RELI 1301: Introduction to Religion and Society
Fall 2016-University of Texas at Tyler
Adjunct Instructor Dr. Jimmie A. Reese
Office: None provided. For an appointment call Dr. Reese at his home (903-586-4116) or contact him by E-Mail: jareese@aol.com.

Course Description: Religion has been a powerful phenomenon throughout human history, but what kind of phenomenon is it? In this course, we examine some of the classic answers to that question. We will consider psychological, sociological, economic, phenomenological, anthropological, and other theories of religion. Also to be included are sociological interpretations of society.

Learning Objectives: By the end of the course, students should:
1. Be able to demonstrate knowledge of the various academic definitions of what religion “is.”
2. Be able to identify the important academicians who have studied religion and be able to elaborate on their contributions to our understanding of religion. Examples may include Durkheim, Weber, Freud, Bonhoeffer, Buber and Marx. The actual list changes from semester to semester.
3. Be able to write intelligently on how religious experience is subjective in nature but can be shared by groups of people who believe similarly.
4. Be able to demonstrate an understanding of the chronology of how thinking about religion has changed over time.
5. Be able to demonstrate an understanding of how the religious beliefs of individuals and communities impact the social orders of society.

Required Texts:
Journal articles provided by the instructor will serve as required readings.
Visual presentations (DVD and/or Video) are considered as text.
Lectures are also considered as text.

Final Grading System.
Students will be evaluated based on the following:
1. There will be four exams on the readings, videos and/or lectures throughout the semester. These will account for three-fourths of your grade. Students may drop the lowest grade of the first three exams. The fourth exam is not optional. There are no make-ups unless the student absence is due to representing the university for a sponsored event. The average of all four reflection papers (see number two below) may be used as a substitute grade for a missed exam except for the final. Please check with the university calendar for date of your final. Please read University policies beginning on third page.

CAUTION: EXCESSIVE ABSENCE WILL RESULT IN GRADE ALTERATION AFTER FOUR ABSENCES NOT APPROVED.
2. There will also be four reflection papers of 3-5 pages each. Format will be explained in class. They will account for one-fourth of your grade. Students are allowed to miss one reflection paper as the average of the best three will be used in grading. In order for the average of reflection papers to be used as a substitute for a missed exam, all four reflection papers must be completed. Substitution does not apply to the final exam. Each paper will be written from each of the four parts of the course. PAPERS ARE DUE TO THE WEEK OF EACH EXAM. Course content is subject to change.

Important Dates for Fall 2016
University of Texas at Tyler

FIRST DAY OF CLASS: AUGUST 29
FIRST EXAM: PART ONE: September 21
FIRST REFLECTION PAPER: Same week as above.

SECOND EXAM: PART TWO: October 12
SECOND REFLECTION PAPER: Same week as above.

THIRD EXAM: November 16
THIRD REFLECTION PAPER: Same week as above.

Thanksgiving Holidays November 21-25
FOURTH REFLECTION PAPER: THE WEEK BEFORE FINALS.

FOURTH EXAM DURING EXAM WEEK, December 13-17
Please check the University calendar for date of course final.

Dates are subject to change. You will be notified at least a week in advance.

Due dates for Reflection Papers are only due dates. You may want to turn in your paper prior to the due date.

If you need to contact Dr. Reese, please use the following e-mail address: jareese@aol.com or call 903-586-4116.
CLASS SCHEDULE

Part One: Religion and Being Religious

August 29 - Lecture & Discussion: Introduction to course and definitions of Religion.

August 31 - Why and how to study religion and its dimensions.

September 5 - No Class.

September 7 & 12 - Lecture & Discussion: Toward a religious worldview.

September 14 - Lecture & Discussion: A comparison of religious polarities.

September 19
  Lecture: How religious people know what they claim to know and the challenge of atheism.

September 21: Exam one will cover the above content.
Reflection paper number one due the week of first exam.

Part Two: Sociological Perspectives

September 26
  Lecture & Discussion: Introduction to sociology and the major perspectives in sociology including the work of George Ritzer.

September 28
  Lecture & Discussion: A sociological analysis of religion in America.

October 3
  Lecture & Discussion: Cultural and religious changes.

October 5,
  Lecture & Discussion: Issues Facing American Faith Communities.

October 10 - When does a social condition become a social problem? An introduction to part three of your course.

October 12: Exam two will cover the above content.
  Reflection paper number two due either October 6 or 8

Part Three: The Orders of Society and Selected Topics

October 17
  Discussion of article. Domestic Order: Seeking Consilence: A Theologian and a Scientist Discuss the Problem of Bottled Water.

October 19
  Discussion of Video. International Order: The Taize Community of France and the story of Brother Roger.
October 24 & 26
Case Study Video: *The Snake Handlers*.

October 31
Discussion of article: **Economic Order**: Discussion of journal article: *The War Against Rest*.

November 2 & 7
Video, Discussion & Lecture: **Political Order**: PBS special-*The Battle for the Bible. Presented as a model for understanding how power politics works*.

November 9
Discussion of article: **Social Order**: *The Ten Commandments 2.0*. An interpretation of the Ten Commandments in light of our new media and new technologies.

November 14
**Education Order**: Discussion of Article: *The Moral Uses of the University*.

**November 16:**
Exam three will cover the above content.
Reflection paper number three due the week of the third exam.

**Part IV: Voices of Challenge**

November 21-25 Thanksgiving Holidays.

November 28-Fr. Henri Nouwen

November 30-Adolf Hitler. his *Positive Christianity* and the response of German pastors.

December 5
Lecture & Discussion: Jean Vanier, founder of the L’Arche Community.

December 7
Lecture & Discussion: TBA

**Exam 4-Week of Finals. Exam four will cover the above content. Reflection paper number 4 due on or before the final exam.**

Class lecture, sequence of topics and content subject to change.
REFLECTION PAPER GUIDELINES

PART ONE: WHAT IS A REFLECTION PAPER?

First of all—a reflection paper is not a research paper. It is an opportunity for the student to reflective on what has been encountered in class, namely lecture, readings and videos.

PART TWO: GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE PAPER

Your paper is to be divided into three parts. Please follow the outline provided as follows.

1. Descriptive. Write what you heard, saw, and/or read. This is an objective question that requires that you ONLY describe what you experienced. PLEASE-NO PERSONAL OPINIONS. You are trying to explain to someone who knows nothing of what you experienced the content of what you heard, saw and/or read. Example of a descriptive statement: the coffee is black.

2. Opinion. Now you can give your personal evaluation of what you have just described. This is a subjective question. You are now trying to explain to someone what you personal reaction is to what you heard, saw and/or read. You will want to be able to defend your opinion. Example of your opinion: the coffee taste good. Not everyone will agree with you, but it is your own unique experience and evaluation. Explain yourself.

3. Contextualization. In what ways will the content of your report have relevancy for your own context or will it? Show how you might apply what you have learned or explain how what you learned will not work in your context.

PART THREE: PRESENTATION

All papers will be computer generated OR typed on a typewriter. Be forewarned: handwritten papers will not be accepted. Please double-space all pages.

The following format is to be placed in the middle of your front cover page. Name: Course Title: Due Date: Paper Number: Source: Title of Video, article or lecture with name of source

Identify each section of your paper with the following words in Bold Type:

Section I- Description. Section II- Opinion. Section III- Contextualization

The length of the paper should not be less than three pages of double spaced manuscript. That allows for one page per section. No matter the length of any section, no section should be less than one full page. I will read whatever you turn in, but would rather not have more than five pages per paper. You will be graded on both content and whether or not you follow my instructions on the required format.

NOTE: RIGHT AND LEFT MARGINS ARE TO BE ONE INCH.
Further Reminders

POLICIES THAT MUST APPEAR IN EACH COURSE SYLLABUS

The following University policies must appear on each course syllabus or be provided as an informational sheet (web-links to these policies may be used in the print or electronic syllabus)
http://www.utttyler.edu/academicaffairs/syllabuspolicies.pdf

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at http://www.utttyler.edu/about/campus carry/index.php.

Students Rights and Responsibilities
To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: http://www.utttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies
Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at http://www.utttyler.edu/registrar. Each semester’s Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.
Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements.
Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. These include:
- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a “W” grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy
Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).
Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability/Accessibility Services
In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible a disability diagnosis such as a chronic disease, learning disorder, head injury or ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment you are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources office and schedule an interview with an Accessibility Case Manager. If you are unsure if the above criteria applies to you, but have questions or concerns please contact the SAR office.
For more information or to set up an appointment please visit the SAR webpage (http://www.utttyler.edu/disabilityservices/) or the SAR office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to saroffice@utttyler.edu.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance
Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.
Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities
If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement:
It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation:
Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor’s directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.