

College of Arts & Sciences
Program in Religious Studies
Oakland University

Religion in the Modern World
REL3140-41784.201740
4 Credits, Fall, 2018

Instructor: Charles Mabee, Ph.D.
Course Section #REL3410-41582.201840
E-mail: cmabee@oakland.edu

Office: **217 Varner Hall**
Office Phone: 1-248-370-2154
Cell Phone: 1.517.944.5550
Office Hours: by cell phone appointment

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Course Description | <p>The course addresses fundamental issues facing Western civilization at the beginning of the 21st century from the standpoint of their embeddedness in the world's great Western religious traditions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It also explores the accumulation of generational “wisdom capital” found within these religious expressions. The specific issues addressed are the following: (1) The nature of women’s perspective on religion and their contemporary struggle for social equality; (2) the peculiar religious issues associated with the rise of the Internet; (3) the scope and underlying presuppositions of modern religious fundamentalism (found throughout the spectrum of Western religious experience); and (4) the peculiar earmarks and core dynamics of acts of religious violence and terrorism.</p> <p><i>This class satisfies the General Education requirements in the Knowledge area of Western Civilization.</i></p> <p>Course Prerequisites/corequisites: none</p> <p>Required Text(s): C Lynn Japinga, <i>Feminism and Christianity: An Essential Guide</i> (Abingdon, 1999) Craig Detweiler, <i>iGods</i> (Brazos, 2013) Steve Bruce, <i>Fundamentalism</i> [Key Concepts in the Social Sciences] (Polity, 2000) Mark Juergensmeyer, <i>Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence</i> (California, 2017)</p> <p>Course Procedures: <i>Online posting and interaction with other class members</i></p> |
| Outcomes & Objectives | <p>General Education Learning Outcomes: On completion of this course the student will demonstrate</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Knowledge of the core values, key terms and concepts of the formative religious traditions impacting Western civilization, especially as those living traditions continue to evolve within the broader context of this over-arching civilization.2. The ability to analyze and critique the application of these core values, terms and concepts to contemporary social, cultural and political issues that continue to challenge Western civilization. <p>Cross-Cutting Capacities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Social Awareness—This course raises the awareness of fundamental issues facing Western culture and provides resources for the assumption of the role of the critically aware citizen through gaining the knowledge of religious thought that both emanates from the broader society and offers potential avenues of resolution for its problems.2. Critical Thinking—This course examines religious ideas and commitments from the standpoint of neutral analysis, encouraging the formation of critical judgment on the part of the student. It explores the underlying meaning of religious language and thought, and gives significant attention to the problem of developing an independent voice freed from the restraints of institutional persuasion. <p>Course Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Characterize the nature of religious studies as an academic discipline.2. Demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding in selected content areas of religious studies; including the application of seminal ideas found at the core of major religious traditions of the West to contemporary issues, broad knowledge of the history of those ideas expressed within the various religious communities associated with core religious traditions, and a critical awareness of |

the search for common ideas and practices within these various traditions, with special attention given to shared ethical beliefs and practices.

Expectations

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.

Special Considerations: Students with disabilities who may require special considerations should make an appointment with campus Disability Support Services. Students should also bring their needs to the attention of the instructor as soon as possible.

Grade Determination

Grades in this course will be based on equal evaluations of each of the six learning modules and the final paper. Remember: Late submission of work is not acceptable!! Don't put yourself in the position of "last minute" scrambling to post your essay.

There are 6 major learning modules in the class that last two weeks each. Generally, throughout the semester, you are given the first week of the module to complete the assigned reading and produce a rough outline of the key points you will develop in the "reading" essay that is due near the beginning of the second week of the module (all due dates are given on the Moodle homepage and are absolute). No late work is accepted unless cleared with the professor **ahead of time**. The purpose of this "reading" essay is to show that you have completed a detailed and careful analysis of the assigned *reading* (hence the name!). A more detailed description of this essay is given on the Moodle homepage. At the beginning of the second week of each module you will post in the appropriate Moodle "Forum" the final version of this reading essay (generally 3-4 pages, single-spaced, space between paragraphs). Then, several days later after you have had a chance to read the posted essays of your fellow learners, you will submit a second essay which is more subjective in nature. This is called the "next-step" essay. The intention here is to show how you are understanding and processing key ideas that you find in the posted core essays of your fellow learners in the class. Now you complement the objective reading essay with a subjective essay that serves to help "personalize" your learning experience by relating it to your own life history, or provides additional research that you find helpful to augment the assigned reading, or elaborates on the ideas of your fellow students that you wish to develop with additional thought and/or discussion. **At the conclusion of each learning module, you will receive a modular grade from the professor that combines the evaluation of the two required essays as well as comments that will offer ways in which you can improve your work if appropriate.** You will find this in the "Grades" link on the Moodle homepage. Thus, you will have personal contact with the professor at a minimum of every two weeks throughout the semester. The reading essay is the more important of the two essays because it serves as the foundation of your modular learning and is given appropriately greater weight (approximately 3x) in the grading determination.

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.

Note the following statement from the Student Handbook of the University of Edinburgh that may help you better understand the seriousness of plagiarism in the academic environment: "In order to assess your work and to give you useful feedback the professor needs to have a clear sense of what ideas you have developed for yourself and what comes from elsewhere. To be fair to all of the students in the course it is important that each student is given grades that accurately reflect their own efforts. Students sometimes wonder where to draw the line between discussing their ideas with their peers (which can be an excellent learning experience) and unacceptable collusion. The time to be particularly careful is when you are preparing work for assessment. You need to be certain that the work you submit represents your own process of engagement with the task set. You may get into difficulty if, for example, reading another student's plan for their work influences you, or if you show them your plan. Assisting another student to plagiarize is a cheating offence. In addition to giving references for all of the materials that you have actually included within your assignments, it is important to appropriately acknowledge other sources of guidance you have used when preparing your work."

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 draft 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.

The **First Year Advising Center** is the first stop for all incoming first-year students and undecided transfers. In addition to orientation, that office provides academic advising for all first-year, undecided and re-deciding students; programs and events for first-year students; and major exploration and career counseling for all undergraduate students.

Once you reach sophomore standing, your academic program of choice will determine the academic advising office you will visit. Each school and the college at Oakland University house their own professional academic advising office. Use the "**Find My Academic Adviser**" tools on this website to determine which advising office you will be visiting. Faculty advisers within each **academic department** also are qualified to advise you and connect you with additional resources.

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.

There are 6 major graded modules in the class that last two weeks each. Four of the modules are fully essay modules; one is an interview + short, integrative essay; and the remaining one is a quiz.

Your grades for MODULE SIX (+ Final Paper + Final Class Grade) will be sent to you by email before Tuesday, Dec. 19. No grade for module six will be posted on Moodle.

Notes

Detailed Class Schedule and Topical Outline (Go to Moodle homepage for more details)—

ORIENTATION WEEK/Sept. 5-8

Introduction to your fellow students, online learning, class syllabus and writing expectations. Note concerning class writing expectations: During this partial week, you will be asked to post both a "practice" Primary Essay and a "practice" Professor's Essay. The instructor will provide a model of an acceptable Primary Essay at the conclusion of the week, SATURDAY, Jan. 7.
NOTHING POSTED DURING THIS FIRST WEEK IS GRADED--HOWEVER PARTICIPATION IS MANDATORY!

LEARNING (FIRST GRADED) MODULE ONE/ Sept. 10-19

Primary Topic: Is Christianity inherently patriarchal? How can it be changed?

Assigned Reading: Lynn Japinga, *Feminism and Christianity: An Essential Guide* (Abingdon, 1999) (you have enough time for module one to read the entire book)

LEARNING MODULE TWO/ Last Submission date: Wednesday, Oct. 3 (Cf. Moodle homepage for details)

Primary Topic: Interview

Assigned Reading: If you have not completed all of Japinga, complete the entire book before the interview

LEARNING MODULE THREE/ Oct. 8-17

Primary Topic: “How the Internet Shapes Our Spiritual and Social Lives”

Assigned Reading: *iGods* (entire book) (Cf. Module Three Forum for more details)

LEARNING MODULE FOUR/ Oct. 22-31

Primary Topic: “The Underlying Presuppositions and Scope of Modern Western Religious Fundamentalism”

Assigned Reading: *Fundamentalism*, Chs. 1, 2, 5 + EITHER Ch. 3 or Ch. 4 (Cf. Module Four Forum for more details)

LEARNING MODULE FIVE/ Quiz on Religious Terrorism, Friday, Nov. 10 (6am)-Tuesday, Nov. 13 (11:55pm) (**Cf. Moodle homepage for details**)

Primary Topic: “The Peculiar Earmarks and Core Dynamic of Acts of Religious Terrorism: Symbolic and Political Uses”

Assigned Reading: *Terror in the Mind of God*, Chs. 7, 8, and 9

LEARNING MODULE SIX/ Nov. 19-28

Primary Topic: “The Peculiar Earmarks and Core Dynamic of Acts of Religious Terrorism: Overcoming the Threat?”

Assigned Reading: *Terror in the Mind of God*, Chs. 1, 10, and 11 (Cf. Module Six Forum for more details)

Final (Graded) Paper due to be posted by Friday, Dec. 14 (mid-night)

Go to final paper FORUM for the exact topic of this paper.