**RS 307 / Religion in America**

California State University Northridge, Fall 2015

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**Office Hours:**

In-person: M/W 11:00-12:20

Online: W 2:00-3:00

**Course Description:**

This course provides an introduction to the development, character, and influence of religion in the United States from the colonial era to the present. Guiding our conversations will be an exploration of the following question: to what extent is American a Christian nation? Course readings and discussions will focus on the relationship between religion and the development of American culture, as we explore the variety of religious traditions and experiences that have shaped and been shaped by the American context. Throughout the semester students will complete assignments that will contribute to a final historiographical essay on the role of religion in American culture and society.

**This course is a GE Writing Intensive course, and in each WI course students will be required to complete writing assignments totaling a minimum of 2500 words.**

Required Reading:

* Edwin Gaustad and Leigh Schmidt, *The Religious History of America: The Heart of the American Story from Colonial Times to Today* REVISED EDITION (Harper San Francisco, 2002) [Designated hereafter as RHA]
* Edward Blum and Paul Harvey, *The Color of Christ: The Son of God and the Saga of Race in America* [Designated hereafter as TCC]

Email etiquette

I am happy to communicate with you via email. Your emails should begin in the following manner:

Dear Professor Baugh,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I am in your RS 307 class.

Evaluation

Your grade will be calculated using the points system. Throughout the semester you will have the opportunity to earn up to 100 points in the following six areas:

1. **Quizzes (30 points) –** Throughout the semester there will be11 multiple-choice quizzes covering that week’s material. You can earn up to 3 points for each quiz. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.
2. **Q&A Discussion Posts (10 points)**  – In these posts I will pose a question on the week’s topic. You will respond to my question. There will be 12 opportunities worth 1 point each, so you may choose to skip 2.
3. **Peer Discussion Posts (5 points) –** In these posts you will respond to your classmates. There will be 6 opportunities worth 1 point each, so you may choose to skip 1.
4. **Midterm Essay (25 points) –** The midterm exam will consist of a formal essay. Instructions will be posted on Moodle.
5. **Final presentation and essay (30 points)** – The final will consist of an online presentation and essay. Instructions will be posted on Moodle.

Grades

Letter grades correspond to the points earned during the semester, based on the following scores:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 94 or above = A | 74-76 = C |
| 90-93 = A- | 70-73 = C- |
| 87-89 = B+ | 67-69 = D+ |
| 84-86 = B | 64-66 = D |
| 80-83 = B- | 60-63 = D- |
| 77-79 = C+ | 59 or below = F |

Plagiarism/Cheating

The CSUN Religious Studies Department is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence, honesty, and integrity. Students are expected to do their own work. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. **Anyone caught cheating or helping someone else cheat will receive an F on the assignment and will be subject to disciplinary action such as suspension or expulsion.**

For more information of the behavior defined as academic dishonesty, and a more detailed discussion of disciplinary procedures, consult pages 614-615 of the 2010-2012 CSUN catalog. **Remember, too, that much of the information posted on the Internet is protected by U.S. copyright laws**. Passing off this information as your own is plagiarism and carries the penalties outlined above.

Accommodation for disabilities

If you have a disability and need accommodations, please register with the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) office or the National Center on Deafness (NCOD). The DRES office is located in Bayramian Hall, room 110 and can be reached at (818) 677-2684. NCOD is located on Bertrand Street in Jeanne Chisholm Hall and can be reached at (818) 677-2611. If you would like to discuss your need for accommodations with me, please contact me to set up an appointment.

**RS 307 Class Schedule\***

The following schedule represents a broad outline of class topics and reading assignments. The course Moodle page will offer the most detailed and up-to-date assignments and deadlines. Assignments must be completed by 5:00 PM on the due date.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Date** | **Read** | **Do** |
| 1 | Aug 24 | Syllabus |  |
| 2 | Aug 31 | * Worthen, “One Nation Under God?” (M) * Pew, “America’s Changing Religious Landscape” (M) * An additional newspaper article |  |
| 3 | Sept 8\*  (7th is holiday) | RHA ch 6, TCC Introduction |  |
| 4 | Sept 14 | RHA ch 7, TCC ch 3 | My Family Tree assignment |
| 5 | Sept 21 | RHA ch 8, TCC ch 4 |  |
| 6 | Sept 28 | RHA ch 9, TCC ch 5 |  |
| 7 | Oct 5 | RHA ch 10, TCC ch 6 |  |
| 8 | Oct 12 | RHA ch 11, TCC ch 7 |  |
| 9 | Oct 19 | MIDTERM ESSAY DUE | Post additional news story |
| 10 | Oct 26 | RHA ch 13, 14 |  |
| 11 | Nov 2 | RHA ch 15, 16 | Mapping Religion in my Backyard assignment |
| 12 | Nov 9 | RHA ch 17, TCC ch 8 |  |
| 13 | Nov 16 | RHA ch 18, TCC ch 9 |  |
| 14 | Nov 23 | Contemporary issues: reading TBA |  |
| 15 | Nov 30 | Present final projects |  |
| 16 | Dec 7 | Final essay due |  |

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

RS 307 Student Learning Objectives

1. Students will explain and reflect critically on the human search for meaning, values, discourse and expression in the historical development of religions in the United States from the founding period until the present.

2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the historical and cultural contexts within which American religious institutions were created.

3. Students will be able to recognize the influence of religion on contemporary American political institutions and politics, culture and society.

4. Students will be able to describe the role of religion in the shaping of American concepts of race, gender, and national identity.

5. Students will use appropriate critical vocabulary to describe and analyze works of American religious expression orally and in essays.

General Education Goal

Students will understand the rich history and diversity of human knowledge, discourse and achievements of their own and other cultures as they are expressed in the arts, literatures, religions, and philosophy.

**General Education Student Learning Objectives, Arts and Humanities:**

1. Students will explain and reflect critically upon the human search for meaning, values, discourse and expression in one or more eras/stylistic periods or cultures.
2. Students will analyze, interpret, and reflect critically upon ideas of value, meaning, discourse and expression from a variety of perspectives from the arts and/or humanities;
3. Produce work/works of art that communicate to a diverse audience through a demonstrated understanding and fluency of expressive forms;
4. Students will demonstrate ability to engage and reflect upon their intellectual and creative development within the arts and humanities;
5. Students will be able to use appropriate critical vocabulary to describe and analyze works of artistic expression, literature, philosophy, or religion and a comprehension of the historical context within which a body of work was created or a tradition emerged;
6. Students will learn to describe and explain the historical and/or cultural context within which a body of work was created or a tradition emerged.

Writing Intensive (GE Designation WI)

Goal: Students will develop their abilities to express themselves and the knowledge they have obtained through practicing various forms of writing within different disciplinary contexts. Writing intensive courses will build upon the skills gained in the Analytical Reading and Expository Writing section of Basic Skills. In each WI course students will be required to complete writing assignments totaling a minimum of 2500 words.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will:

1. Develop and clearly define their ideas through writing;
2. Ethically integrate sources of various kinds into their writing;
3. Compose texts through drafting, revising, and completing a finished product;
4. Express themselves through their writing by posing questions, making original claims, and coherently structuring complex ideas;
5. Revise their writing for greater cogency and clarity;
6. Utilize adopted communication modes and documentation styles of specific disciplines (MLA, APA, Chicago, CBE, etc) where appropriate.