

College of Charleston
Department of Religious Studies
Fall 2013

RELS 250: RELIGION IN AMERICA
Tues & Thurs 10:50-12:05; Ed Center 219

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Office Hours: Tues 1-3 and Fri 10-12 or by appointment

This course introduces the complex and multifaceted phenomenon of religion in America from the 16th century until today. At the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- Identify important names, dates, places, institutions, denominations and concepts from four centuries of American religious history.
- Appreciate how religion interacts with other important concepts in America, such as politics and law, race and ethnicity, commerce and popular culture.
- Analyze in speech and writing how religion shapes important issues in American life, then and now.
- Understand the “lived” or vernacular dimension of religion in American history, including in their own community and their own family.

This course will fulfill the **General Education Student Learning Outcomes:**
Student Learn Outcome #1: Students analyze how ideas are represented, interpreted or valued in various expressions of human culture.
Student Learn Outcome #2: Students examine relevant primary source materials as understood by the discipline and interpret the material in writing assignments.
These two learning outcomes will be assessed in the final exam, which will ask students to identify and interpret primary sources from American religious history.

Required Texts:

Edwin Gaustad and Leigh Schmidt, *The Religious History of America*, Rev. Ed (**RHA**)
ISBN-13: 9780060630560

Colleen McDannell, *Religions of the United States in Practice*, Volumes 1 and 2 (**RUSP 1** and **RUSP 2**) ISBN-13: 978-0691009995 and ISBN-13: 978-0691010014

There are also required short readings, numbered OAKS 1-16, on OAKS. Please print these out!

Recommended readings are listed in the course schedule as “RR;” the full list in on the last page of this syllabus. They are to be found mostly in RUSP 1 and 2, with a few on OAKS (Identified by “RR”, followed by a letter from A to G.)
Please bring the relevant book or printout to class.

Assignments:

Participation and attendance including in-class writing: **7%**

Two 4-5 pp. “research” papers, one based on visiting a religious site in Charleston, the other based on interviewing family members about their religious background: 2 x 10% = **20%**

Four out of eight 1-2 pp. “memos” based on the readings: 4 x 5% = **20%**
(at least one of which must be done before the midterm exam)

Oral presentation (plus 1 pp. handout) based on one recommended reading: **8%**

2 out of 3 “surprise” quizzes (announced in class the day before) 2 x 5% = **10%**

Midterm exam (multiple choice, short answer, and essay) on Oct 10: **15%**

Final exam (multiple choice, short answer, and essay) on Dec 10: **20%**

We will review and discuss each assignment before it is due. There may also be various opportunities to gain bonus marks by attending relevant lectures and writing short papers about them.

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. Students can find a complete version of the Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook, available online.

Grading Scale: A: 93-100; A-: 90-92; B+: 87-89; B: 83-86; B-: 80-82; C+: 77-79; C: 73-76; C-: 70-72; D+: 67-69; D: 63-66; D-: 61-62 F: 60 or below.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Tues 8/20: Introductions: What is religion? What is America?
Studyreligion.org

Thurs 8/22: Catholic and Indian Backgrounds
RHA 3-29 / RR # 1, 2, 3

Tues 8/27: Colonial Religious Diversity and Establishment
RHA 30-31, 43-48, 74-79, 84-86, 95-97, 103-110 / RR # 4, 5

Thurs 8/29: Puritanism
RHA 49-58, 65-68; RUSP 1 Ch. 2: “Puritan Conversion Narratives”/ RR # 6, 7

Tues 9/3: The Religion of the Founding Fathers
RHA 121-138; OAKS #1 “Jefferson’s Bill”
Due: Memo #1

Thurs 9/5: Revivalism
RHA 58-65, 139-149, 156-157; RUSP 1, Ch 27: “Methodist Dream” /RR # 8

Tues 9/10: Utopian and Sexual Experiments
RHA 149-152, 157-161 177-180; RUSP 1, Ch. 16: “John H. Noyes” / RR # 9
Due: Memo #2

Thurs 9/12: Slavery and Religion
OAKS #2: “Believer I Know”; RHA 184-198; RUSP 1, Ch. 31: “The Christian Doctrine of Slavery” / RR # 10

Tues 9/17: Religion, Democracy and the American Character
OAKS #3: “Democracy in America”
Due: Memo #3

Thurs 9/19: Immigration and Nativism
RHA 170-175, 209-212, 222-226; RUSP 1, Ch. 30: “Anti-Catholic Pornography”
RR # 11, 12, 13
Due: Memo # 4

Tues 9/24: Metaphysical America
RHA 198-202, 226-230; RUSP 1, Ch. 32: “Trance Lecturers in Ante-Bellum America”; RUSP 1, Ch. 22: “Sickness, Death, and Illusion”

Thurs 9/26: Civil Religion- North and South
OAKS # 4: “Civil Religion”; OAKS #5: “The Religion of the Lost Cause”

Tues 10/1: The Social Gospel vs. the Gilded Age
Guest Lecturer: Dr. Charles Lippy
RHA 231-241; RUSP 1, Ch, 18: “In His Steps: A Social Gospel Novel”

Thurs 10/3: The Rise of Pentecostalism
RHA 277-284; RUSP 2, Ch. 18: “Tongues and Healing at the Azusa Street Revival;”
OAKS #6: “Searching for Eden” / RR # 14, 15, 16
Midterm Study Guide Handed Out

Tues 10/8: Modernism vs. Fundamentalism
RHA 291-296, 310-316 / RR # 17, 18

Thurs 10/10: MIDTERM EXAM

FALL BREAK

Thurs 10/17: Millennialism

**RHA 152-156, 305-309; RUSP 2, Ch. 30: “Millions Now Living Will Never Die”;
OAKS # 7: “Lindsey /Falwell”**

Due: Memo # 5

Tues 10/22: Judaism in America

Guest Lecturer: Rabbi Stephanie Alexander at KKBE, 90 Hassell St.

**RHA 175-176, 212-216; RUSP 1, Ch. 8, “1842 Hymnal of Penina Morse”; ER # 7:
“The Pittsburgh Platform”**

Thurs 10/24: East Meets West: Asian Religions in America

**RHA 288-89, 412-417; ER # 10: “Asian Religions in America”; RUSP 2, Ch. 10:
“Buddhist Chanting” / RR # 19, 20, 21**

Due: First Research Paper

Tues 10/29: Catholicism In America

Guest Lecturer: Jim Grove

**341-348; RUSP 2, Ch. 9: “Folk Music in the Catholic Mass;” OAKS # 8: “JFK
Speech”/ RR# 22, 23, 24**

Thurs 10/31: Mormon Politics and Practices

**OAKS # 9: “Joseph Smith;” RUSP 1, Ch. 20: “Supernaturalism;” RUSP 2, Ch. 23:
“Word of Wisdom;” OAKS # 10: “What is it about Mormons?” / RR # 25, 26**

Due: Memo #6

Tues 11/5: Religion and the Civil Rights Movement

Guest Lecturer: Dr. Katie Hladky

RHA 374-382; RUSP 2, Ch, 25: “ Martin Luther King”; OAKS #12: Cone / RR# 27

Thurs 11/7: Women’s Liberation and Ordination

**RHA 220-222, 245-251, 385-393; RUSP 2, Ch. 31: “Ordaining Women Rabbis”
(until p. 401) / RR # 28, 29**

Due: Second Research Paper

Tues 11/12: From Positive Thinking to Megachurch Theology

**RHA 335-339; RUSP 2, Ch. 20: “Power of Positive Thinking;” RUSP 2, Ch. 11:
“Contemporary Christian Music;” OAKS #13: “Megachurches” / RR #30**

Thurs 11/14: Religion and Politics 1976-2013

**RHA 398-412; ER #14: “Presidential Election;” ER #15: “Changing Religious
Landscape” (2012 Election) / RR # 31, 32**

Due: Memo #7

Tues 11/19: The New Religious Pluralism

RHA 417-427; ER # 16: “Pluralism Project”/ RR # 33, 34, 35, 36

Due: Memo # 8

Thurs 11/21: Looking to the Future: Spiritual Eclecticism, Spiritual Warfare, Or...?

RUSP 2, Ch. 21: “Shamanism”; RUSP 2, Ch. 26: “Spiritual Warfare”

Final Exam Study Guide Handed Out

Tues 12/3: (Reading Day): Optional Final exam review session

Tues 12/10 9-11 AM Final Exam

Note: Students with documented disabilities who have been approved to receive accommodation through SNAP should feel free to discuss this during office hours. For more information, contact Disability Services at 953-1431.

The Center for Student Learning has writing labs and can arrange individual tutoring for these particular assignments at <http://www.cofc.edu/~csl/> or 953-5635

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Oral presentation and handout based on a recommended reading

See the back of this sheet for recommended supplemental readings, which also serves as a schedule of oral reports.

On the day you have signed up for, prepare about 35 copies of a one-page handout (which may be single or double sided but no more than one sheet of paper.)

The handout should contain 1) A summary of the key facts. 2) Definitions of difficult words. 3) The most telling or interesting quotes from the primary source. 4) Ideas about how this reading relates to larger themes of the class 5) Discussion questions 6) Relevant photos or images are welcome, but not necessary.

For your presentation, you should not just read your handout. Be prepared to give a clear, informative, and interesting (humorous and provocative, even) presentation of 5-6 minutes on the readings, assuming most classmates have not read the text you are presenting on. End with discussion questions. Some of the readings contain religious songs—feel free to play a 1 or 2 minute excerpt of the exact song or one in a similar style (check youtube or similar sites.)

Be ready on the date marked below, but your presentation may be delayed by a class or two.

LIST OF RECOMMENDED READING

1. 8/22: RUSP 1, Ch. 4, “Green Corn Ceremony”
2. 8/22: RUSP 1, Ch. 29, “Native American Visionary Experience”
3. 8/22: RUSP 1, 14, “Vision of Plenty-Coups”
4. 8/27: RUSP 1, Ch. 7, “English Hymnody”
5. 8/27: RUSP 1, Ch. 13, “Celebration of Marriage”
6. 8/29: RUSP 1, Ch. 25, “Possession, Witchcraft and the Demonic”
7. 8/29: RUSP 1, Ch. 19, “Spiritual Meanings of Illness in New England”
8. 9/5: OAKS #A “Edwards’ *Thoughts Concerning the Revival of Religion*”
9. 9/10: RUSP 1, Ch. 21, “Christian Physiology and Diet Reform”
10. 9/12: RUSP 1, Ch. 28, “African-American Vision Stories”
11. 9/19: RUSP 1, Ch. 1, “Amidah”
12. 9/19: RUSP 1, Ch. 9, “Catholic Song”
13. 9/19: RUSP 1, Ch. 6, “Reception of Novices into the Order of St. Benedict”
14. 10/3: RUSP 1, Ch. 5, “The Way of Holiness”
15. 10/3: RUSP 2, Ch. 1, “Lucy Smith and Pentecostal Worship”
16. 10/3: RUSP 2, Ch. 27, “Charismatic Renewal”
17. 10/8: RUSP 2, Ch. 13, “Liberal Protestant Teaching”
18. 10/8: OAKS #B “Hodge Denounces Darwin as Atheistic”
19. 10/24: RUSP 2, Ch. 32, “Mother India’s Scandalous Swamis”
20. 10/24: RUSP 2, Ch. 17, “Taking or Receiving the Buddhist Precepts”
21. 10/24: RUSP 2, Ch. 28, “Visualizing Chenrezi in American Tibetan Buddhism”
22. 10/29: RUSP 1, Ch. 23, “The Miracles of St. Anthony of Padua”
23. 10/29: RUSP 2, Ch. 14, “Reconciling Patriotism and Catholic Devotion”
24. 10/29: RUSP 2, Ch. 7, “Hanukah Songs of the 1950s”
25. 10/31: RUSP 2, Ch. 6, “Mormon Fast and Testimony”
26. 10/31: OAKS #C “Articles of Faith/ Revelation of Plural Marriage”
27. 11/5: RUSP 2, Ch. 8 “Freedom Songs and the Civil Rights Movement”
28. 11/7: RUSP 1, Ch. 12 “Temperance Songs and Hymns”
29. 11/7: RUSP 2, Ch. 15: “Sex and Submission”
30. 11/12: OAKS # D “Harvard Business School Case Study: Willow Creek Church”
31. 11/14 OAKS #E “Ronald Reagan’s Speech to Evangelicals”
32. 11/14 OAKS #F “Barack Obama’s 2013 Speech at the National Prayer Breakfast”
33. 11/19: RUSP 2, Ch. 3, “Daily Prayer of Shi’a Isma’ili Muslims”
34. 11/19: OAKS #G “Franklin Graham Smears Islam”
35. 11/19: RUSP 2, Ch. 29: “The Rite of Baptism in Haitian Vodou”
36. 11/19: RUSP 2, Ch. 34, “Battling Spiritism; The Need for Catholic Orthodoxy”