

University of Oklahoma
Perspectives on the American Experience
HON 2973.010, Fall 2003

New World Religions

Class: CCD5 (Honors College) room 180/181, Tuesday/Thursday 1:30-2:20

Section 011: CCD1 (Herrick Dormitory) room 174, Tuesday 2:30-3:20

Section 012: CCD1 (Herrick Dormitory) room 174, Thursday 2:30-3:20

Prof. James Treat

Office hours: Wednesday 1:30-3:30

Office: Honors College 152

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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:

John L. Esposito, Darrell J. Fasching, and Todd Lewis, World Religions Today (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Diana L. Eck, A New Religious America, rev. ed. (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002).

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

Supplemental readings are drawn from key reference works in American religious studies, either distributed as class handouts or accessible through the Internet; we rely especially on the multimedia resources of the Pluralism Project, sponsored by the Committee on the Study of Religion at Harvard University:

<http://www.pluralism.org/>

Other course information and materials, including all assignment handouts, are available on-line through Blackboard:

<http://ou.blackboard.com/>

Please note that all e-mail communication related to this course is routed through Blackboard, which uses OU e-mail addresses.

Grading Criteria

Each assignment is evaluated on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis according to the following schedule:

Written Responses (13)	20 points (each)
Writing Consultations (2)	10 points (each)
Section Meetings (14)	5 points (each)
Oral Presentation	30 points
Final Examination	100 points
Research Project	120 points
Group Presentation	20 points (each person)
Office Visit	10 points
Campus Event	15 points
Community Event	25 points

Course grades are assigned according to a point system:

C = at least **300** total points, including
at least 200 points on Written Responses
two Writing Consultations
at least 50 points on Section Meetings

B = at least **400** total points, including
at least 200 points on Written Responses
two Writing Consultations
at least 50 points on Section Meetings
one Oral Presentation
at least 60 points on Final Examination

A = at least **500** total points, including
at least 200 points on Written Responses
two Writing Consultations
at least 50 points on Section Meetings
one Oral Presentation
at least 60 points on Final Examination
at least 80 points on Research Project

Class Schedule

August 26, 28	Course Introductions	Esposito Preface Eck Preface, Chapter 1 Miller supplemental readings
September 2, 4	"New World" Religions	Esposito 1 Eck 2 Miller Introduction, Parts I-VII supplemental readings
September 9, 11	Christians in America	Esposito 2 Eck Miller 1, 6, 8, 9 supplemental readings
September 16, 18	Jews in America	Esposito 3 Eck Miller 10 supplemental readings
September 23, 25	Muslims in America	Esposito 4 Eck 5 Miller 21, 23, 25 supplemental readings
Sept. 30, Oct. 2	Hindus in America	Esposito 5 Eck 3 Miller 17-19 supplemental readings
October 7, 9	Buddhists in America	Esposito 6 Eck 4 Miller 16 supplemental readings
October 14, 16	East Asians in America	Esposito 7 Eck Miller supplemental readings

October 21, 23	New "World Religions"	Esposito Eck 6, 7 Miller supplemental readings
October 28, 30	Black Religious Traditions	Esposito Eck Miller 26-29 supplemental readings
November 4, 6	Mormonism	Esposito Eck Miller 4 supplemental readings
November 11, 13	Christian Science	Esposito Eck Miller 5, 31, 32 supplemental readings
November 18, 20	Native American Church	Esposito Eck Miller 39 supplemental readings
November 25, 27	NO CLASS	Esposito Eck Miller supplemental readings
December 2, 4	Scientology	Esposito Eck Miller 40 supplemental readings
December 9, 11	Course Conclusions	Esposito Eck Miller supplemental readings
December 19	Final Examination	Friday, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Section Schedule

August 26/28	NO SECTION
September 2/4	Personal Introductions
September 9/11	Oral Presentations
September 16/18	Oral Presentations
September 23/25	Oral Presentations
Sept. 30 / Oct. 2	Oral Presentations
October 7/9	Oral Presentations
October 14/16	Oral Presentations
October 21/23	Oral Presentations
October 28/30	Research Reports
November 4/6	Research Reports
November 11/13	Research Reports
November 18/20	Research Reports
November 25/27	NO SECTION
December 2/4	Research Reports
December 9/11	Research Reports