

RSOC 51: Religion in America
Summer 2016 ONLINE
Santa Clara University
Religious Studies Department (Religion & Society)
Prof. Michelle Mueller
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Course Description: This course traces important themes for religion in America, with special emphasis on new religious movements in the United States, including nineteenth century Mormonism, Scientology, ISKCON or Hare Krishnas, and Wicca and contemporary Paganism. Course readings and discussions will center on the relationship between religion and the development of American culture. Includes Native American traditions; immigration; new religious movements; women's spirituality in the United States; and modern pluralism, etc. Prerequisite: Introductory level course (SCTR 1-19, TESP 1-19, or RSOC 1-19).

Required textbooks:

Timothy Beal, *Religion in America: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Douglas Cowan and David G. Bromley, *Cults and New Religions: A Brief History*, Second Edition (Malden, MA: Wiley, 2015).

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should:

1. have a familiarity with major movements, moments, and turning points in American Religious History.
2. identify major themes that connect different periods, places, and movements across the span of American religious history.
3. be able to analyze a variety of sources (texts, music, architecture, rituals, etc.) in the larger context of American religious history.
4. be able to provide historical context for characterizations about the supposed decline or abundance of religiosity in the United States.

Core Curriculum: Religion, Theology and Culture 2

The study of Religion, Theology and Culture forms an important component of a Santa Clara education. This course fulfills the requirement for the second course in Religion, Theology and Culture (RTC 2). Students must have completed RTC 1 in order earn RTC 2 credit for this course. The RTC 2 course is part of the Explorations dimension

*This syllabus may be adjusted. 1
Syllabus updated May 2, 2016.*

of the Core Curriculum, and aims to foster the breadth of knowledge, habits of mind and heart, and values needed for contemporary life. As this is an RTC 2 course, students will:

2.1) Analyze complex and diverse religious phenomena (such as architecture and art, music, ritual, scriptures, theological systems, and other cultural expressions of religious belief.) (Complexity; Critical Thinking)

2.2) Integrate and compare several different disciplinary approaches to a coherent set of religious phenomena. (Complexity of Content as well as of Method; Critical Thinking)

2.3) Clarify and express beliefs in light of their critical inquiry into the religious dimensions of human existence. (Reflection; Critical Thinking)

Goals: Critical Thinking, Complexity, Religious Reflection

Please note: This syllabus, including course readings, assignments and scheduling, may be revised.

American Studies Pathway

This course is associated with the Pathway in American Studies. If you declare a Pathway in this area you may use a representative piece of work from this course in the Pathway Portfolio you will complete during your senior year. Recommendation: Please keep electronic copies of your work. Additional information about the American Studies Pathway can be found at: <http://www.scu.edu/provost/ugst/core2009/pathways/americanstudies.cfm>

Course Platform

This is an online course. We will use the Camino website for our general business. Responses to discussion questions and other assignments are due on the Camino site as indicated by due dates posted on the course site.

The course enables students to engage online materials and activities according to their own schedules during the week. There is also structured interaction among students, which allows students and the instructor to share learning experiences together at particular times throughout the course. Online learning tends to be ideal for students for students who are disciplined and highly self-motivated in their studies and those who communicate well in writing and other forms of non- verbal presentation.

In an online course, active, regular engagement of students is particularly important. Because our study together takes place online, we are only present to each other when we post and comment on a regular basis. Unlike in most face-to-face classroom experiences, where written work is seen primarily by the instructor, online posts and

comments are shared with the whole learning community, so students have the particular challenge of expressing themselves succinctly, clearly, and engagingly for a range of readers. Guidelines on online learning will be shared in the first course session.

Please note that, as in the face-to-face classroom, I will not comment at length on every comment you make in the discussion forum or other posts. Generally speaking, I will select a few of your comments that highlight key insights or learning opportunities and comment on these. I will also sometimes offer one overall comment about themes in your responses overall. Be assured, however, that I will be tracking all of your discussion contributions as part of your intellectual engagement with the material and your student colleagues.

Assignments:

- Completion of weekly activities on Camino website. Due dates listed on course website. (RSOC 51 2 and RTC 2.1 - 25 points)
- Camino Discussions – forums for peer-to-peer discussion of class reading material. Each week, students write a reflection prompted by a question from instructor, and respond to another student in the Discussion. See instructor's grading rubric and due dates on Camino website. (RSOC 51 3 and RTC 2.1 and 2.3 - 25 points)
- Midterm exam - Open book timed midterm exam with three short essay questions about religious movements addressed in readings before midpoint. Due date TBD. Please note: Instructor checks essays for plagiarism before grading. Plagiarism is not acceptable. (RSOC 51 1 and 4, RTC 2.1 and 2.2 - 25 points)
- Final research paper – Final papers may focus on one religious or spiritual tradition in the United States religious landscape or contribute to the study of American religion (i.e. What is unique about religion in America versus other parts of the world?). Either paper must be substantiated with academic research and a clear thesis. 15-20 double-spaced pages in 12 point font. Footnote citations in Chicago or MLA style. (RSOC 51 1, 2, and 4, RTC 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 - 25 points)

About your instructor: Prof. Michelle Mueller is a PhD candidate of the Graduate Theological Union in the Area of Cultural and Historical Studies of Religions. Instructor uses collaborative pedagogy and involves student ideas in structure of class; class discussion (here, performed online) is an important component of the educational and collaborative learning experience.

General Guidelines:

Students are responsible for meeting deadlines and complying with all College policies.

Do not plagiarize. For clarification, see <http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/what-is-plagiarism/>

If unspecified, assume assignment page length is in 12pt font on double-sided pages. I prefer Garamond, Times New Roman, or Arial.

Assignments are to be turned in to the Camino classroom page. In the case that the Camino website is down, email the assignment to mbmueller@scu.edu by the deadline so that I will have a time-and-date stamp.

Use proper footnote citations in Chicago or MLA style. Here are guidelines for Chicago style: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

Grade Distribution

Letter Grade	Percentage Range	GPA
A	93-100%	4.0
A-	90-92.9%	3.7
B+	87-89.9%	3.3
B	83-86.9%	3.0
B-	80-82.9%	2.7
C+	77-79.9%	2.3
C	73-76.9%	2.0
C-	70-72.9%	1.7
D+	67-69.9%	1.3
D	63-66.9%	1.0
D-	60-62.9%	0.7
F	0-59.9%	0

Specific schedule of readings is listed on the Modules page of Camino class website.

INSTRUCTOR AND COURSE POLICIES

All standard College policies apply.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form (as described in the Student Conduct Code) will result in a failed grade for the project, and possibly for the course. All allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported to the department chair and Office of Student Life. For a full presentation of University policies concerning plagiarism, see:

<http://scu.edu/studentlife/resources/upload/Academic-Integrity-brochure-2014.pdf>

In order to avoid the sanctions applied to cases of academic dishonesty, please make sure that you properly cite all sources that you utilize in your writing, including works that are directly quoted or paraphrased, as well as works used as a source of information. This includes both print and online sources. Your paper submissions must consist of your own writing, and any direct quotations or paraphrasing from other works must be properly cited.

Disability Accommodations

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, www.scu.edu/disabilities as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with me during my office hours. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy or parenting may be eligible for accommodations. While I am happy to assist you, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at [408-554-4109](tel:408-554-4109).

Title IX Syllabus Statement

Santa Clara University upholds a zero tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have

experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence or stalking, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please go to www.scu.edu/studentlife and click on the link for the University's Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie at [408-554-3043](tel:408-554-3043) or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.com <http://stage-www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethics-point/>

Reporting Practices

While I want you to feel comfortable coming to me with issues you may be struggling with or concerns you may be having, please be aware that there are some reporting requirements that are part of my job at Santa Clara University. For example, if you inform me of an issue of harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, I will keep the information as private as I can, but I am required to bring it to the attention of the institution's EEO and Title IX Coordinator. If you inform me that you are struggling with an issue that may be resulting in, or caused by, traumatic or unusual stress, I will likely inform the campus Student Care Team (SCU CARE).

If you would like to reach out directly to the Student Care Team for assistance, you can contact them at www.scu.edu/osl/report. If you would like to talk to the Office of EEO and Title IX directly, they can be reached at [408-554-3043](tel:408-554-3043) or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.com. Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to the Office of Student Life (OSL), Campus Safety Services, and local law enforcement. For confidential support, contact the Counseling and Psychological Services office (CAPS), the YWCA, or a member of the clergy (for example, a priest or minister).

Finally, please be aware that if, for some reason, our interaction involves a disruptive behavior, a concern about your safety or the safety of others, or potential violation of University policy, I will inform the Office of Student Life. The purpose of this is to keep OSL apprised of incidents of concern, and to ensure that students can receive or stay connected to the academic support and student wellness services they need.