



AFFILIATED WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Renison University College
Affiliated with the University of Waterloo
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Renison University College Land Acknowledgement

With gratitude, we acknowledge that Renison University College is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Hodinohsyó:ni, and Attawandaran (Neutral) Peoples, which is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River from mouth to source. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place in all corners of our campus through research, learning, teaching, community building and outreach. We are guided by the work of our Reconciliation and Restoring Steering Committee and Anti-Racism and Decolonization SpokesCouncil, as well as the [University of Waterloo's Office of Indigenous Relations](#).

Fall 2023

Course Code: RS/SDS 242

Course Title: Religious Diversity and Social Development

Class Times/Location: M/W 10:00-11:20, REN 2102

Instructor: Douglas E. Cowan

Office: REN 315 (ask me for directions, though see below)

Office Phone: 519-884-4404 (x28607—very rarely checked)

Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday (11:30 am-12:30 pm, sort of).

While I will be on campus during these times, I would prefer to consult with students virtually. Besides being a more Covid-conscious option for everyone, this allows me (a) to be more flexible in terms of your schedule, and (b) to give you more direct attention in terms of particular questions and issues that you may have.

Email: doug.cowan@uwaterloo.ca

(This is always the best way to reach me. Please note that while I will make every effort to respond within a few hours during the week—within reason, of course—I do not read university email on the weekends or on holidays.)

Cross-listed course

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, an SDS/RS cross-list will count in an SDS major's average, even if the course was taken under the Religious Studies rubric.

Course Description

This course explores the interrelationship of religious diversity, multiculturalism, and attitudes toward social issues. Religious traditions and beliefs contribute both positively and negatively to social development. In this course, we will explore not only when we mean when we say 'religion,' but also how we understand concepts of 'diversity' and 'social development' in terms of the most powerful meaning-making force in human history. As we will discover, this often means very different things to different people.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Identify aspects and influences of religious diversity as exemplified through various issues, concerns, and problems of social development, both in Canada and globally.
- B. Describe how various religious groups approach specific issues of social development, civil liberties, and human rights, and how those stances are related to particular religious worldviews.
- C. Critically analyse and explain social development issues in terms of the religious dimensions involved.

Required Text

There is no required textbook that you need to purchase for this class. (You're welcome.)

Class Materials Available on LEARN

Required readings, videos, and other material will be available on or through LEARN as necessary. When a reading or a video is linked in LEARN for viewing outside of class, it is your responsibility to access it. For readings, I definitely recommend that, at the very least, you download them to your device rather than read them online. You will benefit from some materials even more if you print them out. For videos, please ensure you have watched them before the class indicated. Slide decks used to support lectures will be available on LEARN after the class, but it is important to remember that these will not and cannot replace class attendance. (If there is a discrepancy between a slide deck and the syllabus, the syllabus takes precedence.)

Course Requirements and Assessment

<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Date of Evaluation</u>	<u>Weighting</u>
Class Attendance (10) and LEARN Discussion Participation (15)	After weeks 4, 8, 12	25%
Quiz #1	October 4	15%
Quiz #2	November 8	15%
Quiz #3	December 4	20%
Comparative Paper	December 6	25%
Total		100%

I will go over all course requirements in much more detail in class, but generally...

Class Attendance and Discussion Participation (25%)

Discussion participation is crucial to success in a course such as this. It's simply a fact that active engagement leads to more effective learning.

In addition to attendance and in-class participation (see below under "Attendance Policy"), for each week, I will post discussion prompts related to readings, viewings, lectures, or class discussions. For each of these prompts, you are required to contribute at least one substantive initial post, and at least two substantive response posts. The prompts are designed to stimulate your thinking, not simply answered with a sentence or two of "I agree" or "I disagree"-type statements. In all cases, you must articulate why you think what you do. That is, a response that says not much more than "I agree" or "I disagree" is not an acceptable level of participation. The online portion of the course supplements (and is not infrequently based on) in-class discussion, so it should be taken with the same level of seriousness. Always think about how your own contributions and responses work to further the topic of discussion. I evaluate posts and threads for both quality and quantity.

As important as class attendance, it is important to keep up with online discussion participation. If students consistently post either their initial contributions or their responses at the last moment, this will be considered inadequate for participation. If students only post initially, but make no effort to respond to other posts, this too will be considered insufficient. Lastly, students may not 'do all the discussions at the same time'—either ahead of the module or at the end of the semester. Obviously, this defeats the purpose of the assignment. For the online discussions, I will be assigning marks out of 5 for each of the three months of the course, and these will be factored into an overall participation mark out of 25 for this part of the course.

In-class Quizzes (2x15%/1x20%): October 4/November 8/December 4

These will be fairly standard short-answer-plus-short-essay quizzes, the kind you are used to writing in any number of other courses. There are a couple of caveats for this: (a) you must be in place and ready to write before the class begins. Late admissions will not be allowed and there will be no make-up test. (See "Attendance Policy" below.) Walking in late to a test is simply not fair to other students. It's not any more complicated than that. (b) If something comes up that would legitimately allow for a make-up test, you must let me know as much beforehand as possible. You cannot miss a test then claim an exemption after the fact. Again, this is fairly standard across the university.

Comparative Paper

Using methods and concepts we explore during the course, each student will produce a final paper using the comparative method. I will be going over this assignment in detail in class, and we will be learning and practicing the comparative method throughout the semester. The assignment basics, however are: **Due: December 6. Minimum length: 2400 words. Suggested maximum length: 3600 words.**

Course Outline

Note: This is a general framework for the course, though it may alter based on class interest.

Week	Date	Topic
1	Sept 6	Introduction to the Course
2	Sept 11-13	Religion and Religious Diversity: Part 1
3	Sept 18-20	Religion and Religious Diversity: Part 2
4	Sept 25-27	Religious Diversity and Social Development
5	Oct 2-4	Women, Religion, and Social Development *October 4: In-class Quiz #1 (15%)
	Oct 9-13	Thanksgiving Holiday/Reading Week
6	Oct 16-18	Religion, Development, and Social Marginalization
7	Oct 23-25	Religion, Development, and Cultural Appropriation
8	Oct 30-Nov 1	Religion, Development, and Freedom of Expression
9	Nov 6-8	Religion, Diversity, and Morality *November 6: In-class Quiz #2 (15%)
10	Nov 13-15	Religion, Development, and Sexuality
11	Nov 20-22	Religion, Diversity, and the Problem of Non-belief
12	Nov 27-29	Catch-up days
13	Dec 4	*December 4: In-class Quiz #3 (20%)

Late or Incomplete Work

Assignments turned in past the due date will be assessed a penalty of 10% per day late, including the day on which you turn it in. If a paper is due on Friday and you turn it in Sunday, that is a 20% penalty. With the exception of drafts, turn in all assignments through the appropriate LEARN Dropbox; do not simply email them to me. I only grant extensions for reasons of medical and family emergency, and documentation is required in both instances. See the University of Waterloo guidelines on Covid-19 to assist you in this. Extensions beyond the end-of-semester require that you complete Request for Incomplete form, available at the Renison Registrar's Office, and supporting documentation may be required.

Policy on Plagiarism

"Policy 71's glossary defines plagiarism, in part, as "presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others (whether attributed or anonymous) as one's own in any work submitted whether or not for grading purposes"...

The Vice-President Academic and Dean has the authority to assess instances of plagiarism and the resultant penalties that are raised by an instructor. An instructor can propose a grade penalty to the Vice-President Academic and Dean, who will decide whether to accept the penalty or initiate a formal inquiry."

For additional information on how plagiarism is dealt with at Renison, review the policy from where the above text is copied: [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#).

Students should also be aware that copyright laws in Canada prohibit reproducing more than 10% of any work without permission from its author, publisher, or other copyright holder. Waterloo's policy on Fair Dealing is available at uwaterloo.ca/copyright-guidelines/fair-dealing-advisory Violation of Canada's Copyright Act is a punishable academic offence under Policy 71 – Student Discipline.

Bottom line? Do your own work.

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, in the first week of term whether they wish to opt out of Turnitin®. N.b., this is for the entire semester, and I will provide an alternate scaffolding for the assignment.

Policy on Generative AI

This course includes the independent development and practice of specific skills, such as critical examination of course concepts, reflexive articulation of your own views, developing and practicing writing skills, research and the application of specific methods, as well as creative expression. Therefore, the use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) trained using large language models (LLM) or other methods to produce text, images, music, or code, like Chat GPT, DALL-E, or GitHub CoPilot, is not permitted in this class. Unauthorized use in this course, such as (but not limited to) running course materials through GenAI or using GenAI to complete a course assignment is considered a violation of [Policy 71](#) (plagiarism or unauthorized aids or assistance). Work produced with the assistance of AI tools does not represent the author's original work and is therefore in violation of the fundamental values of academic integrity including honesty, trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility.

You should always be prepared to show your work. To demonstrate your learning, you should keep your rough notes, including research notes, brainstorming, and drafting notes. You may be asked to submit these notes along with earlier drafts of their work, either through saved drafts or saved versions of a document. If the use of GenAI is suspected where not permitted, you may be asked to meet with your instructor to provide explanations to support the submitted material as being your original work. Through this process, if you have not sufficiently supported your work, academic misconduct allegations may be brought to the Associate Dean.

In addition, you should be aware that the legal/copyright status of generative AI inputs and outputs is unclear. More information is available from the Copyright Advisory Committee: <https://uwaterloo.ca/copyright-at-waterloo/teaching/generative-artificial-intelligence>

Electronic Device Policy

Students who choose to use electronic devices to support their learning may do so provided that the individuals in the class are not disturbed or prohibited from their own learning. Electronic devices should be used for the purposes of supplementing the learning experience and focus on topics being discussed in class. **Please respect the rights of other students to learn without distraction. Phone use** (including texting) **is not permitted**. A first offense will result in a discussion. Each subsequent offense will mean a deduction of 1 mark on your class participation grade. Phones must not be kept in view at any time.

I have this policy because [research](#) shows that laptop and device use in class interferes with learning both for the user and the people around them. By the way, students who believe *most strongly* that they can multitask while learning attain the *lowest scores* on tests of learning and retention.

Attendance Policy

I expect that everyone will be in class every day. It is simply the only way to do well in a course such as this. If you are aware of an upcoming absence, it's your responsibility to let me know in advance so we can make arrangements for that. You should make yourself aware of the university's self-declared absence policy. **Students are allowed two unexcused absences**, after which they will lose **one mark out of 10 per absence up** to a total of 10 marks.

If you do find yourself unable to attend class due to illness, you will need to contact me and, where appropriate, use the University of Waterloo [Self-declared Absence](#) site or the [University of Waterloo Verification of Illness](#) form. Please note that, once you declare an absence using this site or get a medical note, you must also contact your professor to arrange for any accommodations (retaking a Quiz, submitting an assignment late, avoiding an unexcused absence penalty, etc.).

Communication Policy

Email, using the uWaterloo provided email address, is the approved method of communication for Renison. The Office 365 email that you use to login using your WatIAM login and password is secure and confidential. Take caution when forwarding your WatIAM email to an external email service as confidential information forwarded to a third-party provider could be a data security breach and violation of FIPPA (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) under which all students, staff, and faculty are bound by law.

Final Examination Policy

There is no final examination scheduled for this course. (Once again, you're welcome.)

Accommodation for Illness or Unforeseen Circumstances

The instructor follows the practices of the University of Waterloo in accommodating students who have documented reasons for missing quizzes or exams. See [Accommodation due to illness](#).

Accommodation Due to Religious Observances

The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University community,

some students may seek accommodations on religious grounds. Accordingly, students must consult with their instructor(s) within two weeks of the announcement of the due date for which accommodation is being sought. Failure to provide a timely request will decrease the likelihood of providing an accommodation. [See Request for accommodation on religious grounds.](#)

Academic Integrity, Grievance, Discipline, Appeals and Note for Students with Disabilities

Academic Integrity: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity](#) and the [Arts Academic Integrity](#) websites for more information.

Renison University College is committed to the view that when a problem or disagreement arises between a faculty member and a student every effort should be made to resolve the problem through mutual and respectful negotiation. Most issues are resolved by a student/faculty meeting to discuss differences of opinion. It is only after this stage, when a common understanding or agreement is not obtained that further actions listed below could be taken.

Discipline: Every student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their own actions. [Check the [Office of Academic Integrity](#) website 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 professor or academic advisor. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties are imposed under the University of Waterloo [Policy 71 – Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check the [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their 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, or Academic Advisor, who will provide further assistance.

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 they have a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals](#).

Academic Integrity Office (UWaterloo): The website can be found at uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

[AccessAbility Services](#) is located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, and 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.

Students are encouraged to register with AccessAbility Services (AAS) at the start of each term if they require accommodations due to a disability. However, some students not connected to AAS may require accommodations later in the term. In that case, you should immediately consult with your instructor and/or your Academic Advisor.

Intellectual Property

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of the instructor, which can include:

- lecture handouts and presentations (e.g., PowerPoint slides)
- lecture content, both spoken and written (and any audio or video recording thereof)
- questions from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams)
- work protected by copyright (i.e., any work authored by the instructor)

Making available the intellectual property of instructors without their express written consent (e.g., uploading lecture notes or assignments to an online repository) is considered theft of intellectual property and subject to disciplinary sanctions as described in [Policy 71 – Student Discipline](#). Students who become aware of the availability of what may be their instructor's intellectual property in online repositories are encouraged to alert the instructor.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.

On Campus

- [Counselling Services](#): counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4096
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and Counselling Services
- [Health Services](#) – Student Medical Clinic: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

Off Campus, 24/7

- [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454

- [Empower Me](#): Confidential, multilingual, culturally sensitive, faith inclusive mental health and wellness service.
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 844-437-3247
- [Here 24/7](#): Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- [OK2BME](#): set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning teens in Waterloo. Email: ok2bme@kwcounselling.com Phone: 519-884-0000

Full details can be found online at the [Faculty of ARTS](#) website.

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#)

Download the [WatSafe](#) app to your phone to quickly access mental health support information.

A Respectful Living and Learning Environment for All

Everyone living, learning, and working at Renison University College is expected to contribute to creating a respectful environment free from harassment and discrimination.

Harassment is unwanted attention in the form of disrespectful comments, unwanted text messages or images, degrading jokes, rude gestures, unwanted touching, or other behaviours meant to intimidate.

According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, discrimination means unequal or different treatment causing harm, whether intentional or not, because of race, disability, citizenship, ethnic origin, colour, age, creed, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, or other personal characteristic.

If you feel that you are experiencing the above from any member of the Renison community (students, staff, or faculty), you may contact Melissa Knox, Renison's external anti-harassment and anti-discrimination officer, by email (mnknox@uwaterloo.ca) or by phone or text (226-753-5669). Melissa is an employment and human rights lawyer and part-time Assistant Crown Attorney for the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General. Melissa is experienced in case management, discipline and complaints processes, and works with organizations across Canada to foster safe, respectful, and inclusive work and learning environments through policy development, educational workshops, conflict mediation and dispute resolution, and organizational culture audits.

For additional information see Renison's [Harassment, Discrimination, and Abuse](#) policy.