

RS/IS 4873
CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS
IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Classroom: TBA
Meeting Time: TBA

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Purpose and Outline

At the beginning of the twentieth century, many sociologists had predicted that religion would gradually wane in importance as our world became increasingly scientific, rational, and technological. And yet today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it would seem that exactly the opposite has happened: new religious movements have proliferated wildly throughout the world in the last century and have become intimately tied to the larger questions of citizenship, identity, and community in a global context.

This course will examine a series of new religious movement that have emerge within the last 150 years, placing them within the larger contexts of globalization, transnationalism, and citizenship. These will include: the Native American Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Spiritualism, the Nation of Islam, Rastafari, Vodou, and various forms of religious terrorism (such as al-Qaeda, ISIS, and American-based white supremacist groups). In the course of our discussion, we will ask: why has religion not in fact waned as a global force but instead become even more powerful and relevant in the last century? How is religion tied in complex ways to questions of citizenship, nationalism, and racial and ethnic identity? Why do religious movements often become linked to political violence and terrorism?

In addition to lectures, discussions and films, the class will involve field trips to new religious groups in the Columbus area. Students will one required to write three short papers and develop one group presentation based on some new religious movement not covered in the body of the class.

GENERAL EDUCATION
GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

GE Themes: General

Goal 1: Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations.

Expected Learning Outcomes: 1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.

1.2 Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.

Goal 2: Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making Connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and /or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

Expected Learning Outcomes: 2.1 Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.

2.2 Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.

GE Themes: Citizenship for a Just and Diverse World

Goal 1: Citizenship: Successful students will explore and analyze a range of perspectives on local, national, or global citizenship, and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that constitute citizenship.

Expected Learning Outcomes: 1.1 Describe and analyze a range of perspectives on what constitutes citizenship and how it differs across political, cultural, national, global, and /or historical communities.

1.2 Identify, reflect on, and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for intercultural competence as a global citizen.

Goal 2: Just and Diverse World: Successful students will examine notions of justice amidst difference and analyze and critique how these interact with historically and socially constructed ideas of citizenship and membership within societies, both within the US and /or around the world.

Expected Learning Outcomes: 2.1 Examine, critique, and evaluate various expressions and implications of diversity, equity, inclusion, and explore a variety of lived experiences.

2.2 Analyze and critique the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, citizenship, and how these interact with cultural traditions, structure of power, and /or advocacy for social change.

We meet the outcomes by:

--Examining primary and secondary sources from a range of contemporary religious movements, with special attention to their role in questions of citizenship and identity in a global context.

--Conducting cross-cultural, comparative analysis, which will introduce us to a range of perspectives on how religion relates to citizenship in various geographic and political contexts.

--Preparing ourselves for the responsibilities of global citizenship in a diverse and interconnected world by cultivating tools for critical thinking and through assignments that bring insights from the course to bear on contemporary issues.

--Engaging in difficult but civil conversations across our differences about the intersections of religion and citizenship.

READINGS

Required Texts (available at OSU Book Store)

Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (University of California Press, 2003)
Reuben Snake and Huston Smith, *One Nation Under God: The Triumph of the Native American Church* (Clear Light Books, 1997)
Hugh B. Urban, *New Age, Neopagan and New Religious Movements* (University of California Press, 2016)

Short readings On-line

There will also be additional short readings available on our Carmen/ Canvas site

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

Evaluations in this class will be based on four things:

1. Attendance and participation (20% of final grade). This means: attendance to all classes and vigorous participation in class discussions. More than two unexcused absences will result in a lower grade (loss of 2 points per additional absence)
2. Generating discussion questions based on the readings (15% of final grade). Students will post 1-2 discussion questions on the readings once a week. Question should be posted on our Carmen site **the night before class**.
3. Three short written papers (4-6 pages) on assigned topics (45% of final grade). The papers must make use of the readings discussed in class. One of the three papers must be a field observation report based on a group visit to a religious community in central Ohio (trips dates and places TBA).
4. Group project on a new religious movement not covered in class (20% of final grade). Students will work in groups of 3-5 members and will do a 30-40 minute presentation to the class. Everyone who does it will get full credit (20 points). Awards and extra points will be given for the overall best presentation and for the most entertaining presentation.

Grading Scale:

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-87	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	E	0-59

STUDENT RIGHTS AND CONDUCT

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee. For additional information, see Code of Student Conduct:

<http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

SYLLABUS

WEEK I. INTRODUCTION

8-23 Approaches to Globalization, Citizenship, and New Religious Movements

Read: BBC News, "Baha'i" (on Carmen/ Canvas)
"Was Anders Breivik a Christian Terrorist?" (Carmen)
BBC News, "What is Islamic State?" (Carmen)
Recommended: Lechner and Boli, "Globalization Reader" (Carmen)

8-25 The Peyote Movement and the Native American Church

Read: Urban, *New Age*, pp.26-33
Smith and Snake, *One Nation*, pp.15-27, 31-65, 105-119
Film: "Peyote Road"

WEEK II. THE PEYOTE MOVEMENT, CONT; SPIRITUALISM IN 19th CENTURY AMERICA

8-30 The Peyote Ceremony and the Legal Debate

Read: Urban, *New Age*, pp.36-44
Smith and Snake, *One Nation*, pp. 77-141
Film: "Peyote Road, cont."

9-1 Spiritualists, Women, and Abolitionists in Nineteenth Century America

Read: Urban, *New Age*, pp.67-83

WEEK III. MORMONISM, PLURAL MARRIAGE, AND THE LAW

9-6 Mormons and Plural Marriage in the Nineteenth Century

Read: Urban, *New Age*, pp.45-62

9-8 The LDS and FLDS: Ongoing Debates over Religious Freedom and Law

Read: Urban, *New Age*, pp.62-66
"About the FLDS" (Carmen)

* * * * *Note: First Paper Due by midnight September 12* * * * *

WEEK IV. THE NATION OF ISLAM AND THE FIVE PERCENTERS

9-13 From Moorish Science Temple to Nation of Islam

Read: Urban, *New Age*, pp. pp.90-105
Film clip: Malcolm X interview

9-15 From Nation of Islam to Five Percenters: Race, Religion and Hip-Hop

Read: Urban, *New Age*, pp.105-113
Swedenburg, "Islam in the Mix" (Carmen)
"God the Black Man and the Five Percenters" (Carmen)

WEEK V. RASTAFARI: CULTURAL RESISTANCE, MUSIC, AND GANJA

9-20 The Origins of Rastafari in Twentieth Century Jamaica

Read: Urban, *New Age*, pp.114-152

9-22 Rastas, Reggae, and Ganja in the Contemporary U.S.

Read: Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads* (Carmen)
"ACLU Asks U.S. Appeals Court" (Carmen)
Film: "Rebel Music"

**** *Note: Final Project Topic Due in class September 22* ****

WEEK VI. VODOU AND AFRO-CARRIBEAN RELIGIONS

9-27 Vodou in Haiti and Brooklyn

Read: Brown, *Mama Lola, I* (on Carmen)
Film clips: Vodou in Haiti and Brooklyn

9-29 Spirit Possession and Animal Sacrifice, from Brooklyn to Florida

Read: Brown, *Mama Lola, II* (Carmen)
"Conflicts Concerning Santeria Sacrifices" (on Carmen)

WEEK VII: THE CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY: TAX EXEMPTION AND "CULT" DEBATES

10-4 From Dianetics to Scientology

Read: Urban, *New Age*, pp.135-149

10-6 Scientology, Cults, Religion, and the Debate over Tax Exemption

Read: Urban, *New Age*, 149-156
Time Magazine, "The Cult of Greed" (Carmen)
"The Truth Run Down" (Carmen)
Film clip: "Scientology"

WEEK VIII. NEOPAGANISM AND WICCA

10-11 Wicca, Feminism and Environmentalism

Read: Urban, *New Age*, pp.157-178
Film clip: Starhawk on Wicca and Permaculture

10-13 Autumn Break: No Class

**** *NOTE: Second short paper due by midnight October 17* ****

WEEK IX. MODERN SATANISM AND THE "SATANIC PANIC"

10-18 The Church of Satan and Temple of Set

Read: Urban, *New Age*, pp.179-191
Film Clip: "Satanis: The Devil's Mass"

10-20 Satanism in Popular Culture and the Satanic Panic of the 1980s

read: Urban, *New Age*, pp.191-200

Marilyn Manson interview (on Carmen)
Film clip: Debates over the Satanic Temple and Baphomet Statues

WEEK X. ASIAN RELIGIONS IN AMERICA

10-25 VEDANTA SOCIETY AND ISKCON (Hare Krishna)

Read: Urban, "ISKCON/ Hare Krishna" (Carmen)

10-27 Osho/ Rajneesh

Read: Urban, *Zorba the Buddha* (on Carmen)

Film: "Wild Wild Country"

***** Note: Final Project Bibliography Due in class October 27*****

WEEK XI. BAHAI FAITH AND THE UNITY OF RELIGIONS?

11-1 From Babism to Baha'i

Read: Hartz, *Baha'i Faith*, pp.8-67 (on Carmen)

Film: "What is Baha'i Faith?"

11-3 Baha'i, Globalization, and the Unity of Religions

Read: Prothero, *God is not One* (on Carmen)

Hartz, Baha'i Faith, pp.68-134

Film clip: Stephen Prothero on Colbert Report

******* Note: Final Project Bibliography Due March 27*******

WEEK XII. MILLENARIAN AND APOCALYPTIC MOVEMENTS

11-8 Peoples Temple and the Jonestown Murder-Suicides

Read: Urban, *New Age*, pp.242-264

"Murder or Suicide? What I saw" (Carmen)

Film: PBS Frontline, "Jonestown"

11-10 Branch Davidians and the Tragedy at Waco

read: Urban, *New Age*, pp. 265-280

Film: "Waco: The Inside Story"

WEEK XIII. RELIGION AND GLOBAL VIOLENCE

11-15 Soldiers for Christ: Abortion Clinic Bombers and Aryan Christians

Read: Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, pp.xi-xvii, 3-43

Film: "Blood in the Face"

11-17 Aum Shinrikyo and Terrorism in 1990s Japan

Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, 103-250

WEEK XIV. RELIGION AND GLOBAL VIOLENCE, CONT.

11-22 Radical Islam and ISIS/ ISIL/ Islamic State/ Da'esh

Read: Juergensmeyer, *Terror*, pp.61-84
"What ISIS Really Wants" (on Carmen)

11-24 Thanksgiving: No Class

WEEK XV. STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

11-29 **Student Presentations:** Attendance counts double

12-1 **Student Presentations:** Attendance counts double

WEEK XVI: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS, CONT.

12-6 **Student Presentations:** Attendance counts double

******* NOTE: *third short paper due by midnight December 13* *******

SUGGESTIONS FOR FINAL PROJECT TOPICS

Buddhism in America
Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster (Pastafarians)
Christian Science
Civil Religion/ Nationalism
Conspiracy Theories and religion (eg., QAnon)
Create your own Religion
Cyber-pagans or Techno-pagans
Falun Gong
Fan Culture as religion (Harry Potter, Star Wars, Star Trek, etc)
Global Catholicism
Global Pentecostalism
Heaven's Gate
Jedi-ism
The Kabbalah Learning Center
The Manson Family
Music Concerts (Grateful Dead, Phish, etc) as religious events
Neo-paganism (other forms than what we talk about in class, such as Druids, Odinism, etc)
OSU Football or other sports as religion
The Raelians
The Solar Temple
Unification Church
Vedanta Society/ Ramakrishna Mission
Westboro Baptist Church
World Harvest Church
Yoga in America