

Please note: This syllabus, including course readings, assignments and scheduling, may be revised to meet the learning needs of participating students.

## Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the development, character, and impact of religion in the United States from the pre-colonial era to the present. Course readings and discussions will center on the relationship between religion and the development of American culture. We will explore the variety of religious traditions and experiences, including architecture, music, practice, ritual, scriptures, and texts, that have shaped and been shaped by the American context. Given the time constraints of a quarter, the course cannot be exhaustive. Instead, we will examine representative episodes in American religious history that highlight larger themes and major turning points. Along the way we will draw upon a variety of methodological approaches, including anthropology, several subfields of history (cultural, intellectual, social), and literary and scriptural studies. The course will proceed in a chronological order. Among the topics covered are Native American traditions, colonial religious impulses, slavery, revivalism, spiritual creativity, religion and war, immigration, race, church and state, and modern religious pluralism.

## Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should:

- have a familiarity with major movements, moments, and turning points in American Religious History.
- identify major themes that connect different periods, places, and movements across the span of American religious history.
- be able to analyze a variety of sources (texts, music, architecture, rituals, etc.) in the larger context of American religious history.
- be able to provide historical context for characterizations about the nature of religion and spiritual as they intersect with other elements of culture and society in the United States today.

## 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 to earn RTC 2 credit for this course. The RTC 2 course is part of the Explorations dimension of the Core Curriculum, and aims to foster the breadth of knowledge, habits of mind and heart, and values needed for contemporary life. In particular, as an RTC 2 course, we will focus on:

1. analyzing complex and diverse religious phenomena
2. drawing on multiple disciplinary approaches to analyze religion in the United States;

- critically articulating the way belief has shaped and continues to shape the experience and the practice of American identity, ourselves included.

### **Course Platform**

This is an online course. With the exception of the first week of the course, weekly course materials will be posted on the Camino course management system (<https://camino.scu.edu>) by noon (Pacific) on Mondays and Fridays. 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 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.

### **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>

### **Texts**

The following text is required and is available for purchase at the University Bookstore:

Catherine L. Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion*, 5th Edition (Wadsworth 2012)  
-- ISBN-13: 978-1133050025

**Additional Required Readings:** All of the readings not included in the above texts will be available on the course website in the Camino course management system. The readings will appear in the "lessons" folder. Supplemental readings may be announced or distributed during the quarter.

### **Course Requirements**



Intellectual Engagement: Discussion forms an important part of this course and to the Humanities endeavor more broadly. As a result, the course will only be as good as its participants. Students are expected to be prepared to discuss the assigned readings during each class session in a thoughtful and lively manner. This means not only sharing your perspective in the online discussion forum, but also commenting on the perspectives of other students. In the online learning environment, a good rule of thumb is to offer your own 250-400 word response to the discussion questions for each lesson and to comment on the responses of at least one student colleagues in fewer than 100 words.

Each Monday one discussion forum question will be posted. Students will be asked to respond the question based on their reading and reflections in light of their understanding of how American religion has developed over time and continues to shape American culture. Students will be asked to focus in particular on their own religious experience and that of their families and local communities is illuminated by the historical development of religions in America. Students will also be required to comment on the response of at least one other student, responding to a different student in each week of the course.

Because online learning is significantly text-based, students who don't participate are entirely invisible to the rest of the class. Likewise, students who respond too excessively add a significant reading burden to other students. The trick is balance: offering a comment that is both thoughtful and succinct.

For each class session in the schedule below you will find questions to help you think about and prepare to discuss the readings. (Core objectives 1, 2, 3)

Weekly Quizzes: For the first five weeks of the course there will be a 10-question quiz on the assigned materials for the week. Eight of the questions will be multiple choice, two will be short essay (200-300 word for each response). Quizzes will be posted on Friday morning and must be completed by 10PM (Pacific). (Core objectives 1, 2)

Exams: Both the midterm and the final exam will contain two sections: (Core objectives 1, 2)

1. The first will be a series of short answers (identifications) in which students will demonstrate their familiarity with the variety phenomena that scholars of religion in America use to understand the role of religion in the United States.
2. The second section will require students to write a thematic essay (500-800 words), drawing upon the variety of phenomena and multiple methods to construct thematic trajectories that make connections across historical time periods and the diversity of religious expression in America.

Late Policy Assignments turned in late will be penalized a minimum of one point per day late.

### Grading

Grading is based on a possible 100 points for the quarter, weighted as follows:

Intellectual Engagement	10 Points (Exhibited primarily in discussion forums)
Weekly Quizzes	40 Points (8 points each)
Midterm	25 Points
Final Exam	25 Points

For each written assignment, students will receive written feedback intended not only to evaluate critically that assignment, but also to offer constructive suggestions for improvement on future assignments.

Final grades will be based upon the following scale:

A (95-100); A- (90-94); B+ (87-89); B (83- 86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72); D (60-69); F (below 60).

Final grades are not negotiable, and cannot be changed, except in the case of clerical error.

The Santa Clara University Undergraduate Bulletin, 2009-2010 (p. 353), identifies the standards for grades as follows: A (excellent), B (good), C (adequate), D (barely passing), F (not passing).

### Disability Accommodation Policy

To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disabilities Resources located on the second floor of Benson. Phone numbers are (408) 554-4111; TTY (408)554-5445. Students must register and provide documentation of a disability to Disabilities Resources prior to receiving academic accommodations

### Academic Integrity

Students are encouraged to collaborate, share ideas, and ask questions of one another. However, all submitted and graded work must be your own and clearly distinguishable from the work of others. Plagiarism is presenting others' work as your own, or failing to cite the contributions of

### Course Schedule

Digital copies will be provided of readings below followed by [Camino]. The schedule below may be adapted to meet the learning needs of students. Please check the Camino announcement board frequently to make sure you are aware of any assignment changes.

Complete By	Topic/Assignment	Focus Question
June 26	Read Albanese, Introduction and Chapter 1 Read "Native American Creation Myths" Listen to first lecture podcast by June 23 Complete introduction by June 23 Complete discussion contribution by June 24 Complete quiz by June 25	What happens when different religious traditions encounter each other? What is conversion? Who is converted to what? How does the idea of conversion shape American culture in its formation and through the present day?
June 30	Read Albanese, Chapters 2-3 Listen to second lecture podcast by June 28 Complete discussion by June 28 Complete quiz by June 30	How did religious diversity shape not only American religious culture, but American identity more generally?
July 7	Read Albanese, Chapters 4-5 Listen to second lecture podcast by July 5 Complete discussion by July 6 Complete quiz by July 7	What was the role of religion in the currents of political thought that lead to revolution in the British Colonies in North America? How do American religious experiences of Evangelical Awakening, metaphysical experimentation and innovation, and religious disinterest shape the religious

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		character of the nation? How does American missionary experience influence culture in the United States? How are these various influences felt today?
July 14	Read Albanese, Chapter 6 Listen to second lecture podcast by July 12 Complete discussion by July 13 No Quiz this Week	How did African Americans understand God's relationship to the United States? Were black and white Christianity two different religions? How did increasing European immigration likewise shape religious development in America? How do these themes of ethnic and racial difference play out in American religion today?
<b>July 15</b>	<b>Midterm Examination</b>	<b>Topics covered through July 14</b>
July 21	Read Albanese, Chapters 7-8 Listen to second lecture podcast by July 19 Complete discussion by July 20 Complete quiz by July 21	How did modernity shape American religious diversity and change? What influence did Darwinian evolutionary theory, increasing industrialization, and immigration have on religious expression in the modern United States?
July 25	Read Albanese, Chapter 11 Listen to second lecture podcast by July 24 Complete discussion by July 25 No Quiz this Week	How do American's Christian origins, contract with Native peoples and their religions, and the increasing diversifications of religions through the life of the nation shape religion as a particular cultural or civic phenomenon in the United States? Why does religion still matter in the US today despite declines in religious diversity?
<b>July 26</b>	<b>Final Examination</b>	<b>All content from the course</b>