

RE307 Religion in Today's World

for S2T 2015

Mission Statement

Park University provides access to a quality higher education experience that prepares a diverse community of learners to think critically, communicate effectively, demonstrate a global perspective and engage in lifelong learning and service to others.

Vision Statement

Park University, a pioneering institution of higher learning since 1875, will provide leadership in quality, innovative education for a diversity of learners who will excel in their professional and personal service to the global community.

Course Title RE307 Religion in Today's World

Bookstore Textbooks can be purchased through the official bookstore of accelerated classes, **MBS bookstore**

Semester S2T2015

Semester Dates Mar 16, 2015 to May 10, 2015

Drop Date Mar 23, 2015

Withdrawal Date Apr 19, 2015

Class Days Online format.

Class Time Online format.

Classroom Online format.

Location

Prerequisites None required, but RE109 or a similar course in World Religions would be helpful.

Credit Hours 3

Course Description RE307 Contemporary aspects of religious thought and practice across a variety of disciplines and expressions, and considering current trends and movements. Attention will be given to religion as manifested on the world state, with particular attention to the role it plays in the United States. The attempt is made to integrate religion with business, education, the sciences, politics consistent with current experience. 3:0:3.

Faculty Name Michael S. Jeffress, PhD

Email michael.jeffress@park.edu

Textbooks

Cimino, Richard and Lattin, Don: *Shopping for Faith*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002; -text only, any edition.

Eck, Diana L.: *A New Religious America*, New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002; -any edition.

Both of the texts are **required**, and needed **from the first day**. These are readily available in libraries, used book stores, and on the internet.

Additional Resources

Students are encouraged (and will be required in the weekly assignments) to utilize news media, television, music, political campaign information, business, their own studies and any other cultural resources to enlarge awareness of religion in today's world. Links to a variety of same are included in the course; development of additional resources is expected as part of the learning experience.

Additional Resources Online

Online Classroom Technical Support- For technical assistance with the Online classroom, email helpdesk@parkonline.org or call the helpdesk at **866-301-PARK (7275)**. To see the technical requirements for Online courses, please visit the <http://online.park.edu> website, and click on the "Technical Requirements" link, and click on "BROWSER Test" to see if your system is ready.

FAQ's for Online Students- You can find most answers to your questions here.

If you cannot remember your Park University ID number or have forgotten your password, please visit <https://accounts.park.edu>. If you continue to have problems, please call Enrollment Services at 1-877-505-1059 or the IT Help Desk at 1-800-927-3024.

Library Resources

McAfee Memorial Library Mission

The **McAfee Memorial Library** provides access to quality information resources that enables a diverse community of learners to think critically, communicate effectively, demonstrate a global perspective and engage in lifelong learning and service to others.

Collections

- **Pirate Search**- Search all Park University Library Databases, eBooks and Print holdings at once!
- Our collections include more than a quarter million books, **ebooks**, videos and **periodical and research databases**. Electronic resources are available 24/7.
- Additional materials can be obtained via **interlibrary loan** and/or **reciprocal borrowing agreements** with local and regional libraries.

Instruction Service

- Reference and instruction librarians are available to help with research and the use of electronic resources on-site, via phone, **email** and **live chat**.
- Classroom instruction is available in basic research, the use of electronic resources and in support of course assignments.
- Contact one of our **reference and instruction librarians** to schedule an instruction session.
- **Instructional videos** in the use of electronic resources can also be found on the library

website.

- **Library at a Glance**(.pdf)

Contact Information Mabee Learning Center / Academic Underground

8700 N.W. River Park Drive

Box 61

Parkville, MO 64152

Phone: (816) 584-6285 (800) 270-4347

library@park.edu

www.park.edu/library

Faculty Additional Learning Outcomes

1. Identify religious themes in American life and relate them to encounters in everyday life.
2. Discuss challenges to traditional religion in today.
3. Define movements and trends in religion in the United States and abroad.
4. Explain the religious history of the United States and examine the many factors in its development.
5. Interpret the diversity of religious expression in American life.
6. Examine the interplay between science and religion and its significance for the modern world.
7. Critique the impact of religious influence on the development of various policies represented in public life.
8. Analyze the interplay of religion and other disciplines, and present such information to others.
9. Differentiate knowledgeably between diverse religious groups.
10. Evaluate with greater understanding the reporting of news involving religion.

Schedule

Week 1: Getting to know you, intro to subject. Why study religion? Religion In Today's World. Overview.

Week 2: What's going on? Communities What are we really dealing with?

Week 3: "We the people..." Who is "We"?

Week 4: The influence of East and West: Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims

Week 5: Religion and Science

Week 6: Religion and Disciplines: Law, Education, Business, Politics, Medicine, and so on.

Week 7: New Religious Movements, Cults, and Sects

Week 8: Who are you? What do you believe? Emerging movements. Bridge Building: A New Multireligious America

Assignments

Week 1: Shopping for Faith: Introduction, chapters 1-3. Eck, chapter 1. Quizzes. Weekly Finds. Discussion.

Week 2: Shopping for Faith: chapters 4-6. Eck, chapter 2. Weekly Finds. Begin development of Essay Project. Discussion.

Week 3: Shopping for Faith: chapters 7-9. Weekly Finds. Continue development of Essay Project. Discussion.

Week 4: Eck, chapters 3, 4, 5. Weekly Finds. Continue development of Essay Project. Discussion.

Week 5: Read articles provided in the week. Weekly Finds. Continue development of Essay Project. Video. Discussion.

Week 6: Read articles provided in the week. Read classmates' web research on Religion and Disciplines. Weekly Finds. Submission of final paper in Essay Project. Discussion.

Week 7: Read articles provided in the week. Read classmates' web research on Sects & Cults. Weekly Finds. Video. Discussion.

Week 8: Read Eck, chapters 6 & 7. Read Postscript in Shopping for Faith. Read articles provided in the week. Discussion. Weekly Finds. Final Exam.

Grading Plan

Points may be earned with each graded class activity. Accumulation will build during the term to a possible 915 points.

A 90-100% 824-915 points

B 80-89% 732-823 points

C 70-79% 641-731 points

D 60-69% 549-640 points

F 0-59% 548 points and lower

Course Topic/Dates/Assignments

Week 1: Getting to know you, intro to subject. Why study religion? Religion In Today's World. Overview.

Shopping for Faith: Introduction, chapters 1-3. Eck, chapter 1. Quizzes. Weekly Finds. Discussion.

Week 2 What's going on? Communities What are we really dealing with?

Shopping for Faith: chapters 4-6. Eck, chapter 2. Weekly Finds. Begin development of Essay Project. Discussion.

Week 3 "We the people..." Who is "We"?

Shopping for Faith: chapters 7-9. Weekly Finds. Continue development of Essay Project. Discussion.

Week 4 The influence of East and West: Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims

Eck, chapters 3, 4, 5. Weekly Finds. Continue development of Essay Project. Discussion.

Week 5 Religion and Science

Read articles provided in the week. Weekly Finds. Continue development of Essay Project. Video. Discussion.

Week 6 Religion and Disciplines: Law, Education, Business, Politics, Medicine, and so on.

Read articles provided in the week. Read classmates' web research on Religion and Disciplines. Weekly Finds. Submission of final paper in Essay Project. Discussion.

Week 7 New Religious Movements, Cults, and Sects

Read articles provided in the week. Read classmates' web research on Sects & Cults. Weekly Finds. Video. Discussion.

Week 8 Who are you? What do you believe? Emerging movements. Bridge Building: A New Multireligious America

Read Eck, chapters 6 & 7. Read Postscript in Shopping for Faith. Read articles provided in the week. Discussion. Weekly Finds. Final Exam.

Late Submission of Course Material

It is not conducive to good health or success in this course to put off readings and assignments until the last minute. Remember the wise proverb: "*By the inch, it's a cinch; but by the yard it's hard.*" No extra credit is possible in this course. Everyone has the same time to complete the same assignments. Each week's work is due within the week it is assigned.

I will *not* accept for credit any assignment that is turned in late without *prior* approval. Online

quizzes cannot be made up. Any assignment that is turned in past its due date will receive a zero in the grade book. Extensions on assignments may be granted only for extreme and verifiable reasons (e.g., serious personal illness lasting three consecutive days, death in immediate family, some military deployments). *If* a student requests an extension for an assignment, *and* the request is approved, *then* the assignment will be penalized by 5% off the final grade for each day that it is late. No assignment will be accepted for credit more than 7 days past its original due date.

Classroom rules of conduct

Having both taken many online courses as a student and taught even more, I have put together the following guidelines to make our discussion forum experience a more rewarding experience.

1. *Be on time.* Complete all your work on time.
2. *Be respectful.* Religion is a sensitive topic for many people. No form of bigotry against any religion will be tolerated. Our class is to be an open and safe place for everyone to share ideas, raise questions, and engage in critical thinking. We will be rich in diversity. We will be from different backgrounds with varied social, political, religious, and philosophical views. We will have different types and levels of education and experience. There will be *zero tolerance* for any disrespectful behavior, rude comments, or cyber bullying of any kind. You are free to disagree and engage in scholarly debate, but keep the focus of the debate centered on propositions and not the people who make them. Those who violate this guideline will be warned and subsequent violations may result in expulsion from the course.
3. *Use correct grammar and style.* This is a college class, and a certain level of formality and proper netiquette is expected. Complete sentences that are free of typos and include correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation are expected. A deduction of 1 point per error is applied to the grade for each discussion forum. I recommend that you type your posts in a word processor, run spellcheck, and then copy and paste them into the discussion forum. This may help you not only on your grade by reducing grammatical mistakes and typos, but it may also save you the time and headache of losing text from accidentally closing a window, hitting the wrong button, or the loss of Internet connection.
4. *Be concise.* Unless otherwise indicated, all posts to the discussion forum should be limited to 300-500 words (2-4 paragraphs) and comments made to peers should be 150-300 words. This might be a challenge, but learning to provide concise comments and feedback is important.
5. *Be Credible.* The textbooks should be your primary sources for information, but if you reference another source, make sure it is a credible source and provide the link or bibliographic information for that source. Plagiarism, i.e.,

cutting and pasting from the internet without citing the source(s) will not be tolerated.

6. *Give proper identification.* Please sign your name to all of your posts. When you are responding to the post of another, then begin with a greeting to that person. The threaded discussions can become a tangled web without following this guideline. Also, when I grade your comments, I pull them out of context, and it is helpful for me to know to whom you were replying in case I need to go back to the original context.
7. *Keep focused.* The discussion forum is for discussions about the content of the course. Please do not clutter it with personal notes or discussions unrelated to the posted topic. You can always extend conversations by connecting with classmates by e-mail or social networks.
8. *Sleep on it.* You do not have to reply to every post or comment, and you never have to reply or post immediately. Let your posts reflect thoughtfulness and introspection.
9. *Avoid ALL CAPS, the overuse of exclamation points (!), italics, and bold type.* Computer mediated communication is devoid of presence and nonverbal cues, and, therefore, more susceptible to miscommunication.
10. *Acronyms and Emoticons.* Do not overuse emoticon symbols and texting acronyms (e.g., JK, TTYL, LOL). We are not instant-messaging each other on a social media site; we are interacting in a virtual academic classroom, and a certain level of formality is expected.

Academic Honesty Catalog

Academic integrity is the foundation of the academic community. Because each student has the primary responsibility for being academically honest, students are advised to read and understand all sections of this policy relating to standards of conduct and academic life. Park University students and faculty members are encouraged to take advantage of the University resources available for learning about academic honesty at www.park.edu/current or www.park.edu/faculty.

Academic Honesty Instructor Added

All assignments are expected to be the result of your own thinking, preparation, and work. Any and all work submitted to this course is subject to being submitted to Turnitin.com to screen for plagiarism. Academic dishonesty will be dealt with severely and without exception. Any suspected case of cheating, plagiarism, purchased papers, borrowed papers, work copied from the Internet, as well as any other act that is deemed dishonest will result in the student receiving a zero ("F") on the assignment in question. In addition, an Academic Dishonesty Incident Report will be submitted to the appropriate Department Chair, Campus Center Academic Director, or Academic Dean for further appropriate disciplinary action. Any repeat offenses will result in automatic expulsion from the course with a failing grade (WF).

Plagiarism Catalog

Plagiarism involves the use of quotations without quotation marks, the use of quotations

without indication of the source, the use of another's idea without acknowledging the source, the submission of a paper, laboratory report, project, or class assignment (any portion of such) prepared by another person, or incorrect paraphrasing.

Plagiarism Instructor Added

I have zero tolerance for plagiarism. If you have any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism, then please spend some time reviewing the information at <http://www.plagiarism.org>. Do your own thinking and work. When you need to borrow ideas to build upon them, then give credit where credit is due. Never simply copy and paste from other sources. Engage them and add your personal critical observations, and always cite your sources. I frequently utilize anti-plagiarism software and strategies to ensure students are conducting themselves with honesty and integrity in all of the assignments.

Attendance Policy Catalog

Attendance is automatically generated by activity in the online course. Students must communicate this to the instructor before Sunday of that week. Excused absences can be granted by the instructor for medical reasons, school-sponsored activities and employment-related demands, including temporary duty. Students are responsible for any missed work. Students with absences for two successive weeks, without approved excuse may be administratively withdrawn from the class and notified that an “F” will be recorded, unless the student initiates official withdrawal from the class(es).

Attendance Policy Instructor Added

Although this is an online course, “attendance” still matters. The online system keeps track of when and how often students log onto the course, what pages they view, what files they download, links they access, etc. You will not do well in this course if you do not spend adequate time reading the textbook, being logged onto the course reading class notes, viewing PowerPoints, accessing links to other Internet resources referenced in the course materials, taking quizzes, participating in the discussion forums, and working on assignments. Keep in mind that this course is for three credit hours. That means you would be in a classroom for three hours per week if this class were not online. The rule of thumb is to spend three hours outside of class to study and do homework for each credit hour. Therefore, you should plan to give this course about 12 hours of your time each week. However, because this course is accelerated, meaning that you complete the work in 8 weeks instead of the usual 16 weeks, you can double these numbers. You must be disciplined to put in the time and keep up with course announcements, assignments, and deadlines. I recommend that you check your student e-mail every day and log on to the course at least every two days to ensure that you stay on top of things.

Instructors are required to maintain attendance records and to report absences via the online attendance reporting system.

1. The instructor may excuse absences for valid reasons, but missed work must be made up within the semester/term of enrollment.

2. Work missed through unexcused absences must also be made up within the semester/term of enrollment, but unexcused absences may carry further penalties.
3. In the event of two consecutive weeks of unexcused absences in a semester/term of enrollment, the student will be administratively withdrawn, resulting in a grade of "F".
4. A "Contract for Incomplete" will not be issued to a student who has unexcused or excessive absences recorded for a course.
5. Students receiving Military Tuition Assistance or Veterans Administration educational benefits must not exceed three unexcused absences in the semester/term of enrollment. Excessive absences will be reported to the appropriate agency and may result in a monetary penalty to the student.
6. Report of a "F" grade (attendance or academic) resulting from excessive absence for those students who are receiving financial assistance from agencies not mentioned in item 5 above will be reported to the appropriate agency.

Park University 2013-2014 Undergraduate CatalogPage 98

Disability Guidelines Catalog

Park University is committed to meeting the needs of all students that meet the criteria for special assistance. These guidelines are designed to supply directions to students concerning the information necessary to accomplish this goal. It is Park University's policy to comply fully with federal and state law, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, regarding students with disabilities. In the case of any inconsistency between these guidelines and federal and/or state law, the provisions of the law will apply. Additional information concerning Park University's policies and procedures related to disability can be found on the Park University web page:

<http://www.park.edu/disability>

Additional Information

I genuinely want you to benefit from this course. Yes, even though it will be academically demanding--especially considering the 8-week accelerated format, I would like you to be able to say at the end that you enjoyed the course. Please do not allow yourself to become overwhelmed. I am here to help. You can contact me anytime using the e-mail link on the course homepage. I usually respond within 24 hours, except on some weekends, but you can definitely expect a reply from me within two business days. You are also welcome to call me at my office (985) 448-4584 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (CST). If I do not answer, please leave a voicemail in which you identify yourself and leave your contact information, then I will return your call.

Biography

I enrolled in a seminary at age 20 and have been a student of religion ever since. I was a Christian minister for 16 years (1992-2008), but I have experienced numerous theological and philosophical shifts through the years. As much as I do not care for the phrase, today you can

place me in the "spiritual-but-not-religious" camp.

I have been a full-time college professor since 2010. I teach at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, LA (about an hour from New Orleans to the east and Baton Rouge to the west), where I live with my partner of 6 years, Priscilla, our dog and two cats. I joined the online adjunct faculty for Park University in the spring of 2014 and thoroughly enjoy teaching for Park and the level of maturity the students always exhibit.

If you want to know more about my background and work, please visit my Web site: <http://www.michaeljeffress.com>.

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