

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE**

Department of Religious Studies

**FALL 2017**

**RS 204: RELIGION, LOGIC AND MEDIA ONLINE: COURSE SYLLABUS**

**Professor:** Dr Claire White  
**Email:** [claire.white@csun.edu](mailto:claire.white@csun.edu)  
**Weekly Class:** Online  
**Office hours:** I am online during Tuesdays 12noon-1pm.  
You can also arrange to Zoom with me then, just email me.  
**Office Location:** Santa Susana Hall (SN), room 236, telephone: 818-677-5640  
D2 on Map: <http://www.csun.edu/csun-maps>  
**Website:** <http://www.csun.edu/religious.studies/profile.White.html>  
**External Website:** <http://clairejwhite.wix.com/clairenw>

**1. This document**

This is your syllabus for the class. A syllabus is an outline of a course that describes what to expect and what you need to do to pass. You cannot pass this course unless you read and consult this document and Moodle regularly. The course is subject to minor changes as we progress (e.g., topics, readings). Before you ask me a question, consult this document to ensure it has not been answered.

**2. Brief course description**

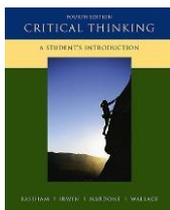
This course fulfills CSUN requirements for RS 204 'Religion, Logic and Media'.

**RS 204 Student Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Explain and apply the concepts of deductive logic as a dimension of critical reasoning;
2. Apply the principles of deductive logic to the critical analysis of statements made about religion in the news and entertainment media;
3. Understand the historical and social contexts in which media misunderstand or distort statements made by or about religious groups or spokespersons.

**Required Textbook:**



*Critical Thinking: A Student's Introduction* (Fourth Edition) by Gregory Bassham, William Irwin, Henry Nardone, James Wallace (2010).

Book is available from Amazon to rent for 30USD, to buy for 100USD BUT is also available FREE as a PDF online: Google the title of the book.

### **3. Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)**

Below is a list of the aims and objectives of this course that have been determined by the University, College, Department and your instructor. *What can you expect to learn in this course?*

By the end of the semester, students will be able to demonstrate efficiency in all of RS 204 SLO's (see point 2, above) and the majority of GE critical thinking and RS SLOs outlined below:

#### **A. General Education Student Learning Objectives, Critical Thinking:**

Students will be able to:

1. Explain and apply the basic concepts essential to a critical examination and evaluation of argumentative discourse;
2. Use investigative and analytical thinking skills to examine alternatives, explore complex questions and solve challenging problems;
3. Synthesize information in order to arrive at reasoned conclusions;
4. Evaluate the logic and validity of arguments, and the relevance of data and information;
5. Recognize and avoid common logical and rhetorical fallacies.

#### **B. Religious Studies Student Learning Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

1. Recognize and to articulate (orally and in writing) the difference between an academic approach to religion and a personal, devotional approach.
2. Demonstrate a basic level of proficiency in recognizing the major contributors to the modern study of religion and their models/theories from philosophy, theology, the history of religions, and the social sciences.
3. Understand the following terms in their conventional, popular usage, and then discuss the variety of ways that religious studies scholars have critiqued, expanded, or problematized these: religion, religious, myth, ritual, symbol, philosophy, subjectivity, objectivity, secular/secularization, cult, sect, mysticism, theism, atheism, polytheism, monotheism, spirituality, magic, paganism, animism, canon, religious violence, post-colonialism, individualistic compared to community-based religions.
4. Explain and give basic examples of the social function of religion with regard to gender, ethnicity, and nationality.
5. Recognize religiosity in an aspect of modern culture such as different forms of media, art, music, films, politics, sports, and the public discourse on science.
6. Demonstrate a basic level of proficiency in describing several specific religious traditions, including their historical development, major beliefs and practices, and demonstrate a basic level of proficiency in interpreting religious texts and rituals from each religious tradition.

#### **C. This course is part of the GE Pathways program in Scientific Reasoning. GE pathways Student Learning Objectives**

1. Students will understand the scientific method and show an appreciation of what kinds of questions can and cannot be answered using the scientific method.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the process of evidence-based rational thought.
3. Students will be able to identify a number of ways in which scientific theories, e.g., evolution, inform a variety of academic disciplines, and the inter-dependence of various levels of inquiry from the natural and social sciences.
4. Students will be able to integrate knowledge into a coherent world-view based on scientific

evidence and reason.

#### **4. Course Information**

##### **a.) Readings**

You cannot pass the course unless you do all of the required readings. You will be tested on them. Readings are from the required book or articles will be available in advance, electronically on Moodle.

##### **b.) Teaching**

The sessions will typically include an assigned reading, short e-lecture and video. This class is online. Face-to-face meetings are not required to pass this course.

##### **c.) Technological information:**

You will need regular access to a computer equipped with Internet access, Microsoft word and PowerPoint. This course will employ the Moodle web-based format and e-videos are hosted using YouTube

- For instruction on how to use Moodle technology, go to: <http://www.csun.edu/it/moodle>
- For video instruction on Moodle technology go to: <https://shibboleth.csun.edu/idp/Authn/UserPassword> and login with your CSUN username and password (Lynda.com for CSUN students).
- We will use ZOOM for two check-ins during the course and you can also use it to interact with me during my online office hours. (Zoom is like Skype). See syllabus for dates.
- 1. Log into Zoom here: <https://www.csun.edu/it/zoom>
- (You can also download it as an iphone app and use it on your iphone).
- 2. Click "join a meeting"
- 3. Enter the meeting ID provided by me (check Moodle)
- 4. Make sure your device is set to mute until you want to speak 😊
- If you are having a technical difficulty, please contact the IT Help Center by phone (818-677-1400), online at (<http://techsupport.csun.edu>) or in person (Oviatt Library, room 33).

##### **d.) Class materials**

- Class materials (e.g., e-lectures, PowerPoints, discussion posts, articles) will be available on Moodle by 9am on Monday morning at the start of each scheduled weekly topic.

##### **e.) Online Class etiquette and tips**

- Treat this like any other class.
- Schedule in a regular time each week to spend on the course.
- Plan your schedule ahead of time to allow you to submit assignments on time.
- Do the required readings first, then the remaining tasks (e.g., watch e-video).

##### **f.) Communication**

- Check your CSUN account weekly for class messages.
- Ask me via Moodle (using the discussion forum dedicated to student questions), anytime throughout the course, about anything that you are unsure of.
- You can also use the discussion forum to ask your peers a question.
- You may also email me questions, but Moodle discussion forum is preferred. Begin the email with the following "*Dear Dr. White, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in your RS 204 online class.*" Be as specific as you can in your enquiry.
- I will answer emails within 48 hours Mon-Fri.
- Email me to arrange an appointment in person if necessary.

- I am also available for Skype meetings during my consultation times. Please email to arrange a Skype meeting.

### **G.) Disability**

If you have a disability and need accommodations, please register with the Disability Resources and Educational Services office or the National Center on Deafness. The DRES office can be reached at (818) 677-2684. NCOD can be reached at (818) 677-2611. Please let me know how I can accommodate you at the earliest opportunity.

### **H.) Difficulties**

If you are experiencing personal difficulties during the course – such as mental health issues or family problems that are affecting your progress, make an appointment to come and see me as early as you can.

### **I.) Religious Observations**

If an assignment due date conflicts with a religious observation that affects you then complete the assignment early. If the observation lasts longer than 6 days then contact me for an earlier submission.

### **J.) Submission/Late work**

- All assignments are due electronically on Moodle. Follow the guidelines on Moodle.
- **Assignments are accepted FROM Monday at 9am and BY 9am the following Monday (7 days).** Late assignments (i.e., Monday at 9:03am) will receive 0.
- Often I enable you to see, and submit work, up to two weeks ahead to help you manage your time.
- Always complete assignments at least 1 day early to allow time for any problems to be resolved.
- \*\*\*Late work and re-take assignments are **only** accepted in cases of severe emergencies (e.g., illness requiring hospitalization or a death in the family). All emergencies must be documented in writing and submitted to me for consideration within 7 days of the event.
- Technological problems (e.g., broken computer, failure to upload doc on Moodle) are not valid reasons for late submissions. If you have problems, contact IT BEFORE the deadline.
- There is no need to tell me that you have missed some assignments. See assessment summary (below), the course is designed so that you can miss some assignments.

## **5. Assessment Summary**

<b>#</b>	<b>Due Day/time</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Total Points</b>
<b>1</b>	Monday BY 9:00am	7x Reading Quizzes (10pt each) (highest 6 are graded. You may miss 1 or complete all to ensure you get the highest grade possible).	<b>60</b>
<b>2</b>	Monday BY 9:00am	12x Q&A Posts (2 pt each) (highest 10 are graded. You may miss 2 or complete all to ensure you get the highest grade possible).	<b>20</b>
<b>3</b>	Monday BY 9:00am	5x Peer posts (2pt each)	<b>10</b>
<b>4</b>	Monday BY 9:00am	5x Media examples (2pt each)	<b>10</b>

### **a). Moodle discussion posts**

There are three types of Moodle discussion posts

1. Q&A posts: I will post a question on the week's materials and you will respond.
2. Peer posts: You will engage with your peers (e.g., commenting on their post).
3. Media examples: You will provide an example in the media of what you have learned.

(2 points each). See guidelines and grading rubric on Moodle.

### **b). Quizzes**

Quizzes will be based on the assigned reading for that week and will be posted on Moodle during selected weeks (10 questions, 10 points in total, 1 point per question). See guidelines and grading rubric on Moodle.

### **c). Extra Credit Opportunities**

Extra credit opportunities may arise throughout the course. Check Moodle and announcements for updates. Extra credit will never amount to more than 5 points in total so don't rely on them!

### **d). Grading**

Grading is based on a point system. Maximum points overall = 100.

<b>POINTS</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
Below 60	F

Grades are not curved or normalized.

### **e.) Zoom sessions**

I will hold two Zoom sessions during the course to discuss any questions that you have. They are optional, but highly recommended. You do not need to tell me if you cannot make the zoom session. To join, Just log-in using the instructions (see c, above). This is like a class sykpe session.

### **6. Academic Dishonesty**

All cheating, including plagiarism, will NOT be tolerated. Students will receive a grade F and be reported to the University for disciplinary action. For more information of the behavior defined as academic dishonesty, and a more detailed discussion of disciplinary procedures, consult pages 27-28 of the 2012-2013 Student Handbook.

## 7. Weekly Class Schedule and Submission Tracker

Wk	Date DUE	Topic	Read	Submit BY 9:00am Monday on due date	Done?
	<b>29<sup>th</sup> Aug 1pm</b>	Zoom session 1	Syllabus		
<b>1</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sept</b>	Introduction to the Course	Syllabus	Practice Quiz on course syllabus (T/F)	
<b>2</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> Sept</b>	Introduction to the Study of Religion	Nye: Ch1 (Moodle)	Q&A post 1	
<b>3</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> Sept</b>	Thinking Critically About the Media	Ch. 14 (up to page 448 only)	Reading Quiz 1 (T/F) Q&A post 2	
<b>4</b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> Sept</b>	Introduction to Critical Thinking	Ch. 1 (excluding pages 17-24) See Moodle	Reading Quiz 2 (T/F) Q&A post 3 Peer post 1	
<b>5</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Oct</b>	Recognizing Arguments	Ch. 2	Reading Quiz 3 (M/C) Q&A post 4 Peer Post 2	
<b>6</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> Oct</b>	Basic Logical Concepts	Ch. 3	Reading Quiz 4 (M/C) Q&A post 5 Media example 1	
<b>7</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> Oct</b>	Logical Fallacies 1	Ch. 5	Reading Quiz 5 (M/C) Q&A post 6 Media example 2	
<b>8</b>	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> Oct</b>	Logical Fallacies 2	Ch. 6	Reading Quiz 6 (M/C) Q&A post 7 Media example 3	
<b>9</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> Oct</b>	Analyzing Arguments	Ch. 7	Reading Quiz 7 (M/C) Q&A post 8 Peer post 3	
<b>10</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	Case study: Evolution	See Moodle	Q&A post 9 Media example 4	
<b>11</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	Writing Argumentative Essays	Ch. 13	Peer post 4	
<b>12</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	Evaluating Arguments and Truth Claims	Ch. 8	Q&A post 10 Peer post 5	
<b>13</b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	Finding, Evaluating and using Sources	Ch. 12 (341-358 only)	Q&A post 11	
	<b>28<sup>th</sup> Nov 1pm</b>	Zoom session 2			
<b>14</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Dec</b>	Science and Pseudoscience	Ch. 15	Q&A post 12 Media example 5	

KEY: T/F = TRUE OR FALSE, M/C = MULTIPLE CHOICE

Have you enjoyed the course?

Contact me about becoming a Religious Studies Major or Double Major!