

Doane College

# RELIGION IN AMERICAN LIFE

PRE 323 (3 credits)

M 6:00-10:30PM

Instructor: Lee Tasey  
Office Hours: Arranged  
Email: [ltasey@yahoo.com](mailto:ltasey@yahoo.com)

**Course Description:** This course is an examination of the intellectual and social history of religion in America. Beliefs and practices of major religions are also examined.

**Course Reading:**

World Religions in America. Jacob Neusner, Ed. Third Edition. Louisville: WJK. ISBN-13: 978-0-664-22475-2

**Course Goals:**

- 1) to learn the basic beliefs and rituals of various religions. Major concepts to be explored are the nature of the Absolute, the problem with human life and its solution on earth, and notions of life after death

- 2) to study the historical development of selected religions in the United States with close attention paid to how each religion impacts, and is impacted by, American life
- 3) to develop a greater appreciation for the breadth and depth of the human spirit, both in the United States and abroad
- 4) to remove prejudice and stereotypes, thus allowing students to sympathize with beliefs and lifestyles different than their own

**Course Work and Grading:** Grading is based on 1) class attendance, participation and attentiveness 2) seven reflection papers (to be turned in at the beginning of each class) and 3) a final research paper.

**Course Policies:** Class attendance and participation is important to learning. If you will miss more than two classes, do NOT enroll in this class. More than two absences will result in the grade of "F."

#### **Course Evaluation**

- 1) attendance, participation & attentiveness (APA) 40%
- 2) seven one-page reflection papers 20%
- 3) research paper 40%

#### **Grading Scale**

A+ = 98-100  
A = 95-97  
A- = 92-94  
B+ = 89-91  
B = 86-88  
B- = 83-85  
C+ = 80-82  
C = 77-79  
C- = 74-76  
D+ = 71-73  
D = 68-70  
D- = 65-67

### **A Note on Plagiarism**

All written work must be in your own words. Using someone else's words or ideas without a proper citation is a crime. If I find you guilty of plagiarism, not only will you fail that assignment, you may also fail the course. So play it safe—don't steal.

### **A Note on Courtesy**

We live in the twenty-first century, not the Stone Age. Everybody should act civilized. When the instructor is talking, you don't talk. When you're talking, your colleagues don't talk. And when the guest speaker is talking? NOBODY SAYS A WORD.

### Tentative Class Schedule

Session I Introduction: Religion in American Life

Session II Judaism

Session III Christianity (Roman Catholicism)

Session IV Christianity (Protestantism) & Islam

Session V Secular Humanism

Buddhism VI Buddhism & Neo-Paganism: Wicca

Session VII Unitarian Universalism & Separation of Church  
and State