RELI 1301: Introduction to Religion and Society  
Fall 2014-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 four exams provided all four are taken. 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.
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. Course content is subject to change.

Important Dates for Fall 2014
University of Texas at Tyler

FIRST DAY OF CLASS: AUGUST 25

FIRST EXAM: PART ONE: September 17
FIRST REFLECTION PAPER: Same week as above.

SECOND EXAM: PART TWO: October 6
SECOND REFLECTION PAPER: Same week as above.

THIRD EXAM: November 3
THIRD REFLECTION PAPER: Same week as above.

Thanksgiving Holidays November 24-29.

FOURTH REFLECTION PAPER: THE WEEK BEFORE FINALS.

FOURTH EXAM DURING EXAM WEEK
December 9-13. 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 25 & 27,
  Lecture & Discussion: Introduction to course, definitions of Religion, and how religious people know what they claim to know.

September 1-No class.

September 3,
  Lecture & Discussion: Dimensions of religion and developing a worldview based on religion.

September 8 Lecture & Discussion: Cultural and religious changes and responding to religious diversity.


September 15
  Lecture: Review and conclusion of first section of course.

September 17: Exam one will cover the above content.
September 15 or 17 Reflection paper number one due.

Part Two: Sociological Perspectives

September 22 & 24,
  Lecture & Discussion: Introduction to sociology and the major perspectives in sociology and an examination of American social values.

September 29,
  Lecture & Discussion: The work of George Ritzer.

October 1,
  Lecture & Discussion: A sociological analysis of religion in America.

October 6,
  Lecture & Discussion: The American generations compared.

October 8: 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 13,
  Discussion of article: Domestic Order: Interfaith Families: Practicing Radical Hospitality.

October 15,
  Discussion of video and lecture: International Order: Video presentation of the French international and ecumenical monastery: Taize.
October 20.
Case Study Video: *The Snake Handlers*.

October 22,
Discussion: **Economic Order**: Article: *Seeking Consilience: A Theologian and a Scientist Discuss the Problem of Bottled Water*.

October 27 & 29, Video, Discussion & Lecture: **Political Order**: PBS special-*The Battle for the Bible*. Presented as a model for understanding how power politics works.

November 3,
Discussion of article: **Social Order**: Article: *Effects of Auto-Mobility on Religious congregations and Culture*.

November 5,
**Education Order**: Discussion of Article: *Spirituality in Medicine: What Is Its Role, Today and Tomorrow?* This article deals with the education of medical caregivers.

**November 10:**
Exam three will cover the above content.
Reflection paper number three due either November 3 or 5.

**Part IV: Voices of Challenge**

Part IV will present a number of individuals, movements, and events that have made major contributions and/or challenged the religious experience in American life and other parts of the world.

November 12,
Lecture & Discussion: Feuerbach: Religion as an Objectification of Human Feeling and Marx: Religion as the Product of socioeconomic Alienation.

November 17 & 19,
Freud: Religion as Wish Fulfillment & Bonhoeffer: German resistance movement.

November 24 & 26 Thanksgiving Holiday. (Official holiday is November 24-29).

December 1 & 3,
Lecture & Discussion: Buber: I Thou and Merton: Mystic & Social Critic.

**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 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

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.uttler.edu/wellness/StudentRightsandResponsibilities.html

Attendance and Make Policy
Attendance is required for this course and non-attendance will cause a grade reduction. No exam make-ups are allowed; one exam missed will count as the lowest grade dropped. All written assignments (for example, book reports, abstracts and/or research papers) are due on the date assigned. Late papers will not be excused without serious justification. Broken printers or computers do not count as serious justification. Students need to back up all written data.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness
If you are repeating this course for a grade replacement, you must file an intent to receive grade forgiveness with the registrar by the 12th day of class. Failure to do so will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates will receive grade forgiveness (grade replacement) for only three course repeats; graduates, for two course repeats during his/her career at UT Tyler.

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 12th day of class (January 26th).
Exceptions to the 6-drop rule include, but are not limited to, the following: totally withdrawing from the university; being administratively dropped from a course; dropping a course for a personal emergency; dropping a course for documented change of work schedule; or dropping a course for active duty service with the U.S. armed forces or Texas National Guard.
Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Registrar's Office and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Registrar's Office if you have any questions.

Disability Services
In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodation must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Support Services counselor. If you have a disability, including a learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact Ida MacDonald in the Disability Support Services office in UC 282, or call (903) 566-7079.

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.