

## REL 111: RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN MODERN AMERICA

Sections M01 & W01

Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00 – 12:15 PM, Virtual Classroom

*Instructor:* Dr. Ryan T. O’Leary

*Email:* roleary@uwsp.edu

*Zoom Office Hours:* 1:00 – 3:00 PM Monday and Wednesday

**Description:** This course surveys the religious landscape of modern America, with emphasis upon issues of pluralism, tolerance, and inclusion. We will pay particular attention to the ways in which America’s increasing religious diversity impacts debates concerning politics, law, education, and public space.

**Content-Related Learning Objectives:** By taking this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe and evaluate the influence of important people and texts at the intersection of American religion and culture.
2. Describe how people or institutions in the United States have constructed diverse identities based on ethnicity, gender, nationality, race, and religion.
3. Explain how individuals or groups in the United States have responded to the experience of discrimination and inequality.

**Skills-Related Learning Objectives:** By taking this course, students will have opportunities to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of and empathetic insight about diverse cultural perspectives in the U.S. by considering and responding to a variety of different ideas, beliefs, or values.
2. Develop an “interpretive toolbox” by applying analytical ideas like authority, nativism, pluralism, and religious freedom to texts, current affairs, or your own experiences.

**Attendance Policy:** Students are encouraged to attend synchronously during the virtual class sessions but may view lessons asynchronously if they are unable to attend during the posted class times.

**Late Work Policy:** Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty of 1 point per day the assignment is late deducted from any points the assignment earns.

## READING LIST

### For Purchase

Thomas S. Bremer, *Formed From This Soil: An Introduction to the Diverse History of Religion in America*

### Required Readings Online

Jack Herrera, "DNA tests can't tell you your race," *Popular Science*, December 27, 2019, <https://www.popsci.com/story/science/dna-tests-myth-ancestry-race/>

### Required Readings on Canvas

Thomas Jefferson, "Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom in Virginia"  
Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address" and "Gettysburg Address"  
Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter From a Birmingham Jail"  
John L. O'Sullivan, "The Great Nation of Futurity"

### Film Available through Kanopy

*Voices of Muslim Women from the U.S. South*

### Recommended Readings on Canvas

Genieve Abdo, "Islam in America: Separate but Unequal"  
Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America"  
David E. Campbell and Robert D. Putnam, "America's Grace: How a Tolerant Nation Bridges Its Religious Divides"  
Fredrick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"  
Andrew Hartman, *A War for the Soul of America*, "The Sixties as Liberation"  
Frank Lambert, "'I Saw the Book Talk': Slave Readings of the First Great Awakening"  
Justin B. Litke, "Varieties of American Exceptionalism: Why John Winthrop Is No Imperialist"  
Kera Lovell, "Girls Are Equal Too: Education, Body Politics, and the Making of Teenage Feminism"  
James Madison, "Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments"  
David Mislin, "One Nation, Three Faiths: World War I and the Shaping of 'Protestant-Catholic-Jewish' America"  
Uzma Rashid, "Muslim Women in America: Challenges and Politics of Diversity Within American Community"  
Harel Shapira, "From the Nativist's Point of View: How Ethnography Can Enrich Our Understanding of Political Identity"  
Daniel K. Williams, "Jerry Falwell's Sunbelt Politics: The Regional Origins of the Moral Majority"  
Rhys H. Williams, "Immigration and National Identity in Obama's America: The Expansion of Culture-War Politics"

## EVALUATION & GRADING

Students will be graded according to a standard 100-point distribution, based on points earned, minus points lost for excessive absences.

97 - 100 = A+	87 - 89 = B+	77 - 79 = C+	67 - 69 = D+	0 - 59 = F
93 - 96 = A	83 - 86 = B	73 - 76 = C	63 - 66 = D	
90 - 92 = A-	80 - 82 = B-	70 - 72 = C-	60 - 62 = D-	

**In-Class Activities:** Periodically throughout the semester we will do in-class activities designed to gauge engagement with course material and help spark discussion. Five of these activities will be collected randomly throughout the semester. Each will be worth up to 5 points, and the lowest score will be dropped.

*Total: 20 points*

**Discussion Boards:** Online discussions will supplement in-class discussions by providing a space to consider important people and texts encountered throughout the course, to apply key ideas, and to analyze issues of religious diversity in America. The instructor will open several discussion threads during the semester; students also have the option of starting threads.

- Each week marked “Discuss Online” in the course schedule, you should do one of three things. Either (a) *post* a formal and thoughtful answer to one discussion thread prompt; (b) *reply* to at least two of your classmates’ posts or replies; or (c) begin a *new thread* with a prompt designed to engage your peers in thoughtful discussion of a relevant topic.
- Each post or new prompt will be worth up to 4 points; each response will be worth up to 2 points. Posts will be graded based on engagement with reading material, comprehension, and application of important ideas. Replies and new discussion prompts will be graded on how well they move a conversation forward or spark new avenues of thought.

*Total: 40 Points*

**Adopt a Persona:** The final requirement for the course asks you to imagine that you are a figure from America’s past, of any race, ethnicity, or gender, that has had an impact on American culture. For example, you may imagine that you are Thomas Jefferson, Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, Muhammad Ali, or some other important cultural figure, whether we have studied them directly or not, as long as there is historical distance between their time and today.

- First, read or watch some statement of that figure’s personal and cultural perspective relevant to issues of religion and diversity in America. For example, you might consider Abraham Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address” and other speeches, Fredrick Douglass’ “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” or some of Muhammad Ali’s televised interviews.
- Now, imagine that you (as that person) have fallen through a hole in the space-time continuum and find yourself in the present time. Compose a 5 – 10-page series of diary entries or letters written in the voice of the persona you have adopted.
- These diary entries or letters should: (1) describe the American culture you find; (2) evaluate how American culture has changed since your time, especially regarding religion and diversity; (3) assesses the ways that America is still struggling with the same issues you addressed in your writings, speeches, or interviews, and the ways that your efforts have had an impact on American culture.

*Total: 40 points*

## REL 111 COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week 1: January 25 – 29

#### Thursday: Required Online Reading

- ✓ Jack Herrera, “DNA tests can’t tell you your race,” *Popular Science*, December 27, 2019, <https://www.popsci.com/story/science/dna-tests-myth-ancestry-race/>

### Week 2: February 1 – 5

#### Tuesday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “Beginnings,” pages 1 – 9

#### Thursday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “Encounters,” pages 13 – 20; “New Worlds of Contact,” pages 47 - 48
- ✓ Box 1.1, “Zones of Contact,” pages 15 - 16; Box 1.8. “Animism,” page 43

### Week 3: February 8 – 12

#### Tuesday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ Box 2.1, “Authority,” pages 57 – 58
- ✓ “Colonizing America,” pages 69 – 79

#### Thursday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “New Worlds of Reformed Authorities,” pages 85 – 86
- ✓ Box 3.3, “Sacred space,” pages 103 – 104

Discuss Online #1 due Thursday before class

### Week 4: February 15 – 19

#### Tuesday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “A New Nation,” pages 137 – 145
- ✓ Box 4.2, “Pluralism,” pages 138 – 139; Box 4.3, “Enlightenments,” pages 140 – 141

#### Thursday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “The Limits of Liberty,” pages 145 – 148
- ✓ Box 4.4, “Separation of church and state,” page 146

#### Thursday: Required Reading from Canvas

- ✓ Thomas Jefferson, “Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom in Virginia”

Discuss Online #2 due Thursday before class

**Week 5: February 22 – 26**

Tuesday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “A Nation Enslaved,” pages 176 – 183
- ✓ Box 5.1, “Syncretism,” page 159; Box 5.3, “Camp meetings,” page 174; Box 5.4, “Spirituals,” page 182

Thursday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “Expansion,” pages 184 – 185
- ✓ Box 5.5, “Muslim Slaves,” page 184

Discuss Online #3 due Thursday before class

**Week 6: March 1 – 5**

Tuesday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “Women’s Voices” and “Displaced Voices,” pages 193 – 206
- ✓ Box 6.1, “Voice,” page 192; Box 6.2, “Gender,” pages 195 – 196

Thursday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “The Diversity of Religious Voices in America,” pages 223 – 25
- ✓ Box 6.3, “Nativism,” page 210; Box 6.4, “Millennialism,” page 214

Discuss Online #4 due Thursday before class

**Week 7: March 8 – 12**

Tuesday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “The Nation at War,” Reconstructing the Nation,” and “Diverse Voices of the Unified Nation,” pages 252 – 261
- ✓ Box 7.1, “Providentialism,” page 234; Box 7.2, “Race,” page 242

Thursday: Required Reading from Canvas

- ✓ John L. O’Sullivan, “The Great Nation of Futurity”
- ✓ Abraham Lincoln, “Second Inaugural Address” and “Gettysburg Address”

Discuss Online #5 due Thursday before class

**Week 8: March 15 – 19**

Tuesday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “New Lands,” pages 270 – 279; “America’s Double Consciousness,” pages 301 – 304
- ✓ Box 8.1, “The Black Hills,” page 273

Thursday: No Reading

**Week 9: March 22 – 26 (Spring Break)**

**Week 10: March 29 – April 2**

Tuesday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “Modern Worlds,” “Science,” and “Religious Responses to Modern Sciences” (read through “Fundamentalists”), pages 311 – 322
- ✓ Box 9.1, “Fundamentalism,” page 320

Thursday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “Religious Responses to Modern Sciences” (begin with “Rethinking religion”), pages 322 – 328
- ✓ Box 9.2, “Sexuality,” pages 326 – 327

Discuss Online #6 due Thursday before class

**Week 11: April 5 – 9**

Tuesday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “Migrations,” pages 329 – 342

Thursday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “Global America,” pages 342 – 343

Discuss Online #7 due Thursday before class

**Week 12: April 12 – 16**

Tuesday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “Cold War and Civil Rights,” and “Religion of the Nation,” pages 349 – 359
- ✓ Box 10.1, “Civil Religion,” pages 353 – 354

Thursday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ Box 10.2, “Class,” pages 361 – 362; Box 10.3, “The Judeo-Christian Tradition,” pages 366 – 367

Discuss Online #8 due Thursday before class

**Week 13: April 19 – 23**

Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “Confronting Racial Apartheid,” and “Liberated People,” pages 368 – 381
- ✓ Box 10.4, “The Apotheosis of Martin Luther King, Jr.,” page 374

Required Reading from Canvas

- ✓ Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter From a Birmingham Jail”

Discuss Online #9 due Thursday before class

**Week 14: April 26 – 30**

Tuesday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “A Spiritual Nation,” and “Spiritual Immigrants,” pages 383 – 398
- ✓ Box 11.1, “Spirituality,” page 387; Box 11.2, “Yoga,” 395 – 396

Thursday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “Religious America,” pages 411 – 414

Discuss Online #10 due Thursday before class

**Week 15: May 3 – 7**

Tuesday: Formed From This Soil

- ✓ “Crossing Borders,” and “Rethinking America and Religion,” pages 418 – 425
- ✓ Box 12.1, “Globalization,” pages 422 – 423

Thursday: Film (on Kanopy)

- ✓ *Voices of Muslim Women from the U.S South*

**Week 16: May 10 – 14**

Tuesday and Thursday: No reading—work on term papers

**Week 17: Finals Week**

Adopt a Persona assignment due Wednesday, May 19<sup>th</sup> by 11:59 PM

## CONCERNS & RESOURCES

### Academic Concerns

Being a Pointer means going to class regularly, doing your work outside of class, and asking for help if there are questions or concerns.

**Academic Misconduct:** Copying off someone's test, plagiarism, claiming credit for work that is not yours, and all other forms of academic misconduct are not tolerated at UW-Stevens Point. If a student is confused about what exactly academic misconduct is, there is information available regarding rules and procedures for the [process](#). You can also visit with your faculty or learn how to cite the work of others at the [Writing Lab](#).

**Academic Success:** Your full-time job at UW-Stevens Point is *to be a student*. Being successful depend a lot on how much effort and time you invest. It also asking questions or finding support if you feel lost. We have an amazing [Tutoring-Learning Center](#) if you want to learn how to be a better student or need subject-specific help.

**Disability Services:** UW-Stevens Point is committed to supporting students with disabilities the academic and other accommodations, plus the auxiliary aids necessary to ensure your success. To learn more, check out their [site](#) or visit them in Albertson Hall, room 609 (library building).

### Other Concerns and Resources

Responding to student concerns with care, concern, and resources is critical in supporting the success of our students and campus community. Here is a brief list of helpful resources.

#### **Absence from Class**

Contact faculty directly or if a crisis/emergency  
Office of the Dean of Students  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

#### **Academic Difficulty**

Academic & Career Advising Center  
715-346-3226, [uwsp.edu/acac](http://uwsp.edu/acac)

Disability Services & Assistive Technology  
715-346-3365, [uwsp.edu/dtac](http://uwsp.edu/dtac)

Tutoring-Learning Center  
715-346-3568, [uwsp.edu/tlc](http://uwsp.edu/tlc)

Students should visit with faculty of the course in which they are having trouble.

#### **Add/drop Class; Withdrawal Questions**

Office of the Registrar  
715-346-4301 [uwsp.edu/registrar](http://uwsp.edu/registrar)

Students should visit with their Academic Advisor.

#### **Academic Misconduct**

Faculty for the specific course or Office of the Dean of Students to discuss process  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

#### **Alcohol or Drug Use**

Center for Prevention

715-346-3121, [uwsp.edu/dos/aoda-ipv](http://uwsp.edu/dos/aoda-ipv)

#### **Bias or Hate Incidents**

Office of the Dean of Students to report  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

Diversity and College Access  
715-346-4076, [uwsp.edu/dca](http://uwsp.edu/dca)

#### **Concerning Behavior**

Office of the Dean of Students  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

#### **Employment**

Campus Activities and Student Engagement  
715-346-4700, [uwsp.edu/centers/case](http://uwsp.edu/centers/case)

#### **Family Crisis or Emergency**

Office of the Dean of Students  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

#### **Financial Insecurity**

Enrollment Services Center/Financial Aid  
715-346-3300; [uwsp.edu/enrollmentservices](http://uwsp.edu/enrollmentservices)

Emergency Grants

Office of the Dean of Student  
715-346-2611; [Grant Application Form](#)

Financial Coaching Program  
UW-Stevens Point School of Business and Economics

[Website](#) or email: [fincoach@uwsp.edu](mailto:fincoach@uwsp.edu)



Financial Literacy - Online  
[GradReady Program](#)

Financial Literacy - In Person  
Financial Literacy Association (Student Org.)  
College of Professional Studies, [finlit@uwsp.edu](mailto:finlit@uwsp.edu)

### **Food Resources**

The Cupboard - Stevens Point campus  
715-346-4700, [uwsp.edu/centers/case](http://uwsp.edu/centers/case)  
[List of food resources in the community in Marshfield, Stevens Point, and Wausau](#)

### **Housing/Roommate Concerns**

Residential Living (your Hall Director first)  
715-346-3511 (central office), [uwsp.edu/resliving](http://uwsp.edu/resliving)

### **Identity and Difference**

Diversity and College Access  
715-346-4076, [uwsp.edu/dca](http://uwsp.edu/dca)

### **Involvement**

Campus Activities and Student Engagement  
715-346-4700, [uwsp.edu/centers/case](http://uwsp.edu/centers/case)

### **Legal Questions**

Student Legal Services  
715-346-4282, [uwsp.edu/dos/sls](http://uwsp.edu/dos/sls)

### **Loss of Family Member or Friend**

Office of the Dean of Students  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

Counseling Center (confidential services)  
715-346-3553, [uwsp.edu/counseling](http://uwsp.edu/counseling)

### **Mental Health Concerns**

Counseling Center (confidential services)  
715-346-3553, [uwsp.edu/counseling](http://uwsp.edu/counseling)

Mental Health Crisis Line (outside agency)  
866-317-9362 for after hours mental health support

### **Missing Student**

Office of the Dean of Students  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

University Police  
715-346-3456, [uwsp.edu/protsv](http://uwsp.edu/protsv)

### **Non-academic Misconduct**

Office of the Dean of Students  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

### **Physical Health / Injury**

Student Health Service (confidential resource)  
715-346-4646, [uwsp.edu/stuhealth](http://uwsp.edu/stuhealth)

### **Procedural Issue or Conflict**

Office of the Dean of Students  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

### **Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking, or Harassment**

Office of the Dean of Students to report  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

CAP Services - Stevens Point (confidential advocacy services, outside agency)  
715-340-7882, 715-346-4039, 800-472-3377 (toll free), [kpétrick@capmail.org](mailto:kpétrick@capmail.org), [capservices.org](http://capservices.org)

PDC - Marshfield (confidential advocacy services, outside agency)  
715-421-1509 or 844-210-8899 (toll free)

The Women's Community - Wausau (confidential advocacy services, outside agency)  
715-842-8323 or 888-665-1234 (toll free)

Center for Prevention (confidential services)  
715-346-3121, [uwsp.edu/dos/aoda-ipv](http://uwsp.edu/dos/aoda-ipv)

Counseling Center (confidential services)  
715-346-3553, [uwsp.edu/counseling](http://uwsp.edu/counseling)

University Police and Security Services to report  
715-346-3456, [uwsp.edu/protsv](http://uwsp.edu/protsv)

### **Title IX**

Haeryon Kim, 116 Old Main, 715-346-3020, [hakim@uwsp.edu](mailto:hakim@uwsp.edu), [Title IX site](#)

### **Transportation**

[UWSP Rideshare Facebook Page](#)  
[Stevens Point Bus Route](#)  
[Bus connections from Stevens Point](#)

### **Questions or Concerns Not Listed Here**

Office of the Dean of Students  
715-346-2611, [uwsp.edu/dos](http://uwsp.edu/dos)

