It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it. - Aristotle

Course Number
PRE 323W

Credits
3

Instructor
Dr. Cindy Spady

E-mail Address
cindy.spady@doane.edu

Office Hours
As needed

Phone
402-984-0792 (cell and text)

Description
"An examination of the intellectual and social history of religion in America. Beliefs and practices of major religious groups are also examined."

Required Books:


Additional readings may be assigned.

Course Objectives and Goals:

1. To learn basic and core beliefs of various world religions, with special emphasis on those prominent in the United States.

2. To explore how religion affects American life and influences politics, economics, culture, media, and other aspects of everyday life.

3. To enhance critical thinking and research skills pertaining to religious thought and experience.

4. To explore, compare, and contrast one’s personal beliefs and understanding with others’.
**Course Schedule** (Schedule is tentative and subject to change.)

*Reading assignments will be given out at the end of each class for the next week.*

October 24: Introduction and Overview

What is religion? Why religion?
Religion in America
How does religion impact our world and country?
Separation of Church and State

Please read before the first class meeting:

Prothero – Introduction, Neusner – pgs. 1-7, 400-421

October 31: Judaism

November 7: Christianity

November 14: Islam

November 21: Hinduism, Buddhism, and Other Eastern Religions

**November 28 – No Class Thanksgiving**

December 5: Newer Religious Movements Part 1: Mormonism and Jehovah Witnesses

December 12: Newer Religious Movements Part 2: Scientology, Church of Science, Atheism, Agnostics, and Spiritual But Not Religious

December 19: Native American Spirituality

Pagan, Wiccan

Course Wrap up

How you will be graded:

**Grading Rationale**

Students will be evaluated with the following criteria:

30% - Attendance/participation

30% - Weekly assignments/home work

30% - Final paper

10% - Weekly article submission about religion in America
Grading Scale

A+ 100-99%
A 98-93
A- 92-91
B+ 90-88
B 87-83
B- 82-81
C+ 80-79
C 78-74
C- 73-70
D 69-60
F 59-0

Attendance and Participation  30%

Both attendance and participation in class are essential. Since we only meet 8 times attendance is vital. This course format is highly interactive. Attendance will be taken each class. Small group and large group work are integral parts of each class and participation will be taken into account when deciding the attendance/participation portion of the grade, which is 30%. If you will not be in class please email or texted me. The following will be taken in consideration:

1. Attendance (please try diligently to be at all 8 classes) for the entire class time.
2. Asking questions, participating in small groups, being engaged
3. Completing in-class assignments and exercises
4. Disrupting the class with excessive chatter will result in deduction of participation points. Sometimes we do not realize that talking not only disrupts the professor, but also and more importantly other students. Be respectful please!!!!

If you will not be in class please let me know when and why. If you expect exceptions then you need to let me know your status. Communication is vital.

Weekly Assignments/Home Work  30%

Each week you will have a short assignment to complete before the next class. These are in addition to your readings.

These assignments might include short essays, research to share with class, etc. Late Assignments will not be accepted.
Final Paper  30%

For your final you will submit a paper 6-8 pages. The particular paper assignment will be handed out by Nov. 21, including formatting guidelines. The paper will be due on Jan. 3, 2014.

Weekly Article/Current Event Sharing  10%

Religion is everywhere. Each week you are to turn in an article/story that you have found in a newspaper, online, TV, magazine, or other outlet that pertains to religion in America.

You will share these briefly in class.

No late submissions will be accepted.

How each session will work:

Each class meeting might include lecture, group work, discussion, and use of media.

Come ready to participate, learn, be challenged, open up your world view and self understanding, dialogue with others, share your points of views and be open to others’.

Doane College Academic Integrity Policy:

The Doane College Academic Integrity Policy will be adhered to in this class. All projects and tests will represent your own work. Any use of others’ ideas and words without proper citation of sources is plagiarism and will result in penalties to be determined by the instructor and/or the dean of undergraduate studies.