003
September 12 Week 2	American Pluralism and Civil Religion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Patell CRK. Abram C. Van Engen, City on a Hill: A History of American Exceptionalism. <i>American literary history</i>. 2022;34(3):1099-1101. doi:10.1093/alh/ajac083
September 17 Week 3	Colonization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Butler J. <i>Religion in Colonial America</i>. Oxford University Press; 2000. Introduction and chapter 1 2. Stein SJ. <i>The Cambridge History of Religions in America Volume I Pre-Columbian Times to 1790</i>. Cambridge University Press; 2012. Chapter 1
September 19 Week 3	Puritans, Quakers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ryrie A. Living the Puritan Life. <i>Revue française de civilisation britannique</i>. 2023;XXVII(3). doi:10.4000/rfcb.10040 2. May IB. <i>God-Optional Religion in Twentieth-Century America: Quakers, Unitarians, Reconstructionist Jews, and the Crisis Over Theism</i>. Oxford University Press doi:10.1093/oso/9780197624234.001.0001 Chapter 2
September 24 Week 4	African American Religion, Slavery, Dissenters	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yeager JM, ed. <i>The Oxford Handbook of Early Evangelicalism</i>. Oxford University Press; 2022. Chapter 24

		<p>2. Glaude ES. <i>African American Religion : A Very Short Introduction</i>. Oxford University Press; 2014. Chapter 1 and 2</p>
September 26 Week 4	Antebellum: Revivals, Slave Religion, Spiritualism	<p>1. Yeager JM, ed. <i>The Oxford Handbook of Early Evangelicalism</i>. Oxford University Press; 2022. Chapter 20</p> <p>2. Wells-Oghoghomeh A. Engendering Slave Religion : Methodology Beyond the Invisible Institution. <i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>. 2022;90(3):579-598. doi:10.1093/jaarel/lfac049</p>
October 1 Week 5	Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses	<p>1. Davies DJ (Douglas J. <i>An Introduction to Mormonism</i>. Cambridge University Press; 2003. Chapter 1</p> <p>2. 1.</p> <p>3. Wah CR. An Introduction to Research and Analysis of Jehovah's Witnesses: A View from the Watchtower. <i>Review of religious research</i>. 2001;43(2):161-174. doi:10.2307/3512060</p>
October 3 Week 5	Test 1	
October 8 Week 6	Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism	<p>1. Yeager JM, ed. <i>The Oxford Handbook of Early Evangelicalism</i>. Oxford University Press; 2022. Chapter 19</p> <p>2. De Stradis S. Rome, Catholicism, and the nation-state in America: Re-centering a debate? <i>Religion compass</i>. 2023;17(7). doi:10.1111/rec3.12459</p>

October 10 Week 6	Buddhism in America	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mann GS, Numrich PD, Williams RB. <i>Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs in America : A Short History</i>. Oxford University Press; 2008. doi:10.1093/oso/9780195333114.001.0001 - Chapters 1 and 3
Oct. 12-20 READING WEEK	Have an Amazing Week!	
October 22 Week 7	Judaism in America	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Heschel S. Imagining Judaism in America. In: <i>The Cambridge Companion to Jewish American Literature</i>. Cambridge University Press; 2003:31-49. doi:10.1017/CCOL0521792932.003
October 24 Week 7	Islam in America	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. https://www.commondreams.org/views/2014/04/09/peoples-history-muslims-united-states 2. Smith JI, Haddad YY, eds. <i>The Oxford Handbook of American Islam</i>. Oxford University Press; 2014. Chapter 1
October 29 Week 8 [switch the week 8 topics. The "Right" is in response, partly, to liberal Christianity]	Liberal Christianity and the Social Gospel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Billy Graham's The Offence of the Cross sermon 2. THERE'S A WHOLE SLEW OF STUFF HERE.

<p>October 31 Week 8</p>	<p>Cold War, Evangelical Religion and the Rise of the Right</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jenson RW. America: Transcendentalism to Social Gospel. In: <i>The Blackwell Companion to Nineteenth-Century Theology</i>. Wiley-Blackwell; 2010:339-357. doi:10.1002/9781444319972.ch16 2. Maiden, John, 'Introduction', <i>Age of the Spirit: Charismatic Renewal, the Anglo-World, and Global Christianity, 1945-1980</i> (Oxford, 2023; online edn, Oxford Academic, 17 Nov. 2022), https://doi-org.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/10.1093/oso/9780198847496.003.0001 3.
<p>November 5 Week 9</p>	<p>Malcom X, Martin Luther King and Civil Rights Movement</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poljarevic E. The Political Theology of Malcolm X: Between Human Dignity and Returning the Gaze. <i>Svensk teologisk kvartalskrift</i>. 2020;96(1):11- .[there are better readings than this one. I'd suggest finding one by James Cone on MLK and Malcolm.] 2. Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from a Birmingham Jail (1963)
<p>November 7 Week 9</p>	<p>The Branch Davidians, Ruby Ridge, The People's Temple</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jenkins P. <i>Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religions in American History</i>. Oxford University Press; 2000. Chapter 1 
<p>November 12 Week 10</p>	<p>Christian Nationalism, Extremism and New Apostolic Reformation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Djupe PA, Lewis AR, Sokhey AE. The Full Armor of God : The Mobilization of Christian Nationalism in American Politics. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press; 2023. doi:10.1017/9781009234078 – Sections 1.1 and 1.2 2. Berry D. Voting in the Kingdom: Prophecy Voters, the New Apostolic Reformation, and Christian Support for Trump. <i>Nova religio</i>. 2020;23(4):69-93. doi:10.1525/nr.2020.23.4.69

November 14 Week 10	Test 2	
November 19 Week 11	Religion, Politics, in perspective of the Election	<i>Readings to be uploaded after election</i>
November 21 Week 11	Immigration, Digital Religion, Persecution: The Black Robe	1. Celestini, Carmen. "God's Army of Securitization The Southern Border of the United States and Convoys" Preprint (will update)
November 26 Week 12	Spirituality and Capitalism: Oprah, Tony Robbins, Joel Osteen	1. Wrenn MV. Consecrating Capitalism: The United States Prosperity Gospel and Neoliberalism. Journal of economic issues. 2019;53(2):425-432. doi:10.1080/00213624.2019.1594528 2. Keys to Massive Success, Tony Robbins' talk – in class sections (YouTube)
November 28 Week 12	Class Presentations	
December 3 Last Class!	Class Presentations	

Evaluation:

The course will be graded on the following assignments:

Attendance: 5%

Participation: 10%

Two (2) In class tests 15% each

Research Paper Proposal – 10%

Final Paper Presentation – 10%

Final Paper 25% Due Dec 9

Social Media/Discussion: 10%

Bonus Marks: 5 for attending the Presentation on November 8th analyzing the American Presidential Election (details to follow)

Participation:

While this course is lecture based, there will be time provided for discussion, conversation, and group analysis. As an instructor I strive to promote group interpretation, analysis, and debate, through questions. Your participation will be graded on two elements: articulation of your own interpretations and analysis, and responses to the analysis and interpretation of your fellow students.

Discussions and Discussion Participation Assignments

There will be five (5) Social Media/News assignments in total.

Students will post on the discussion boards news articles or social media posts that represent the role of religion in the 2024 American political election. Time will be given in each class for the poster to discuss the posting, why it reflects religion and course topics. The poster will also come to class with two (2) questions to pose to the class to lead class discussion on the topic. Grades will be given for both posting of the material, and for participation in the class discussion.

Tests

The two tests will be in two parts, the first being 20 multiple choice questions on people, ideas, and groups covered in the readings and/or class discussions/lectures. The second will be the choice of one short essay from a list of possible questions. The short essay will assess how the student critically analyzes the material presented in class.

Research Paper Proposal

This proposal has two components. The first is a 200-word written proposal, with a minimum of five (5) key sources. The second is a 10-minute meeting with the instructor to discuss the topic of your research paper.

Research Paper Presentation: Students will present their research paper to the class. The presentation should normally be approximately 15 minutes, with 10 minutes of Q&A. The objective here is to receive feedback from your peers in a manner typical of an academic conference or a thesis presentation. Students may ask the class to review materials (e.g., articles, historical videos) to prepare for the presentation.

Research Paper

This research paper, on a topic developed in conversation with the instructor (see the Proposal requirement above), will focus on a topic related to Religion in America. It should be between 8 to 12 pages in length (no more than 3,500 words).

Academic integrity, grievance, discipline, appeals and note for students with disabilities:

[The following statements MUST be included in all course outlines and/or websites.]

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. [Check [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information.]

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](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. [Check [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information.] 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 the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties, check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances](#) (other than a petition) or [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals](#).

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), 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 [AccessAbility Services](#) at the beginning of each academic term.

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin® in this course.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit the alternate assignment.

Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River.