

Rel 302 Religion and Cultural Conflict

Spring 18

9:30-10:45 Tues/Thurs Room 233 CCC

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Office hours: 1:00-1:45 Monday and Wednesday

2:00-3:00 Tuesday and Thursday and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the complex relationships between religion, cultural conflict, and violence. We like to think of religion as a good thing only -- as a resource for moral conduct, kindness and peace -- and yet when we look around at the modern world, we find multiple examples of religiously inspired violence and terrorism. At the same time, we also can see many ways that religion can function to challenge structures of violence and to foster more just and peaceful societies. This course will ask students to apply theoretical perspectives on religion, drawn from the sociology of religion and comparative religion, to specific religious movements or groups that use violence or resist violence in situations of cultural conflict. Our primary test cases will be the Sioux Ghost Dance religion of 1890 (reader), multiple cases of religious violence and terrorism from modern global history (Juergensmeyer), and the multiple sides of the conflict over Civil Rights in Mississippi in the mid-1960s (Marsh).

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Read closely, think critically and write effectively about the relationships between religion, cultural conflict and violence or non-violence in the modern world
- Explain analytical tools and concepts from the study of religion and apply those tools and concepts to the analysis of specific religious phenomenon
- Hone skills in information literacy (research)
- Produce a well-constructed and well supported research paper on a topic relevant to the course themes

REQUIRED TEXTS

Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3rd edition

Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights*

REL 302 Reader

Criteria of Evaluation

Midterm exam -- 12.5%
Final exam – 12.5%
Short essay #1 – 12.5%
Short essay #2 – 12.5%
Research paper – 25%
Point system assignments (see below for details) – 25%

Explanation of Assignments

A midterm and a final exam will test your knowledge of material covered in lectures, readings, and other assignments. Format for these tests may include T/F, multiple choice, short answer questions, and essay questions.

Short essays #1 and #2 will challenge you to think deeply about the course material, and to compose a well argued and grammatically clean essay that expresses your ideas clearly. These essays will be graded on a 100 point scale based on the following criteria:

- Essay responds to the prompt in its entirety
- Essay demonstrates clear and detailed understanding of the issues being explored
- Essay is typed and double-spaced with minimal grammatical errors
- Essay is approximately 3 pages, typed and double spaced
- Essay is handed in on assigned due date at the beginning of class
- Essays may be rewritten for a higher grade. In this case, you have *one week* during which you may rewrite the essay and turn it in (include the original graded paper).

Your ***research paper*** will explore a focused topic that involves the intersections of religion, cultural conflict and violence or non-violence. Your research paper

- Must focus on a narrow and clearly defined topic, involving either a person, an event, or a movement relevant to the topic of religion and cultural conflict.
- Must draw on one or more of the tools and concepts used in the study of religion as you work to understand, interpret and/or analyze your topic.
- Must articulate and support a clearly stated thesis that is relevant to the course
- Must exhibit sound research methodology (as reflected in your notes and reference list), making use of at least five relevant secondary sources drawn from a variety of research media including encyclopedia entries, academic articles, and scholarly books.
- Must be well organized, with a strong introduction, a clear paragraph structure, and a thoughtful, relevant conclusion.

- Must appropriately cite all sources in a reference list or bibliography, with notations (parenthetical notes, footnotes or endnotes) throughout as needed.
- Must be typed and double-spaced, free of obvious grammatical and spelling errors, and approximately 5-8 pages in length.

Point System assignments include religion in the news assignments, oral reports, attendance, and assignments designed to help you in the preparation of your research paper. The prompts for each of these will be provided with the assignment schedule. The sum total out of 100 possible points in this category will count for 25% of your final grade.

These assignments and their point values are:

Oral report delivered in round one or round two --- 10 points

Religion in the news #1 --- 10 points

Religion in the news #2 ---- 10 points

Research paper proposal --- 10 points

Annotated bibliography --- 10 points

Research paper thesis statement --- 10 points

Oral report on Research paper ---- 10 points

Attendance* --- 30 points

- **On Attendance** -- Regular attendance is required. Students begin with 30 possible points in attendance and lose one point per *unexcused* absence. Absences will be excused only when an acceptable excuse is provided (via email or in person) *in advance* of the class that will be missed. Acceptable reasons for an excused absence include illness, family emergency, or school sponsored trip (including sports events).

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT: I adhere to a strict policy on academic integrity. Any questions that you may have regarding academic integrity should be resolved before you turn your assignments in. The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. In addition, all infractions will be reported to the university. For more information regarding the university policy on academic misconduct (plagiarism) and disciplinary procedures, please see chapter 14 of the University Handbook, located at this web page link: <http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs/rights/rightsChap14.pdf>

LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability Services Office and then contact me. For more information, please visit the Disability Services Office, located on the 6th floor of Albertson Hall (the library).

Assignment schedule for part 1

Part I. The Study of Religion and the Sioux Ghost Dance		
1/23	Intro class	
1/25	“A Brief Overview of the Nature of Religion” by Donald Miller and Barry Seltser (reader) and “The Ghost Dance Religion” by Alice Kehoe. Pp. 3-9 and 13-26 (reader)	
1/30	“The Ghost Dance Among the Sioux” pp. 796-801 (reader).	Religion in the news #1
2/1 Sociology of Religion	Paden, “As Society, So Religion,” pp. 28-46 from <i>Interpreting the Sacred</i> (reader)	
2/6	Burridge, “The Plains Indians” pp. 76-83 from <i>New Heaven, New Earth</i> (reader) and Wallace, “Nativism and Revivalism” (reader)	Oral reports round 1 begin
2/8 Comparative Perspectives	Paden, “Comparative Perspectives in the Study of Religion, pp. 67-85 from <i>Interpreting the Sacred</i> (reader)	Oral reports
2/13	Martin, “Before and Beyond the Sioux Ghost Dance” (reader)	Oral reports
2/15		Oral reports Short essay #1 due. See prompt below.

Religion in the news #1. Focus on one particular issue or event from recent history or current events in which religion, cultural conflict and/or violence intersect. Using the LEXIS NEXIS database and any other appropriate research tools, research this issue, with the aim of getting as complete a picture as possible of the political, cultural and religious dynamics involved in this issue or event. Your essay should offer a summary of the issue or event, and some analysis or interpretation of the role of religion in it. Include your citations at the end, in correct format. Expected length 1-2 pages, typed and double-spaced.

Essay #1. In 1890, white observers were perplexed and frightened by the emergence of the Ghost Dance religion among the Sioux. (As you know, this confusion and fear helped trigger the infamous Massacre at Wounded Knee). Your job in this essay is to show how analytical tools and concepts drawn from the Sociology of Religion and Comparative Perspectives in religion can help to “make sense” of the Ghost Dance religion. First, you should summarize and clarify the differences between the Sociology of Religion and Comparative Perspectives in religion as explained by William Paden. Then you should draw upon *at least one tool or concept from EACH of these disciplinary perspectives* and apply these tools and concepts in an interpretation of the Ghost Dance movement. Expected length: 3 pages, typed and double spaced.

Oral reports. Round 1. 3-5 minutes

Choose a topic that involves a conflict between Native Americans and the dominant culture in which issues of spirituality/religion are involved. Many possible topics involve Native American struggles to protect their sacred lands such as the struggle over the Black Hills, Taos Blue Lake, Devil's Tower, the Dakota Access Pipeline, or The San Francisco peaks in Arizona. Other possible topics involve Native American prophets responding to the Euro-American invasion such as Handsome Lake (Seneca), Neolin (Delaware), or Tenskwatawa (Shawnee), or the effort to challenge laws discriminating against Native American religions (for example the banning of the Sun Dance).

Research that topic, using a variety of research tools and media as appropriate for your topic. These include encyclopedia articles (especially from the Encyclopedia of Religion), academic articles (accessed via the ATLA ebsco database), library books, and appropriate websites (consider what makes a website qualify as a reliable source). Your research must include at least one reliable academic source.

Give an oral presentation that provides an overview of the conflict, explains specific ways that religion is/was involved with the conflict, and the current state of the conflict. Use visual tools as appropriate.

Pass in a written summary of your presentation (about one paragraph) along with the sources used, using correct citation format. This one page summary with citations document should be submitted at the time of the oral presentation.

Assignments part II & III. Subject to adjustment

Part II. Religion and Violence/Terrorism Juergensmeyer, <i>Terror in the Mind of God (TMG)</i>		
2/20	TMG chapter 1 and pp. 19-24 (abortion clinic bombings and murders)	Finish oral reports round 1
2/22	TMG chapter 2, pp. 24-36 "Soldiers for Christ" Video: "Oklahoma City"	
2/27	TMG chapter 3 "Zion Betrayed"	<i>Religion in the news #2</i>
3/1	TMG chapter 4 "Islam's Neglected Duty"	Oral reports round 2 begin
3/6	TMG chapter 5 "The Sword of Sikhism"	Oral reports
3/8	TMG chapter 6, "Armageddon in a Tokyo Subway"	Oral reports
3/13		<i>Midterm exam</i>
3/15	TMG, chapter 7 Theatre of Terror	Oral reports
3/20	TMG, chapter 8 Cosmic War	Oral reports
3/22	TMG, chapter 9 Martyrs and Demons	<i>Research paper proposals due.</i> Oral reports
Spring break		
4/3	TMG, chapter 10 Warrior's Power	Oral reports
4/5	TMG, chapter 11, The Mind of God	Oral reports
4/10		<i>Short essay #2 due.</i>

Religion in the news #2. Focus on one particular issue or event from recent history or current events in which religion, cultural conflict and/or violence intersect. Using the LEXIS NEXIS database and other research tools, research this issue, with the aim of getting as complete a picture as possible of the dynamics of conflict involved in this issue or event. Your essay should offer a summary of the issue or event, and some analysis or interpretation of the religious dynamics implicated in it. Include your citations at the end, in correct format. Expected length: 1-2 pages, typed and double-spaced.

Essay #2. Choose one of the terrorists or terror incidents described in part I of Juergensmeyer, and then analyze that person or incident using one or more of the concepts he sets forth in part II (e.g., Cosmic war, martyrdom, demonization of enemies, toxic masculinity, etc.). Expected length: pages typed and double-spaced.

Research paper proposals. Submit a one page statement of your proposed area of research. Explain why this topic interests you, and how the topic relates to the themes of this course. List at least three academic sources relevant to your topic, providing the full citation using a standard citation format.

Oral reports. Round 2.

Choose one person or one event relevant to the topic of religion, cultural conflict and violence/non-violence. *TMG* offers many names of perpetrators of religious terrorism, but if you choose one of these figures, be sure to go beyond the material covered in the book. You could also choose a specific event relevant to our overall topic but which is not covered closely in *TMG*. Examples of peacemakers and opponents of tyranny include Desmond Tutu, Thich Nhat Hahn, the Dalai Lama, Mahatma Gandhi, Oscar Romero, Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Research that person or event, using a variety of research tools and media as appropriate for your topic. These include encyclopedia articles (especially from the Encyclopedia of Religion), academic articles (accessed via the ATLA Ebsco database), library books, and appropriate websites (consider what makes a website qualify as a reliable source). Your research must include at least one reliable academic source.

Give an oral presentation that provides an overview of that person or event and the situation of cultural conflict in which they struggle(d). Include visual images or film clips as appropriate. Make connections to the course materials, and pose a question for discussion if possible.

Pass in a written summary of your presentation (about one paragraph) along with the sources used, using correct citation format. This one page summary with citations document should be submitted at the time of the oral presentation.

Part 3. Religion, violence and non-violence in the struggle over Civil Rights (provisional) Charles, Marsh, <i>God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights (GLS)</i>		
4/12	<i>GLS</i> , chapter 1 (Mrs. Fanny Lou Hamer)	
4/17		
4/19	<i>GLS</i> , chapter 2 (Sam Bowers)	
4/24		<i>Annotated bibliography due</i> Oral reports on research papers
4/26	<i>GLS</i> , chapter 3 (Douglas Hudgins)	Oral reports on research papers
5/1		Oral reports on research papers <i>Thesis statement due.</i>
5/3	<i>GLS</i> , chapter 5 (Cleveland Sellers)	Oral reports on research papers
5/8		Oral reports on research papers
5/10		Oral reports on research papers <i>Research papers due.</i>