

CS367 Religious Diversity in America Fall 2005

Tuesday/ Thursday 10:30-12:18

Professor Erzen

433 Hagerty Hall

Email: erzen.2@osu.edu

Office hours: Tuesday 1-3pm

Course Description:

This course is designed to give you an opportunity to learn about religious diversity in the United States while also improving your ability to write college-level essays. In the course, we will read critically and analyze texts from a variety of disciplines to help you articulate ideas and arguments in discussion. The United States today contains over 2000 recognized religious groups, while nearly 60% of Americans say that religion is "very important" in their lives. While we cannot cover all the religions in contemporary America, the course explores Native American religions, Mormonism, Islam, Evangelical Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Rastafarianism and Haitian Vodou. We will read short stories, memoirs, journalism, ethnography, and academic writing and view documentaries and films in order to further your understanding of different styles of writing and expression.

Readings:

Julia Corbett-Hemeyer, *Religion in America: Fifth Edition*

Jon Krakauer, *Under the Banner of Heave: A Story of Violent Faith*

Sonsyrea Tate, *Little X: Growing Up in the Nation of Islam*

Lis Harris, *Holy Days: The World of a Hasidic Family*

(available at SBX Book Store 1806 North High St., Phone: (614) 291-9528 and on reserve at the Main Library)

The articles are available on regular reserve at the Main Library and for purchase at **Zip Copy at SBX bookstore for \$13.95.**

Assignments:

This is a seminar designed to improve your writing skills. Therefore, in-class writing will be an important part of the course. We will discuss and practice writing techniques such as the introduction, conclusion, arguments, organization, style, and some grammar.

Paper #1: Students will write a 2-3 page, typed, double-spaced response paper to the readings on religious diversity. Included in the responses should be the following: what the student feels are the main themes discussed in the text, the effectiveness of the author's argument, and a list of at least three questions to be addressed in class. I will also distribute questions to guide the response paper.

Due October 4th at the beginning of class

Paper #2: This paper will be a revised version of your response paper (4-5 pages). You will be asked to undertake a substantial rewriting and expansion of your response essay, taking into account my comments and your growing understanding of the material.

Due October 25th at the beginning of class

Papers #3: This paper will be (8-10 pages) on topics related to the readings. Topics will be distributed in class one week prior to the paper's due date. Each paper will be submitted for peer review. Peer editing will be done in groups of three or four in which students comment on the essays of each group member. Students will be provided with a form to complete for each member, to be returned to the author and then submitted for evaluation with the revised draft of the paper.

Peer Edits Due November 10th in class

Final Paper Due December 1st in class

My computer crashed, and my grandma ate my homework...

All essays should be written in 12-point, double-spaced type, with standard margins, and pages numbered and stapled. *All written work should be thoroughly proofread.* There are no extensions, and all assignments are marked down one-third of a letter grade for every late day. **After 3 days, if you have not turned in your paper, you will automatically receive a "0" for that paper. No exceptions.**

Grading:

Attentive presence, in-class writing, quizzes and participation in discussion: 20%

Paper #1: 15%

Paper #2: 20%

Paper #3: 25%

Peer Editing and Revision: 20%

Student Conferences: You must meet with me at least once during the semester to discuss one of your papers. However, feel free to stop by office hours or schedule an appointment if necessary. Email is always the fastest way to reach me.

Attendance and Participation:

I expect students to be active participants in their educations. This means that each student should come to class having carefully read the assigned readings and be prepared to discuss them. Because knowing how to articulate your ideas is a crucial part of the learning process, you will be expected, as a member of the seminar, to contribute your own unique perspective to our discussions.

The real action of our seminar takes place in the classroom. Therefore, it is important and expected that you will be at every class session. Inevitably, an occasion may arise when you are unable to attend. Out of fairness to your classmates who do attend every class, chronic lateness and/or more than one unexcused absence will detract from your participation grade. To make up for a missed class, you may turn in a 2-page, single-

spaced précis summarizing the reading for the class you missed. Finally, if you have any special needs or concerns with this course, please feel free to come and talk with me.

Student Rights and Conduct

Any student with a documented disability who may require special accommodations should identify him or herself to the instructor as early in the quarter as possible to receive effective and timely accommodations. You may also wish to contact the Office for Disability Services (150 Pomerene Hall, 292-3307).

Students are expected to know and understand the rules regarding academic misconduct, particularly the rules regarding plagiarism, as stated in the University's Code of Student Conduct. Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own: it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. All cases of plagiarism will be treated very seriously according to the University's guidelines.

*** Readings in Packet and on reserve**

Course Schedule:

Thursday Sept. 22nd

Introductions

Case studies on Religious freedom distributed in class

Sept. 27

*Read "Religious America: Diversity and Freedom" and "Studying and Describing Religion" in *Religion in America*

The Short Story: Native American Religion

Sept. 29

*BACKGROUND: "A Brief History of the Native American Church," "The Peyote Ceremony" and "The American Indian Religious Freedom Act Amendments of 1994" from *One Nation Under God*

Film Clips: *Peyote Road*

Oct. 4- ---Rosh Hashanah

Sherman Alexie, "Somebody Kept Saying Powwow"

Louise Erdrich, "Love Medicine"

Film Clips: *Smoke Signals*

First Response Paper to ideas about pluralism and diversity Due

Popular Non-Fiction: Mormonism

Oct. 6

Under the Banner of Heaven prologue and Part 1 pp. 1-91
BACKGROUND: pp. 174-184 in *Religion in America*

Oct. 11

Under the Banner of Heaven Part II and III pp. 93-255

Oct. 13

Under the Banner of Heaven or film? Finish book IV pp. 256-339

Discussion of Writing Techniques: The Introduction and Conclusion

Memoir: Islam

Oct. 18

Little X Introduction and chapters 1-4 pp. 1-70
BACKGROUND: pp. 238-252 in *Religion in America*

Oct. 20

Little X Introduction and chapters 5-9 pp. 71-115

Oct. 25

Finish *Little X* chapters 10-14

Film: *Born in the USA: Muslim-Americans* Ahmad Soliman

Revision of Initial Response Paper into an Analytical Paper with Thesis and Conclusion Due

Academic Scholarly Writing: Transnational Religion: Vodou and Rastafarianism

Oct. 27

*Elizabeth McAlister, "The Madonna of 115th Street Revisited: Vodou and Haitian Catholicism in the Age of Transnationalism"

*Randal L. Hepner, "The House that Rasta Built: Church-Building and Fundamentalism Among New York Rastafarians"

Journalism: Evangelical Christianity

Nov. 1

*Jonathon Mahler, "The Soul of the New Exurb" *New York Times Magazine*,
March 27, 2005
BACKGROUND: pp. 91-109 in *Religion in America*

Film Clips: *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory*

Nov. 3- ASA

*Bill McKibben, "The Christian Paradox: How a Faithful Nation Gets Jesus Wrong" *Harpers Magazine*, August, 2005

*Russell Shorto, "What's Their Real Problem with Gay Marriage?" *New York Times Magazine*, June 19, 2005

Film Clips: *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory*

Ethnography: Contemporary Judaism and Hasidism and Hinduism

Nov. 8 –

*Prema Kurien, "Becoming American by Becoming Hindu: Indian Americans Take Their Place at the Multicultural Table"

BACKGROUND: pp. 254-267 in *Religion in America*

Nov. 10

Film: *Hiders and Seekers*

**6-8 page paper due for Peer Review (Islam, Transnationalism, Evangelicalism- some level of comparison- memoir v. journalism)
Peer Edits in Class**

Nov. 15

Holy Days: The World of a Hasidic Family chapters 1-3 pp. 9-76

BACKGROUND: pp. 193-218 in *Religion in America*

Nov. 17

Holy Days: The World of a Hasidic Family chapters 4-9 pp. 77-188

Nov. 22

Holy Days: The World of a Hasidic Family chapters 10-15 pp. 189-260

Second set of peer edits taking into account any expansion or new material or response to Holy Days

Nov. 24- Thanksgiving

Nov. 29

Film: *A Life Apart*

**Dec. 1. Wrap up and Conclusion- Final Paper Due in Class
Final Presentations**

University Writing Resources:

The Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing, 485 Mendenhall Lab, cstw@osu.edu
614-688- 5865 <http://cstw.osu.edu>

The [Writing Center at CSTW](#) offers free help with writing at any stage of the writing process for any member of the university community. They can work with you on anything from research papers to lab reports, from dissertations to resumes, from proposals to application materials. They also maintain a resources page with [writing handouts and weblinks](#).

Selected Bibliography for Further Reading:

General:

Robert A. Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton, 2005)

Diana Eck, *Religious Diversity in America: How a Christian Country Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (HarperCollins, 2002)

Elizabeth McAlister and Henry Goldschmidt, *Race, Nation and Religion in the Americas* (Oxford, 2004)

William Hutchinson *Religious Pluralism in America* (Yale, 2003)

Native American Religion:

Huston Smith, ed. *One Nation Under God: The Triumph of the Native American Church* (Clear Light Pub., 1998)

Mormonism:

Richard N. Ostling and Joan K. Ostling, *Mormon America: The Power and the Promise* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1999)

Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: A Story of a New Religious Tradition* (University of Illinois Press, 1987)

Lawrence Foster, *Women, Family, and Utopia: Communal Experiments of the Shakers, the Oneida Community, and the Mormons* (Syracuse University Press, 1991)

Islam:

Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America* (Columbia University Press; 2000)

Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, 2005)

Transnational Religions:

R. Stephen Warner, Judith G. Wittner, *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration* (Temple, 1998)

Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn* (University of California, 2001)

Elizabeth McAlister, *Rara: Vodou, Power and Performance in Haiti and its Diaspora* (University of California, 2003)

Evangelicalism:

Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* (Farrar, Strauss, 2003)

Randall Balmer, *Blessed Assurance: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America* (Beacon, 1999)

Donald Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism* (University of California, 1997)

Christian Smith: *Christian America? What Evangelicals Really Want* (University of California, 2000)

Hinduism:

Thomas A. Tweed, ed. *Asian Religions in America: A Documentary History* (Oxford University Press, 1998)

Raymond B. Williams, *Religions of Immigrants from India* (Cambridge, 1988)

Judaism:

Joseph Blau, *Judaism in America: From Curiosity to Third Faith*

Arnold Eisen, *Taking Hold of Torah: Jewish Commitment and Community in America*

Lynn Davidman, *Tradition in a Rootless World: Women Turn to Orthodox Judaism*
(California, 1993)

Writing Guide: