

Oakland University
College of Arts & Sciences
Program in Religious Studies

REL3140~010, Religion in the Modern World, 4 Credits, Fall 2018

Professor: Dr. Randall D. Engle, Ph.D.
Varner 517
Course Section: 41581
E-mail: engle@oakland.edu
Office hours: By appointment
Class Time: MWF 10:40-11:47am
Classroom: MSC 386
Cell/Text: (248) 885-0929



Welcome to Religion 3140! This class satisfies the General Education Requirement in the Knowledge Applications Integration area. Professor Engle is thrilled to have you in this class!

Course (Catalog) Description:

Focuses on key issues of religious life in the modern world. Examples of topics include the role of women in religious leadership, the relation of science and religion, religious fundamentalism, and religiously motivated acts of terrorism. *The class satisfies the General Education requirements in the knowledge application integration area.*

Course Prerequisites/corequisites: Completion of the general education requirement in the social science or the global perspective knowledge exploration area, not both.

General Education Learning Outcomes:

The student will demonstrate:

1. How knowledge in a field outside of the student's major can be evaluated and applied to solve problems across a range of applications.
2. Knowledge of the personal, professional, ethical, and societal implications of these applications.

Specific Course Objectives:

This course will enhance your critical thinking skills and better appreciate the ways religion and spirituality shape and are shaped by culture, politics, economics and society. It addresses fundamental issues facing global civilization at the beginning of the 21st century as addressed within the world's great Western religious traditions--Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Utilizing an academic approach to the study of religious traditions, cross-cultural competencies will be cultivated enabling you to negotiate an increasingly diverse social space and workplace in both the American cultural context, as well as our progressively interlinked global world. The specific issues addressed are the following: (1) A deeper understanding and awareness of women's perspective on religion and their contemporary struggle for social equality; (2) the peculiar religious issues associate with the rise of modern science

and technology; (3) the scope and underlying presuppositions of modern religious fundamentalism as it is found throughout the global religious landscape; and (4) religiously motivated acts of terrorism.

Cross-Cutting Capacities:

1. **Critical Thinking.** This course examines religious ideas and practices from the standpoint of neutral analysis, encouraging the formation of critical judgment on the part of the student. It explores the underlying human meaning of symbolic religious language and thought, and gives significant attention to the task for the educated student in developing an independent voice and judgment freed from the restraints of institutional persuasion.

2. **Social Awareness.** This course raises the awareness of fundamental issues facing modern religious societies and cultures as they address both the “wisdom capital” of their traditional teachings and life practices and the challenges of modern life.

Religious Studies Mission Statement:

In keeping with the institutional goals of Oakland University to nurture student success, foster an environment for creative endeavors and engage with the general public, Religious Studies undertakes the interdisciplinary exploration of the world’s religious traditions, beliefs and practices to develop critical thinking concerning the role of religion and spirituality in human affairs, and to cultivate cross-cultural competencies among students and the broader community.

It is possible to obtain a concentration or independent major in religious studies at OU. Students may select this major only through special arrangement. If you are interested, contact Dr. Randall Engle. The religious studies program also offers minors in Judaic, Christian, and Islamic Studies. You may wish to check the OU religious studies web site at <http://www.oakland.edu/religiousstudies/>

Required Texts:

Holloway, Richard. *A Little History of Religion*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-300-20883-2

Add/Drops & Incompletes: The University add/drop and incomplete grade policies will be explicitly followed. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of the University deadline dates for dropping the course.

Class Structure:

This course is meant to induce heavy thinking and thoughtful dialogue. You will not have to memorize lots of facts (though there will be some of this), but you will have to tire your brain thinking hard about the topics at hand. If you read and listen to materials for this course quickly and don't think hard about them, you will miss out on most of the course.

An in-person class can have weather-related challenges, especially in a winter term. Obviously, if Oakland University is closed to due inclement, wintry weather then we do not have class that day. Nevertheless, please do not drive to Oakland University if you feel unsafe or if the weather conditions in your area prohibit safe driving. Monitor *your* weather conditions and those of your route—Professor Engle wants you *always* to use your judgment that puts your safety first.

1. **Attendance** and **participation** at all lectures (see schedule below). 10% of your grade can be achieved simply by showing up. Your attendance will be self-evaluated and graded by you at the time of the final exam. Much of the material on the weekly quizzes and final-exam will be from lectures and classroom dialogue.
2. **Read** the assigned primary text. Reflect. Come ready to dialogue. 10% of grade of your grade can be achieved simply by reading thoroughly the assigned texts. Your reading will be self-evaluated and graded by you at the time of the final exam.
3. **Take** seven (7) quizzes throughout the semester to assess your assimilation of the lectures and assigned readings. 20% of grade.
4. **Write** a final paper about a visit made to a religious community (other than your own) *and present* your findings to the class. Complete details and guidelines will be given in class and are available in the class *Reader*. As this will require significant time outside of the classroom (and most likely a weekend at that!), some scheduled classroom time will be given off to compensate. 20% of grade.
5. **Sit** for the mid-term and final exam. I expect all students to take the exam on the days scheduled below. Please make your travel plans accordingly. 40% of grade.

Lecture and Classroom Schedule:

Foundation One: From Cathedral to Cult. No study of religion in the modern context can begin without first understanding where we've been. What are the origins of religion and religious thought? How did different faith communities organize, lead and promote themselves? Because of our North American context, our survey will concentrate on the rise and subsequent splintering of the Roman Catholic Church. Still further, what is *religion* and who are the *religious*? What do world religions have in common—if anything? What is *secularization* and *why* is there religion? *What* are the contestations, the problems, the opportunities of a more complex religious pattern in the world? In this first foundation, we will come to working definitions for the semester that will guide our work.

Lecture and Classroom Schedule:

Introductions:

Wednesday, September 5: Meetings. Review of syllabus, course objectives, calendar, and expectations. Appointment of Snack Czar.
Today's homework: Transfer dates, deadlines and days off from this syllabus to your electronic calendar(s).

Foundation One: From Cathedral to Cult. No study of religion in the modern context can begin without first understanding where we've been. What are the origins of religion and religious thought? How did different faith communities organize, lead and promote themselves? Because of our North American context, our survey will concentrate on the rise and subsequent splintering of the Roman Catholic Church. Still further, what is *religion* and who are the *religious*? What do world religions have in common—if anything? What is *secularization* and *why* is there religion? *What* are the contestations, the problems, the opportunities of a more complex religious pattern in the world? In this first foundation, we will come to working definitions for the semester that will guide our work.

Friday, September 7: Religion. An attempt at definition.

Monday, September 10: More working definitions: understanding secularism and the secularization theory.

Wednesday, September 12: Religion begins. Mesopotamia, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Roman cultures. Hinduism and Buddhism.

Friday, September 14:
Week's Reading: Reading Day. No class.
Chapter 1, *Anybody There?*
Chapter 3, *The Wheel*
Chapter 4, *One Into Many*
Chapter 5, *Prince to Buddha*

Monday, September 17: **Reading Quiz #1**
The beginning of the "Big 3": Meet Father Abraham.

Wednesday, September 19: The Exodus: 10 plagues, 10 words

Friday, September 21: Joshua, Isa and Jesus. A week in the Life.
Week's Reading: Chapter 8, *In the Bulrushes*
Chapter 9, *The Ten Commandments*
Chapter 19, *The Messiah*

Monday, September 24:	Reading Quiz #2
Wednesday, September 26:	The religious culture of the first century to Constantine
Friday, September 28:	The birth and life of Abdullah Mohamed
<i>Week's Reading:</i>	Reading Day. No class. Chapter 22, <i>The Last Prophet</i> Chapter 20, <i>Jesus Comes to Rome</i>
Monday, October 1:	Reading Quiz #3
Wednesday, October 3:	The Fall of Rome. <i>Sacular Obscura</i> .
Friday, October 5:	The Seven Mysteries.
<i>Week's Reading:</i>	The Renaissance, Rationalism and (Erasmus of) Rotterdam Meet Luther, Calvin, Zwingli Chapter 26, <i>Vicar of Christ</i> Chapter 27, <i>The Protest</i>
Monday, October 8:	Reading Quiz #4
Wednesday, October 10:	The Reformation in England of Henry VIII
Friday, October 12:	America: The Great Experiment. Religion explosion \
<i>Week's Reading:</i>	Immigration patterns to the new world Home-Grown Religions: Mormonism, Seventh Day Adventism, Jehovah's Witnesses Chapter 30, <i>The Middle Way</i> Chapter 33, <i>Made in America</i> Chapter 34, <i>Born in the USA</i> Chapter 35, <i>The Great Disappointment</i>
Monday, October 15:	Mid Term Exam
Wednesday, October 17:	Mid-Term Break #Breathe
Friday, October 19:	Mid-Term Break #Breathe

Foundation two: The Modern Context. Having reviewed various religious cultures and their respective histories and placement, we now move on to explore *how* these communities function in our modern context. What issues are important to them? Does the American ideal of separation of church and state mean there is a separation between spirituality and politics? How do different religions answer the question “Why are we here?” and “What are we to do here?” The second half of the semester covers a variety of issues important to religious communities, and attempts to answer the questions “Why would this faith community care about this issue?” (or maybe they don’t).

Monday October 22:	Understanding New Age religions
Wednesday, October 24:	Movie Part 1: <i>Going Clear</i>
Friday, October 26:	Movie Part 2: <i>Going Clear</i>
<i>Week's Readings:</i>	Chapter 36, <i>Mystics and Movie Stars</i>

Monday, October 29:	Reading Quiz #5
	“Life Issues”: Stem Cells
Wednesday, October 31:	“Life issues”: Abortion
Friday, November 2:	“Life Issues”: The Right to Die
<i>Week’s Readings:</i>	Articles posted on moodle
Monday, November 5:	Reading Quiz #6
	“Life Issues”: Funeral customs
Wednesday, November 7:	Guest lecture by Paddy Lynch
Friday, November 9:	Homosexuality and same sex marriage
<i>Week’s Readings:</i>	Articles posted on moodle
Monday, November 12:	Reading Quiz #7
	Feminism
Wednesday, November 14:	Presentation prep day (Prof in Europe)
Friday, November 16:	Presentation prep day (Prof in Europe)
Monday, November 19:	Class Presentations
Wednesday, November 21:	No Class. Thanksgiving Break
Friday, November 23:	No Class. Thanksgiving Break
Monday, November 26:	Class Presentations
Wednesday, November 28:	Class Presentations
Friday, November 30:	Class Presentations
Monday, December 3 :	Class Presentations

Foundation Four: Finis

Wednesday, December 5:	Class presentations conclude. Optional final exam review Class Finished!
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Final Examination:

Monday, December 10 at 12:00 noon in our classroom

The final exam covers all lectures, readings and class presentations from the mid-term (i.e. not cumulative). The exam is 100-objective questions, and you do *not* need a scan-tron.



Behavioral practices:

Learning and respect for each other are integral to the University experience. Specific expectations include the following:



- A. **Internet functions on your computers may not be accessed during class time.** Students are permitted to bring laptop computers to class for the *sole* purpose of note-taking and ordering online gifts for the professor. Any use of computers for e-mail, Face booking, text-messaging, twittering, doing extraneous projects, playing Pac-Man (or whatever it is you kids do nowadays) or other forms of entertainment during class will result in the banishment of your computer to outer darkness, where there will be much weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth – or some other suitable judgment. You will be next. You decide.
- B. Coming **late for class** mandates a word of apology, just as it would in professional and work environment. A pattern of lateness is not acceptable.
- C. **Skipping** class is disrespectful, and then requires more work from your colleagues and professor to update you on class discussion. Please be sure to inform me by email/text if you cannot attend class.
- D. **Extensions** for assignments are negotiable but must be discussed ahead of time, otherwise your grade for a late paper will be lowered.
- E. All Oakland University students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner conducive to an environment of **academic integrity** and respect for the educational process and the safety and well being of all members of the community. Adherence to the Student Code of Conduct will be expected; violations of this code will be reported to the Dean of Students. The Code of Academic and Student Conduct can be found at <http://www2.oakland.edu/deanofstudents/handbook/conduct.cfm>. Below are examples of academic dishonesty in our class. Students, faculty or staff who know of possible academic violations are expected to report the alleged violation to the Dean of Students Office. The report will include a brief written statement and relevant evidence (original material when available). A copy of this report with supporting evidence is given to the accused student as the statement of the charge. When appropriate, the faculty member will issue a grade of Incomplete until the academic conduct matter has been resolved.
 - 1. **Cheating** on assignments and examinations. This includes, but is not limited to, the following when not authorized by the instructor: the use of any assistance or materials such as books and/or notes, acquiring exams or any other academic materials, the use of any other sources in writing drafts, papers, preparing reports, solving problems, works completed for a past or concurrent course, completing homework or carrying out other assignments. No student shall copy from someone else's work or help someone else copy work or substitute another's work as one's own. No student shall engage in any behavior specifically prohibited by an instructor in the course syllabus or class discussion.
 - 2. **Plagiarizing** the work of others. Plagiarism is using someone else's work or ideas without giving that person credit. By doing this, a student is, in effect,

claiming credit for someone else's thinking. This can occur in drafts, papers and oral presentations. Whether the student has read or heard the information used, the student must document the source of information. When dealing with written sources, a clear distinction should be made between quotations, which reproduce information from the source word-for-word within quotation marks, and paraphrases, which digest the source of information and produce it in the student's own words. Both direct quotations and paraphrases must be documented. Even if a student rephrases, condenses or selects from another person's work, the ideas are still the other person's and failure to give credit constitutes misrepresentation of the student's actual work and plagiarism of another's ideas. Buying a paper or using information from the Internet without attribution and handing it in as one's own work is plagiarism.

3. **Unauthorized collaboration** on assignments. This is unauthorized interaction with anyone in the fulfillment of academic requirements and applies to in-class or take-home coursework. Individual (unaided) work on exams, homework, computer assignments and documentation of sources is expected unless the instructor specifically states in the syllabus or verbally that it is not necessary. Collaboration can also include calculating homework problems with another person, having another help to rewrite a paper, sharing information/sources with others and checking coursework with others.

4. Completion of **original work**. When an instructor assigns coursework, the instructor intends that work to be completed for his/her course only. Work students may have completed for a course taken in the past, or may be completing for a concurrent course, must not be submitted in both courses unless they receive permission to do so from both faculty members.

University Services:

Disability Support Services: Disability Support Services acts as an advocate for students with disabilities and works with 500-600 students per semester. In addition to helping students understand university policies and practices, we assist students in addressing personal and academic concerns. We supply referrals to other university offices when appropriate. Visit <https://oakland.edu/dss/>

The Writing Center: The Writing Center provides writers with an interested and supportive audience of well-trained consultants who help both novice and expert writers explore ideas, revise drafts, and develop the skills to craft polished works. Learn more about the writing center by exploring www.oakland.edu/ouwc/ and by visiting Oakland University's "Write Space" in Kresge Library.

Gender and Sexuality Center: The Gender and Sexuality Center is dedicated to providing services and education on issues of gender and sexuality for the Oakland University community through resources, referrals, programs and advocacy. For more information visit <https://oakland.edu/gsc/>

Note: If you do not identify with the name that is listed with the registrar, please notify me so that I may appropriately amend my records. In addition, if you prefer to go by a different pronoun, please inform me.

OU Help Desk: For all technology related questions, please contact the OU Help Desk. This is your “go to” resource for online help in case you have questions, or encounter problems throughout the semester. More specific information can be found at <https://oakland.edu/helpdesk/>

Academic Advising: Academic advisers at the university guide you along your learning journey. For more information, visit <https://oakland.edu/advising/> On this site, you can find who you should be seeing for academic advising and information to help make the most out of your academic advising appointments and your time at OU.

Academic advising is an ongoing partnership between the student and adviser, empowering students to plan for their academic success. Advisers help students with both the “here and now” as well as life after graduation.

The Tutoring Center: The Tutoring Center offers a host of free support services — individual and group peer tutoring (for most 000 - 299 level courses), Supplemental Instruction and study skills assistance through a number of instructional and informational videos.

The students and staff of the Tutoring Center understand that everyone learns differently. Their mission is to coach and challenge you to take control of your own academic success. All services and support programs are available at no cost to currently enrolled OU students.

OU Counseling Center: The Oakland University Counseling Center, located in the Graham Health Center, provides a broad range of mental health services which include:

- Personal Counseling
- Psychological and Psychoeducational Testing
- Career Testing and Counseling
- Substance Abuse Evaluation, Treatment, and Prevention
- Consultation and Outreach
- Crisis Intervention

More information can be found at <https://oakland.edu/oucc/> Counseling is provided by licensed psychologists and interns. Staff that are not fully licensed are supervised by licensed psychologists. Counseling services are based on a short-term model. If long-term counseling is indicated, the staff is happy to help with outside referrals. In order to meet with a counselor, you can call or come in to the Counseling Center and schedule an appointment. Same day appointments may be available, subject to counselor availability.