

**Rel 302: Religion and Cultural Conflict (Spring 2020)**  
Professor Luke Whitmore  
(Office Hours CCC 417: Wed. 1:30-5:30 and by appointment)  
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(image by Brian Stauffer)

**Description**

The power of religion to encourage violence and create conflict is well-known. The power of religion to create peace and harmony is also well-known. Each of these statements represents how much of the world views "religion." In this course we will explore some of the specific reasons that religions have the ability to both encourage violence and create peace.

## Learning Outcomes:

This course offers you the tools necessary to achieve the following outcomes:

- **GEP Humanities 1:** Read closely, think critically, and write effectively about texts or cultural artifacts that reflect on perennial questions concerning the human condition (such as the search for truth and meaning, the confrontation with suffering and mortality, or the struggle for justice, equality, and human dignity).
- **GEP Humanities 2:** Investigate and thoughtfully respond to a variety of ideas, beliefs or values held by persons in situations other than one's own.
- **RELIGIOUS STUDIES:** Demonstrate the ability to interpret, describe, and compare religious phenomena as they intersect with diverse historical, social, and cultural contexts.

## Required Texts: For Purchase

Juergensmeyer, Mark. *Terror in the Mind of God, Fourth Edition: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. (Comparative Studies in Religion and Society) Fourth Edition. (University of California ISBN-10: 0520291352 ISBN-13: 978-0520291355

Chidester, David. *Salvation and Suicide: An Interpretation of Jim Jones, the Peoples Temple, and Jonestown* (Revised). (Indiana University Press, 2003). ISBN 9780253216328

## Assessments and Requirements

Attendance: 5%

Pop quizzes on study questions: 10% (lowest grade dropped)

Participation and Preparation: 5%

Conversation Leaders: 5%. Each class two students will be asked to prepare (together) some very brief remarks and questions about the reading and to take a proactive role in guiding class discussion.

3 Short Essays: 15% x 3 = 45%. 600-800 words. Each essay concludes a unit of the course.

Final Research Project: 30%

- Annotated Bibliography and Thesis Statement: 5%
- Oral Presentation: 5%
- Final Essay: 20%

## Percentage to Letter Grade Conversion

A: 94-100, A-: 90-93, B+: 87-89, B: 83-86, B-: 80-82, C+:77-79, C: 73-76. C-: 70-72, D+: 67-69, D: 65-66, F: 64 or lower

## Learning Accommodations

UWSP is committed to providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations to students with disabilities and temporary impairments. If you have a disability or acquire a condition during the semester where you need assistance, please contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center on the 6th floor of Albertson Hall (library) as soon as possible. DATC can be reached at 715-346-3365 or [DATC@uwsp.edu](mailto:DATC@uwsp.edu)  
<https://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/default.aspx>

## Written Assignments

If you are not able to turn in on time due to particularly extenuating circumstances, some flexibility may be possible. If this is the case, you must have asked and received permission from me no later than the day before the assignment is due. Without permission, a grade penalty will be assigned at my discretion or I may not allow you to submit.

## Required Readings

If I do not provide photocopies of an assigned reading not in one of our books, you must print out the reading (you will find PDF versions on our Canvas site) and bring to class. I strongly discourage reading PDF documents on a smartphone.

## Electronics

Tablets or laptops for the purposes of note-taking are fine, with permission. Please place your smartphones inside your bags during class unless you have compelling personal reason to keep your phone where you can see it. In this case, please let me know at the beginning of class. If it continues to be an issue it will impact your participation and preparation grade.

## Assignments

Assignments will change. Be sure to check Canvas before each assignment.

## Attendance

Regular attendance is expected.

- 2 or fewer unexcused absences (Excellent) = 90-100%
- 3-6 unexcused absences (Good) = 80-90%
- 6-10 unexcused absences (Poor) = 66-79%
- More than 10 absences of any kind = failure of class as a whole unless you and I meet in person and agree that it is possible for you to continue and succeed in the class. This option may require the completion of extra work.

Absences will be excused only when the excuse is provided (via email or in person) in advance of the class that will be missed. You should also be sure to upload a note/relevant information (including a copy of emails to me) into the "Absence-Related Info" folder on Canvas. **Acceptable**

**reasons for an excused absence are illness, family emergency, or school (not club) sponsored trip or athletic competition.** If you miss class (excused or unexcused) you should complete the assignments, request and review notes from a colleague, and then come to discuss with me any questions you have about the material. and study any class notes posted on Canvas. It is not the professor's responsibility to fill you in on what you missed if you were absent.

*Note: If you miss more than 5 classes I strongly suggest that we meet in person to discuss how things are going. I have found that repeated absence usually means you are struggling with something.*

**I assume you have reviewed the following policies and guidelines:**

<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Student-Conduct.aspx>

<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CH17-UWSP-Updated2018.pdf>

<https://catalog.uwsp.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=422#section-1-communal-bill-of-rights-and-responsibilities>

### **Resources Regarding Academic Integrity**

<https://libraryguides.uwsp.edu/plagiarism>

<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/AcademicIntegrityBrochure.pdf>

### **Emergency Response Guidance:**

- In the event of a medical emergency call 9-1-1 or use the closest Red Emergency Phone. Offer assistance if trained and willing to do so. Guide emergency responders to victim.
- In the event of a tornado warning, proceed to the lowest level interior room without window exposure.
- In the event of a fire alarm, evacuate the building in a calm manner.
- Active Shooter/Code React – Run/Escape, Hide, Fight. If trapped hide, lock doors, turn off lights, spread out and remain quiet. Call 9-1-1 when it is safe to do so. Follow instructions of emergency responders. See UW-Stevens Point Emergency Procedures at [uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures](https://uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures) for details on all emergency response at UW-Stevens Point.”