

Political Science 300 **World Religions, War & Politics, in America**
 Spring 2003 Washburn University
 Dr. Chris Hamilton

1. Introduction to the Course

The course describes the major world religions in America, and their political/social teachings and practices that affect American life and the world. The course has **six major topics or themes**.

1. **The current War on Iraq & Terrorism.** Especially the giant whirlpool of crisis and reaction - at home and abroad - between the new GW Bush administration, and world religions, the "Christians", etc about the current Wars on terrorism and Iraq. NOTE: Flexible "time room" is created in these assignments to cover "breaking events" in the apparent War on Iraq, and terrorism. As a result, deadline dates below will probably be forced to vary.
2. **World religions politics, activism and teachings** on controversial modern social issues, including War and Peace, and this era of Wars.
3. **Basic information on the tremendous ethnic and religious diversity** which is growing in America in the late 20th and now 21st centuries.

Several very powerful & long-lasting undercurrents of religions and politics in America are stressed:

4. **The non-Christian World Religions.** The rapidly increasing diversity of non-Christian world religions in America, their socio-political teachings and practices, and how they are changing America.
5. **Religious diversity & political conflicts.** The revival, politics, contrast & conflicts of the Christian Right vs moderate Christians and world religions in America.
6. **The "Other Revival".... the Caring Religions, and the growing Interfaith movement.** Not all is "conflict". There is a huge revival of religious support of social justice, and peace; and a growing Interfaith cooperative movement. This course will recognize ADA student needs.

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Institution: Public/Municipal (Washburn is a separate municipality by state law).

Course Level: Honors and Jr./Sr undergraduate; lecture/research.

Hours: 45 lecture/class hours, 3 hours per week, 15 weeks.

Enrollment: Spring 2001 28 students; Spring 2003 40 students.

Pedagogy and Focus reflections: The course mixes introductory lectures by the Professor which are then followed by World Religion Guest Lecturers; Student research papers AND Guest Lectures follow the SAME issues format of "unresolved modern issues", which includes women, environment, relations with other religions, war, peace, human rights, global governance. This is so that students hear Guest Lectures in the same format and on the same issues that they do research papers on 2 world religions (not of their personal background; see above). This is so that the "format" of analysis & "comparative issues" thinking is deeply impressed into their experience.

Also...students are given a comparative analytical format by the Professor, which is as follows: What

are the different world religious views on the morality and maintenance of politics, international Social Justice, Peace and Global order following the following framework: A. Social Justice must be constructed before Stable Peace in the world can be established B. what are the religious pre-requisites for both Social Justice, and then Stable Peace? Then C. what are the different religious perspectives on international organizations, for the morality and maintenance global Social Justice, Peace and global order? Music, and film are supplements to student learning, besides lectures, in-class exercises, guest lectures, and student research. Frequent illustrations from the progress of the Iraq/Middle East crisis and war are used as illustrations, quandaries, etc. Students respond very well to guest lectures. They seem to pick up both the "unresolved issues" focus in comparing world religions and their presence in America. The first 35% of the course is a survey of world religions, and religious conflict and cooperation in 19th and 20th century America, so that students have sufficient background to understand religious diversity and politics/social issues in the United States. Some world religion background, global information is provided.

Focus: A diversity, and conflict, and interfaith-cooperation focus is maintained; Interfaith relations and organizations are a special focus at the end. The coverage concentrates on: the seven largest non-Christian world religions in the U.S., and the various Christians, and the Interfaith movement, and Native Americans, with a much briefer coverage of recent "pagan/new age" movements.

2. Course Requirements, and Grading Points (1100 points).

The course will feature the following three "experiences":

A. Research Paper, 200 points, 20% of the total course grade. Write a research paper on 2 religions that are not part of your general religious roots or familiarity, concerning their growing role in politics, life and policies in America and the world. This paper should feature **one Interview** of a knowledgeable and learned person of one of the Religious traditions (there are common required interview questions which I will provide; and then you devise additional questions). One goal of this course is to widen your understanding, and learn broadly about religion and politics in America in areas you are not likely to have "inherited" background. Generally speaking you will choose 2 religions or faith groups from 3 General choices: (A) one from the **Christianity groups** (which includes African American Christians) but not those from your background; **or** (B) one religion from the **World Religions group (non-Christian)** **or** (C) one religion from the **"Native" American or indigenous or new Spiritualists groups**. These 3 general groups are listed in the Course Readings Outline.

These following rules promote this goal of acquiring a "broader mind", in your research paper:

1. If you are Catholic or "high" Protestant, you may not choose from these two "branches" of Christian groups.
2. If you are of any other Christian background, you are also not to choose from groups of your general background. Also, all Christian background students can choose only one religion from Christianity, of the two religions you study.
3. If you are of "no religion/agnostic/athiest" backgrounds, with few exceptions, you will choose one religion from the World Religions (non-Christian) group, and one religion from the native American/indigenous/new Spiritualists groups (you will not normally have a choice from Christianity). For an exception to this, you have to present a convincing reason/argument. The restriction is because Americans of this background mainly have experience with and reactions to Christianity, and therefore need other religious exposures.

You will receive handouts which explain the conduct of the Research, and guidelines for the paper. It will be a minimum of 12 pages in length, double-line-spaced, typed. Note: only 50% of the

SOURCES used in the paper can come from the Internet. **The Internet Sources, plus the Interview are going to be the very important for you to discover the "meat and details" about the religions viewpoints on politics and political issues.** 50% of the sources are to be from newspaper articles, professional religious studies, or sociology or political science journal articles, and "news magazine" article reports.

Internet Sources. To pick, and research religions for your paper. Additional website lists will be passed out during weeks of class.

However, the BEST CURRENT general religion websites are as follows:

1. **The Religious Movements Homepage of the University of Virginia.**
website: <http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/welcome>
2. **The Hartford Institute for Religious Research**
website: http://hrr.hartsem.edu/org/faith_denominations_homepages.html
when there click on the button: **Official Denominational Websites**
3. **Also check the website: The Interfaith Alliance**
at: <http://www.interfaithalliance.org/Resources>
when there click on "Religious Resources" and "Links"
4. **The Harvard University Pluralism Project**
With ANY search engine, Yahoo, etc, just type: **Harvard Pluralism Project**
5. **The Spiritual Sanctuary**
With ANY search engine type: www.spiritualsanctuary.org

You must avoid obviously biased, and sectarian sites which "cover" other religions from a propaganda angle. This unfortunately includes **Tolerance.org** which has a number of amateur constructed, and inaccurate summaries.

Also, very good quick summaries of the world religions are to be found in the new book *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Religions On-line* by the distinguished University of Chicago Scholar, Prof. Bruce B Lawrence, Alpha Books, 2001. You can REFER to this book for quick summaries of religions you might choose to research. You don't have to buy the book; just scan it, and also write down the websites it lists. World Religions college textbooks vary quite a bit in the religions they cover or omit, they vary in quality, and they do not generally have a strong summary of a religion's social/political teachings.

B. THREE Take home Exams. (250 + 250 + 300 for the Final = 800 Points) or 80% of the total course grade. There are 3 exams, at 250 + 250 + 300 points each). An example of an old take-home exam can be provided if you wish to know more about "how they look". You will have exactly 1 week to "do" the exam, and turn it in. Late exams will have points deducted for up to 2 days "late". After that, the exam receives a ZERO. Don't be Late.

Important: Exams Questions are arranged as follows:

Textbook and assigned readings. = approx. 63 % of exam points, or about 6 of every 10 exam questions.

Lecture Notes = 37% of exam points, or about 4 out of every 10 exam questions.

C. Pop Tests: TWO Pop Tests at 50 pts each can be administered at ANY time, based on current

readings. The Pop Tests are 50 points each.

Pop Tests may - or may not - occur. They WILL NOT occur if 1. we have Good Class Attendance and/or 2. it is clear that Students are keeping up to date on Reading Assignments during class discussions. (Thus total exam points can range from 800 to 900 points.)

Words of Wisdom to the Wise Student: It is **NOT** wise for you to put off, or delay reading the assignments. You **NEED** to read the Textbook assignments carefully, usually 2 or 3 times. You need to keep up to date with the reading - because Pop Tests can come at any time, and because Exams come every 4 weeks. It is not wise for you to delay reading. **It also means you NEED to take detailed class notes every class period.**

3. Absences hurt your course grade. You are allowed 4 unpenalized absences, for whatever reason. When you miss a 5th time - for **WHATEVER** reason - you will automatically be deducted 3% of total class points when you miss the 6th time and thereafter - for whatever reason - you will automatically be deducted 2% more of total class points.

4. Textbooks. Textbooks are required, but they are low-priced. All books were deliberately chosen to be "lower in price" and good texts. All are about \$17.00 each, and the used texts are less. You might consider cost-sharing a text with a classmate you come to know.

1. John L. Esposito (2002). **Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam.** New York: Oxford University Press. **Required.** ISBN 0195154355
2. Jacob Neusner (2000 revised). **World Religions in America.** Louisville: John Knox Press. ISBN 0-664-258-395. **Required.**
3. Robert Wuthnow & John Hyde Evans (editors). (Oct 2002). **The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism.** Berkeley: Univ of Calif. Press. ISBN 0520233131 paper. **Required.**
4. Sara Diamond (Feb 2000). **Not by Politics Alone: The Enduring Influence of the Christian Right.** New York: Guilford Publications, Inc. **Required.** ISBN 1572304944

5. In-the-Library Readings: *At the Library Reserve Desk, as listed below.*

6. READING ASSIGNMENTS - Reading Assignments are "heavier" in the first half of the course, and "lighten up" a bit in the second half. You will be reading on average, about 3 chapters per week. The textbooks chapters or page numbers are referred to by the Last Name of the Author: Neusner, Balmer, Diamond, Nuthnow & Evans. The Readings Assignments are now Listed Below.

"The Times, they are a-changing" Bob Dylan

I. Religions in America, Religious Extremists, Politics and the New War

Jan 22 to 24

1. Who We Really Are, Harvard Pluralism Project & Census 2000: The New, Diverse America vs. the Religious Right, White Christian Nationalism, and Culture War

Lecture, Handouts. READ: Balmer, chapter 7. Website visit: The Harvard University Pluralism Project, at: www.pluralism.org

2. How Did We Get in this Mess ?? the War with Iraq and 9/11. Lecture.

READ: U.S. News & World Report, Jan 13, 2003 "The American Empire" Handout.
Library Readings: "Ghosts of Our Past", Karen Armstrong, Terrorism Annual Editions 03/04 # 5, pp. 32-36. "Why America? The Globalization of Civil War", Martha Crenshaw, Terrorism Annual Editions 03/04 #3, pp. 20-22.

Jan 27 to 31

3. Terrorism.

Library Readings: "Defining Terrorism" Bopaz Ganora, Terrorism Annual Editions 03/04 #2 p. 11-20. "The Terrorist Mentality" Paul Davis, Terrorism Annual Editions 03/04 #6 p. 36

4. Religious Extremists, Terrorists and Fundamentalism: In Islam, and Christianity

Islamic fundamentalism/extremists: Esposito textbook, chapter 1 on Osama bin Laden, and chapter 2 only up to page 36. **Library Readings:** "Terror in the Name of God", Mark Juergensmeyer, Terrorism Annual Editions, 03/04 #28 pp. 120-124; "The Tenets of Terror:", Robert Marquand, Annual Editions 03/04 #29, pp. 124-134.

Christian fundamentalism/extremists in America: The Christian Right: Diamond, chapters 1, and 12. **Library Readings: Neo-nazi Christian Identity and White Nationalism:** File on Christian Identity, with 3 articles "Christian Identity Movement from New Religious Movements/Univ Virg; "The Identity Movement" from religioustolerance.org; and "Christian Identity" from Watchman Fellowship; xerox handouts from Southern Poverty Law Center and ADL. Christian extremists & neo-nazis in the world: Serbia's Holocaust & Milosovic.

NOTE: POP TESTS ARE POSSIBLE.....

"That Old-time Religion..."

II. American Christianity

Protestants & Catholics and such....through American History and into Our Times

Feb 3 to 7

5. The Older PROTESTANT vs CATHOLIC AMERICA: Biblical Fundamentalism, Mainline Protestants, Catholics. LECTURES

Protestants: Neusner (editor), chapter 2 by Martin E. Marty. Wuthnow & Evans, Introduction, pp. 1-24.

Catholics, and Catholic Hispanic Americans: Neusner (editor), chpt 4 by Greeley, chpt 5 by Gonzalez.

Feb 10 to 14

6. Good Deed Doers 101: The Mainline Protestant Churches

"The Quiet Hand of God" Wuthnow & Evans (eds), chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5.

"The Rising Battle for 'Middle Earth' ".....

Feb 17 to 21

7. Gathering Religious Storms: The Early 20th and Mid-20th Century Religions & America. Catholics; Evangelists. Prohibition, Darwin, Billy Graham in the '50s, Kennedy, the Civil Rights Movement etc.

Library Readings: Balmer, chpt 1 and chpt 2.

Feb 24 to 28

8. The Storm Front Hits: Religious Reform & Politics, and the Challenge to Conservative Christians in the '60s: The New Vatican II Catholic Church, the Sexual revolution, prayer banned in schools, Vietnam, the Nixon scandals, Women's Movement, the Radical Left & Counter-culture, Crass Materialism

Library Readings: Balmer, chapters 3, and 4. And in chapter 5 only pages 83 to 90.

9. Culture War.. Coors, the 1970s & The Rise of the Christian Right: the New Religions, the organizing of the Christian Right in the Nixon-Carter Years. Anti-ERA, Right to Life, Moral Majority, etc.

Library Reading: Balmer, pages 91 to 112.

Guest Lectures: The Culture War Storm Front Hits Kansas.

Biology/Evolution/Science in Kansas Schools, The Christian Right, and the State Board of Education.....Prof Bill Wagnon, State Board Member.

Christian Right spokesperson: To Be Announced.

Take Home Exam 1 handed out February 26, and DUE March 14 IN-CLASS.

"The Quiet Hands of God"

March 3 to 14.

10. "Until Justice Rolls Down Like Waters...." The Catholic Church, the Orthodox Churches. RDGS: To Be Announced. **March 7 Catholic Guest Lecture.**

11. "He Made the Lame Walk, and the Blind See...." The Protestant Mainstream Churches and their tireless work for Social Justice; Wuthnow and Evans (editors), chapters 6, 7, 8 11 and 14. **Methodist Guest Lecture, March 14th**

III. The "Other" Christian America.

Read Over Spring Break March 17 to 23

12. Quakers, Mennonites, Amish: the Peace Tradition Christians and Christian Communitarianism. Library Readings: authoritative statements/documents from the Mennonites, and the Quaker Friends. **March 24 Mennonite guest lecture**

(Also: Start your calls to arrange Religious Leader Interview).

March 24 to 28

13. LDS/Mormons, Community of Christ: Community & Prosperity.

Read: Neusner textbook, chapter 13 on LDS

Also Read Library Readings: Reorganized LatterDay Saints/Community of Christ, peace and justice statements. File in Library titled "RLDS General World Conference Resolutions on Peace & War"

Friday March 28 Mormon guest lecture

Take

14. African-American Protestants.

Read: Neusner textbook, chapter 3. **Wed April 2 or 9 AME Guest Lectures**

IV. The World Religions (non-Christian) & Politics in America.

The Major World Religions in America. Lecture. World Religions (non-Christian) are listed & covered in order of size. Each Religion (U.S./World members/annual US growth rate percent)**

March 31 to April 4 **START LIBRARY READINGS WED APRIL 2**

15. Islam (6 million/1.1 billion/+1.2%)** *Read:* Neusner textbook, chapter 11.

Library Readings: "Scholars Assert the Quran is a Book of Peace (National Geographic).

For research, the best General website is: Prof John L. Gresham's "Finding God in Cyberspace", click on A guide to Religious Studies Resources on the Internet, go to the link Religious Traditions, and click on Islam, then click on Prof. Godlas website. Also reachable as: www.arches.uga.edu/~godlas/ Use the links on Muslim Women, Islam & the Modern World; Islam & Violence; Scholars of Islam Speak Out Against Terror; Scholars Assert the Quran is a Book of Peace (article of National Geographic) **Friday April 4 OR 11TH Islam guest**

April 7 to April 11

16. Judaism (6 million/14 million/+0.2%)** READ: Neusner, chapter 7 **April 11 Judaism Guest Lecture presentation**

Draft Outline of Paper due this April 22

Home Exam 2 handed out Friday April 10 and due in class on Friday April 17

April 14 to 18

17. The Buddhists. Inner Light, Peace and Politics (1.8 million/180 million/+1.1%)**

Read: Neusner, chapter 9. Library Readings: on the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, and Social Engagement statements on peace.....the web site is: www.bpf.org

April 18 Buddhist Guest Lecture 16.

April 22 to April 29

18. Hinduism and Politics (1.1 million/900 million/+0.5%)** *Read:* Neusner, chapter 8. For research, the best General website is: Prof John L. Gresham's "Finding God in Cyberspace", click on A guide to Religious Studies Resources on the Internet, go to the link Religious Traditions, and click on Hinduism.

19. Baha'i. World Politics, Peace/Community Justice (753,000/9 million/+1.9%)**

Library Readings File: Karen Farrington chapter 10, from **The History of Religion**. Official Baha'i statements on religion & justice, world peace, women. Website is: www.us.bahai.org
Note: The Baha'i communities of Kansas are the second oldest in the U.S., established 1896.

Friday April 25 is Baha'i Guest Lecture

Lectures & Readings Only: Smaller World Religions in America:

May 5 to May 9

20. Sikhs (250,000/12 million/+0.1). Jainism (25,000/10 million/+0.0) *Read:* Library Readings: Karen Farrington, review chapter 9 on Sikhism, chpt 5 pp. 86-7 on Jainism. For research, the best General website is: Prof John L. Gresham's "Finding God in Cyberspace", click on A guide to Religious Studies Resources on the Internet, go to the link Religious Traditions, and click on Sikhism, and Jainism.

Lectures May 6 to May 8 involve: Updates on the War & religions responses, and the Interfaith movement.

V. Other Diverse Spiritual Traditions & Politics

Also May 5 to May 9

21. The Interfaith Movement: Cooperative & Growing.

Library Readings: Statements, and activities surveys of the Interfaith Alliance. Website: www.interfaithalliance.org

Due May 8: Final Paper

22. Native American Traditions. *Read:* Neusner, chapter 2. *Also Read:* Library Reserve File, "Native American Spirituality" two articles, University of Virginia, and ReligiousTolerance. Also File "Native Americans Respond to Distortion & Exploitation of their Beliefs by New Age" from Red Earth, and Lakota elders. For research: the best website appears to be the Religious Movements page of the University of Virginia, on the homepage click on "Survey of Site", then religious groups by alphabetical list, then Native Americans.
Also: <http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/profiles/listalpha>

May 1 Native American presentation

Final Take Home Exam 5 is handed out May 8 and is due on the scheduled day of Finals.
(Read instructions in this Syllabus).

Extra References:

Zoroastrians (Remember the Magi) (20,000/300,000/unknown). *Read:* Library Readings: from Karen Farrington chapter 5, pp. 88-90 [History of Religion](#)

Wicca/Pagans (200 - 750,000 uncertain/800,000/uncertain%growth) uncertain). *Read:* Library Readings: "Wicca", and "New Age Transformed" from the University of Virginia. Re-read Balmer, chapter 5. **Reference: [Adherents.com](#) and [www.interfaithalliance.org](#)**

New Age/Spiritualists in America *Read:* Library Reserve File, Karen Farrington, pp. 169-173, and 178 to 185. *Also read:* File "Spiritualism" from Univ. of Virginia.

For research on New Age, Wicca, and Spiritualists, the best General website is: The Religious Movements page, of the University of Virginia, on the homepage click on "Survey of Site", then religious groups by alphabetical list, then New Age, Spritualism, Wicca.
Also: <http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/profiles>