

RELS 115 001
Religion and Society
MWF 09:00 am to 09:50 am
Spring 2007
ECTR 219

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Office hours: MW 13:00 to 16:00; and by appointment

Description:

Religion isn't something that occurs only in the church, synagogue, mosque, or temple. Religion informs and permeates all aspects of society and culture, even in the heavily modernized United States. We will examine how social, cultural, political, and economic elements combined with religious ones in producing events that have profoundly changed the way we look at the world.

We will look at a few social movements and how religious beliefs and practices played and continue to play a role in these movements. Various sociological theorists – like Durkheim, Weber, and Marx, for instance – will be utilized in helping us understand the socio-structural mechanics of the Civil-Rights Movement, Protestant Evangelicalism, the Native American Church, and Neo-Paganism.

Objectives:

- (1) To demonstrate knowledge of sociological theories utilized to understand religion.
- (2) To explain how religion in America has been utilized as a tool of class, gender, and racial oppression, neutrality, and liberation.
- (3) To explore the margins of American religion, especially in terms of their contributions to American life in general.
- (4) To understand religion not only in terms of ideas and theology, but also in terms of sociology, political science, economics, ethics, art, and music.
- (5) To analyze the historical, contemporary, and global conditions that have helped produce modern religion.

Exams: Each minor exam (2 in total) is worth 15%; mid-term exam and final exam are each worth 25%; pop-quizzes (4 in total) are collectively worth 20%. All exams are short-answer, long-answer, or some combination of the two. Grading Scale: 100-97: A+; 97-94: A; 94-90: A-; ...70-67: D+; 67-64: D; 64-60: D-; 60 and below: F.

Policies: (1) Attendance is mandatory. Two un-excused absences and three incidents of tardiness allowed without five-point grade degradation. (2) Excused absences are allowable for appropriate reasons (illness, death, athletics), and require documentation. (3) Make-up work is only for students with documented, allowable

absences. (4) Students must adhere to the Honor Code of the College of Charleston, which forbids lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarism, and failing to report an Honor Code violation. Students can find a complete version of the Honor Code and all related processes in the *Student Handbook* at http://www.cofc.edu/studentaffairs/general_info/studenthandbook.html

Texts:

1. Balmer, Randall. *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America*. Fourth Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006
2. Berger, Helen A. *A Community of Witches: Contemporary Neo-Paganism and Witchcraft in the United States*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1999.
3. King, Martin Luther. *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Edited by Clayborne Carson. New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1998.
4. *One Nation Under God: The Triumph of the Native American Church*. Compiled and Edited by Huston Smith and Reuben Snake. Santa Fe, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishers, 1996.

Calendar:

Jan. 8: Introduction

Jan. 10: Glory, “About Words” and “Prologue”

Jan. 12: Glory, “California Kickback”

Jan 15: **MLK Jr. Day – No Class**

Jan. 17: Glory, “Dallas Orthodoxy”

Jan 19: Glory, “On Location”

Jan. 22: Glory, “Georgia Charismatics”

Jan. 24: Glory, “Bible School”

Jan. 26: Glory, “Campaign Journal”

Jan. 29: Glory, “Mississippi Missions”

Jan. 31: Glory, “Bible Bazaar”

Feb. 2: Glory, “Sound check”

Feb. 5: Glory, “Purpose Driven” and Epilogue

Feb. 7: **Quiz**

Feb. 9: King, “Preface” and “Early Years”

Feb. 12: King, “Morehouse College”, “Crozer Seminary” and “Boston University”

Feb. 14: King, “Coretta” and “Dexter”

Feb. 16: King, “Montgomery Movement” and “The Violence”

Feb. 19: King, “Desegregation” and “Expanding”

Feb. 21: King, “Birth” and “Brush”

Feb. 23: King, “Pilgrimage”

Feb. 26: King, “March on Washington”

Feb. 28: King, “Malcolm X” and “Black Power”

March 2: **MidTerm**

March 4: **Spring Break**

March 7: **Spring Break**

March 9: **Spring Break**

March 12: Film “Peyote Road”

March 14: Native, “Foreward”, “Preface”, “Introduction”, and “Voices”

March 16: Native, “Peyote Ceremony”

March 19: Native, “Pharmacology”

March 21: Native, “Legal Tango”

March 23: Native, “Public Law”,
“Epilogue”, and “Appendix”

March 26: **Quiz**

March 28: Film on Goddess Spirituality

March 30: Witches, “Background: ‘But
Is It A Religion’ and ‘Theory’”

April 2: Witches, “Background: ‘Neo-
Paganism’ and ‘Gardner’”

April 4: Witches, “Background: ‘Wicca
in the United States’ and all following
pages”

April 6: Witches, “The Magical Self”

April 9: Witches, “The Coven”

April 11: Witches, “The Next
Generation: ‘The Place of Children’ and
‘Children and Rituals’”

April 13: Witches, “The Next
Generation: ‘Rites of Passage’ and all
following pages”

April 16: Witches, “Routinization:
‘Routinization’ and ‘EarthSpirit’”

April 18: Witches, “Routinization:
‘Other Routes’ and all following pages”

April 20: Witches, “Conclusion”

April 23: Wrap-up

April 30: **Final Exam**, 08:00 to 11:00