



Course Information

PRE - 323
Religion in American Life
Spring - 2018 (March 12th – May 12th)
3 Credit Hours

Instructor Information

Lee Tasey
Doane University

Contact Information

Office: Cyberspace
Office Hours: Virtually all the time!
Email: lee.tasey@doane.edu
Phone: (531) 333-6244 (Call or text anytime, and I'll return your message within twenty-four hours.)

Communicating with the Instructor

This course uses a “three before me” policy in regards to student to faculty communications. When questions arise during the course of this class, please remember to check these three sources for an answer before asking me to reply to your individual questions:

1. Course syllabus
2. Announcements in Blackboard
3. The “Water Cooler” discussion board

This policy will help you in potentially identifying answers before I can get back to you and it also helps your instructor from answering similar questions or concerns multiple times.

If you cannot find an answer to your question, please first post your question to the “Water Cooler” discussion board. Here your question can be answered to the benefit of all students by either your fellow students who know the answer to your question or the instructor. You are

encouraged to answer questions from other students in the discussion forum when you know the answer to a question in order to help provide timely assistance.

If you have questions of a personal nature such as relating a personal emergency, questioning a grade on an assignment, or something else that needs to be communicated privately, you are welcome to contact me via email or phone. My preference is that you will try to email me first. I will usually respond to email and phone messages from 8am to 5pm on weekdays, please allow 24 hours for me to respond.

If you have a question about the technology being used in the course, please contact the Doane University Help Desk for assistance (contact information is listed below).

Course Catalog Description

Religion in American Life will examine the intellectual and social history of religion in America. The beliefs and practices of major religions will also be examined.

Course Overview

There are many religions in America, some large and some small, but all of them have a unique history and various ways of thinking about ultimate reality, the human condition, and eschatology (the end times, life after death, etc.). Over the next eight weeks, we'll study the major beliefs and practices of various religions that have found their way to American soil as well as religions that are indigenous to it. We'll also study the writings of American poets and novelists, looking at how biblical themes (creation/fall, exodus/promised land, sin/redemption) are to be found within their pages.

Course Prerequisites

None

Course Textbook and Materials

Beal, Timothy. *Religion in America: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press: 2008. ISBN: 0195321073

Bukowski, Charles. *Post Office*. Ecco: 2007. ISBN: 0061177571

Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*. Vintage: 1991. ISBN: 0679734775

Johnson, Denis. *Jesus' Son*. Picador: 2009. ISBN: 031242874X

Steinbeck, John. *The Pearl*. Penguin: 1993. ISBN: 014017737X

White, E.B. *Charlotte's Web*. HarperCollins: 2012. ISBN: 0064400557

Wiesel, Elie. *Night*. Hill and Wang: 2006. ISBN: 0374500010

Learning Objectives

Course Objectives

At the completion of this course students will be able to:

1. **define** religion and other terms related to the study of religion in American life
2. **list** and **describe** the major beliefs and practices of various religions in America (e.g. Native American religions, Unitarian Universalism, Scientology, the Church of Satan, etc.) while taking note of their similarities and differences
3. **identify** and **describe** the major themes of the Jewish and Christian Bibles (e.g., creation/fall, wandering/promised land, sin/redemption, etc.) which were inspirational in the creation of the United States of America
4. **analyze** twentieth-century American literature for its allusions to Biblical stories, themes, allusions, and motifs.
5. **identify** prejudices and stereotypes often associated with religious groups in America

Unit Objectives

Unit I: Define “religion” and other related terms such as “ultimate reality,” “the human condition,” and “eschatology.” List and describe the key figures and features of Native American religions from pre-Colonial times to the present day

Unit II: List and describe the key figures and features of Judaism and Christianity, two religions that were inspirational in the creation of the United States of America

Unit III: List and describe the key figures and features of Unitarian Universalism. Identify and analyze the major themes of the Jewish and Christian Bibles in John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*

Unit IV: List and describe the key figures and features of Christian Science. Identify and describe the major themes of the Jewish and Christian Bibles in Charles Bukowski's *Post Office*

Unit V: List and describe the key figures and features of Scientology. Identify and analyze the major themes of the Jewish and Christian Bibles in Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street*

Unit VI: List and describe the key figures and features of the Church of Satan. Identify and analyze the major themes of the Jewish and Christian Bibles in E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web*

Unit VII: List and describe the key figures and features of New Religious Movements. Identify and analyze the major themes of the Jewish and Christian Bibles in Denis Johnson's *Jesus' Son*

Unit VIII: List and describe the major themes of secular humanism. Identify and analyze the major themes of the Jewish and Christian Bibles in Elie Wiesel's *Night*

Course Requirements

Online Course

This is an online course and therefore there will not be any face-to-face class sessions. All assignments and course interactions will utilize internet technologies.

Computer Requirements

This course requires that you have access to a computer that can access the internet. You will need to have access to, and be able to use, the following software packages:

- A web browser (Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox)
- Adobe Acrobat Reader (free)
- Adobe Flash Player (free)
- Microsoft Word
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You are responsible for having a reliable computer and internet connection throughout the course.

Email and Internet

You must have an active Doane University e-mail account and access to the Internet. *All instructor correspondence will be sent to your Doane University e-mail account.* Please plan on checking your DU email account regularly for course related messages.

This course uses Blackboard for the facilitation of communications between faculty and students, submission of assignments, and posting of grades. The Blackboard Course Site can be accessed at <http://bb2.doane.edu>

Campus Network or Blackboard Outage

When access to Blackboard is not available for an extended period of time (greater than one entire evening - 6pm till 11pm) you can reasonably expect that the due date for assignments will be changed to the next day (assignment still due by midnight).

Attendance/Participation

Preparation for class means reading the assigned readings & reviewing all information required for that week. *Attendance* in an online course means logging into the Blackboard and on a regular basis and *participating* in the all of activities that are posted in the course.

Studying and Preparation Time

The course requires you to spend time preparing and completing assignments. A three-credit course requires 135 hours of student work. Therefore, expect to spend approximately 16 hours a week preparing for and actively participating in this course. (8-week course)

Late or Missed Assignments

All assignments must be finished and turned in to complete the course. Unless the instructor is notified BEFORE the assignment is due and provides an opportunity for the student to submit his/her assignment late, points may be taken off for a late assignment.

Rewrites

Students may submit their assignments ahead of their due date for review by the instructor as long as the assignment is provided a minimum of three days prior to the course due date. The instructor will provide feedback on the assignment for consideration by the student.

Submitting Assignments

All assignments, unless otherwise announced by the instructor, MUST be submitted via Blackboard. Each assignment will have a designated place to submit the assignment.

Drop and Add dates

If you feel it is necessary to withdraw from the course, please contact your advisor for full details on the types of withdrawals that are available and their procedures.

Subject to change notice

All material, assignments, and deadlines are subject to change with prior notice. It is your responsibility to stay in touch with your instructor, review the course site regularly, or communicate with other students, to adjust as needed if assignments or due dates change.

Academic Integrity

Doane University expects and requires all its students to act with honesty and integrity, and respect the rights of others in carrying out all academic assignments. Academic dishonesty, the act of knowingly and willingly attempting or assisting others to gain academic success by

dishonest means, is manifested in various measures. Gehring, et al, (1986) suggests that four categories of academic dishonesty exist¹:

1. Cheating
2. Fabrication
3. Facilitating academic dishonesty
4. Plagiarism

For more information on academic integrity, please visit the website:

<http://catalog.doane.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=191>

Course Grading

Grades and Grading Scale

Assignment of letter grades is based on a percentage of points earned. The letter grade will correspond with the following percentages achieved. All course requirements must be completed before a grade is assigned.

A	1000 – 900
B	899 – 800
C	799 – 700
D	699 – 600
F	599 and below

Summary of Assignments

Item	Points	Date
Item #1 Cyber Cafe #1	100	Week 1
Item #2 Cyber Cafe #2	100	Week 2
Item #3 Cyber Cafe#3	100	Week 3
Item #4 Cyber Cafe #4	100	Week 4
Item #5 Cyber Café #5	100	Week 5
Item #6 Cyber Café #6	100	Week 6
Item #7 Cyber Café #7	100	Week 7

Item #8 Cyber Café #8	100	Week 8
Item #9 Religion Essay	100	Week 5
Item #10 Final Exam	100	Week 9
Total: 1000		

***See the specific assignment instructions on Blackboard.**

Weekly Course Schedule

Week	Topics/Lessons	Activities	Assignments
Week 1	Religion in America: Native American Religions	Reading: <i>Religion in America</i> Instructional Videos: (see course shell)	Cyber Café #1
Week 2	Religion in America: Judaism and Christianity	Reading: <i>Religion in America</i> Instructional Videos: (see course shell)	Cyber Café #2
Week 3	Religion in America: Unitarian Universalism	Reading: <i>The Pearl</i> Instructional Videos: (see course shell)	Cyber Café #3

	Religion and American Literature: Creation/Fall		
Week 4	<p>Religion in America: Christian Science</p> <p>Religion and American Literature: Wandering/Promised Land</p>	<p>Reading: <i>Post Office</i></p> <p>Instructional Videos: (see course shell)</p>	Cyber Café #4
Week 5	<p>Religion in America: Scientology</p> <p>Religion and American Literature: Wandering/Promised Land II</p>	<p>Reading: <i>The House on Mango Street</i></p> <p>Instructional Videos: (see course shell)</p>	<p>Cyber Café #5</p> <p>Religion Essay: <i>America: Journeys of Faith</i></p>
Week 6	<p>Religion in America: The Church of Satan</p> <p>Religion and American Literature: Redemption</p>	<p>Reading: <i>Charlotte's Web</i></p> <p>Instructional Videos: (see course shell)</p>	Cyber Café #6

Week 7	<p>Religion in America:</p> <p>New Religious Movements</p> <p>Religion and American Literature: The Spirit vs. The Flesh</p>	<p>Reading: <i>Jesus' Son</i></p> <p>Instructional Videos: (see course shell)</p>	Cyber Café #7
Week 8	<p>Religion in America:</p> <p>Secular Humanism</p> <p>Religion and American Literature: Questioning God</p>	<p>Reading: <i>Night</i></p> <p>Instructional Videos: (see course shell)</p>	Cyber Café #8
Week 9	N/A	N/A	Final Exam
Week 10			
Week 11			
Week 12			

Week 13			
Week 14			
Week 15			

How to Succeed in this Course

- Check your Doane University email regularly
- Log in to the course web site daily
- Communicate with your instructor
- Create a study schedule so that you don't fall behind on assignments

Student Conduct Statement

Students are required to adhere to the behavior standards listed in **Doane University Policy Manual**

Appropriate classroom behavior is defined by the instructor. This includes the number and length of individual messages online. Course discussion messages should remain focused on the assigned discussion topics. Students must maintain a cordial atmosphere and use tact in expressing differences of opinion. Inappropriate discussion board messages may be deleted if an instructor feels it is necessary. Students will be notified privately that their posting was inappropriate.

Student access to the course Send Email feature may be limited or removed if an instructor feels that students are sending inappropriate electronic messages to other students in the course.

Syllabus Disclaimer

The instructor views the course syllabus as an educational contract between the instructor and students. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as deemed necessary. Students will be notified in a timely manner of any syllabus changes face-to-face, via email or in the course site Announcements.

Please remember to check your Doane University email and the course site Announcements often.

Title IX Policy Statement

It is the policy of Doane University not to discriminate on the basis of gender in its educational programs, activities or employment policies as required by Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments. Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX may be directed to the Director of Human Resources, Doane University, 1014 Boswell Avenue, Crete, NE 68333 or to the Director 9 of the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C., 20202.

Academic Support Center

The Academic Support Center (ASC) located in room 204 of the Fred Brown Building offers academic support in the areas of time management, study strategies, note taking, test taking, math, reading, and writing. Free tutoring and free one-on-one meetings are available to provide assistance in these areas. Additionally, free proofreading of final drafts of papers is available 24/7.

Contact Person: Tere Francis Phone: 402.466.4774 Email: terese.francis@doane.edu

Accessibility Statement

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, professional disability specialists and support staff at Doane University facilitate a comprehensive range of academic support services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Doane University staff coordinate transition from high schools and community colleges, in-service training for faculty and staff, resolution of accessibility issues, community outreach, and collaboration between all Doane University regarding disability policies, procedures, and accommodations.

Accessibility Services

Doane University Access/Services for Students with Disabilities

<http://www.doane.edu/disability-services>

Contact Person: Angie Klasek Phone: 402.466.4774 Email: angie.klasek@doane.edu

Technical Support Contact Information

For technical assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, please contact the Doane University Technology Office Help Desk:

Phone: 402-826-8411

Email: helpdesk@doane.edu

Web: <http://www.doane.edu>

Student Services

<http://www.doane.edu/gps/student-services>