

University of Oklahoma
Perspectives on the American Experience
HON 2973.010, Fall 2002

New World Religions

Class: Honors College 180/181, Tuesday/Thursday 1:30-2:20
Section 011: Honors College 181, Tuesday 2:30-3:20
Section 012: Honors College 181, Thursday 2:30-3:20

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Course Description

This course is an interdisciplinary survey of “New World” religions—indigenous and immigrant traditions that have made a home in America—and of new “world religions”—American traditions that have found their way to other lands. What does it mean to map the American landscape as site of religious migration, to analyze the American nation-state as religious importer/exporter? Relying on the theories and methods of comparative religious studies, we explore themes of similarity and difference, continuity and change, indigenization and globalization. Course readings include primary texts and scholarly interpretations; class lectures and discussions focus on contemporary issues and are supplemented by guest speakers and audiovisual presentations. Students have the opportunity to deepen their appreciation for American religious diversity, to broaden their understanding of responsible citizenship in the context of an emerging global society, and to develop their critical skills for use in academic, professional, and personal settings.

Required Texts

These books can be purchased at the OU Bookstore and are also available at the reserve desk in Bizzell Memorial Library:

Mary Pat Fisher and Lee W. Bailey (eds.), An Anthology of Living Religions (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000).

Jacob Neusner (ed.), World Religions in America: An Introduction (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000).

Timothy Miller (ed.), America's Alternative Religions (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995).

Grading Criteria

Each assignment is evaluated on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. Course grades are assigned according to a contract grading system:

D contract = final examination

C contract = written responses (12)
final examination

B contract = oral presentations (2)
written responses (12)
final examination

A contract = research project
oral presentations (2)
written responses (12)
final examination

Class Schedule

August 27, 29	Religion and Religions	Fisher and Bailey 1, 13 Neusner Introduction Miller Introduction, Parts I-VII
September 3, 5	Tribalism	Fisher and Bailey 2 Neusner 1 Miller 28-29, 39
September 10, 12	Hinduism	Fisher and Bailey 3 Neusner 8 Miller 17-19
September 17, 19	Jainism	Fisher and Bailey 4 Neusner Miller
September 24, 26	Buddhism	Fisher and Bailey 5 Neusner 9 Miller 16
October 1, 3	Confucianism	Fisher and Bailey 6 Neusner 10 Miller
October 8, 10	Taoism	Fisher and Bailey 7 Neusner Miller
October 15, 17	Judaism	Fisher and Bailey 8 Neusner 7 Miller 10, 26
October 22, 24	Islam	Fisher and Bailey 10 Neusner 11 Miller 21, 23, 25
October 29, 31	Sikhism	Fisher and Bailey 11 Neusner Miller

November 5, 7	Orthodoxy	Fisher and Bailey 9 Neusner 6 Miller 14
November 12, 14	Catholicism	Fisher and Bailey Neusner 4-5 Miller 9
November 19, 21	Protestantism	Fisher and Bailey Neusner 2-3, 14-16 Miller 7-8, 32-33
November 26, 28	NO CLASS	Fisher and Bailey 12 Neusner 12 Miller 3, 5, 15, 20, 22, 30-31, 34-35
December 3, 5	Evangelicalism	Fisher and Bailey Neusner Miller 1-2, 6, 11-13, 27
December 10, 12	Mormonism and More	Fisher and Bailey Neusner 13 Miller 4, 24, 36-38, 40-43
December 17	Final Examination (1:30-3:30)	