Description

The role of religion in community building and as the ideological or conceptual glue that binds a group of people together is examined vis-a-vis more conventional identity and nation-building mechanisms, such as politics and commerce. Students are presented with the opportunity to view differing approaches to religion - transformative and transcendental vs. pragmatic - and are able to trace the way the world views differ, resulting in coalitions and conflicts.

Prerequisites:

None

Course Outline:

Unit 1: Introducing Sociological Views of Religion

The purpose of this unit is to introduce sociological theories of religion as tools for analyzing the relationship of religion and world politics. We will consider the fundamental tools used to explore the social construction of religions, along with reviewing the major beliefs, rituals and institutions of the world's most prominent religious traditions. We will test sociological theory by examining the way that American society has started to accept a blurring of the lines between church and state, and will probe possible explanations for that.

Unit 2: Ethos and the Challenges of Modernism and Multiculturalism

The purpose of this unit is to consider the ways in which religions affect the individual and social search for meaning and wholeness. We will explore the concept of "ethos" and the ways in which the different religions of the world contribute to the construction of this basic way of living. Then we will confront the serious challenges of modernism and multiculturalism that have resulted from the industrial and postindustrial revolutions. We will explore these theories further through our online readings by discussing the historic challenges facing us in the sphere of world politics.

Unit 3: Religion, Conflict and Change

When the desire for change converges with the political reality, what happens? The purpose of this unit is to explore the brand-new landscape of religious diversity in world politics, and the potential for both constructive and destructive conflict as we make our way into the 21st century. We will ask several key questions. When is religion an asset, and when is it a liability? Is constructive religious transformation possible, or is religion dependent upon other, more powerful social, political, and economic factors? How might we honor the best in religion, and restrain the worst? And how do we know which is the best, and which is the worst?

Unit 4: Finding the Balance

Throughout this course we have had ample opportunity to reflect on the role of religion in social cohesion. As we conclude the class, we will consider the place of religion in the world today.

Outcomes
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Critically reflect on the role of religion in world politics
2. Articulate the importance of a global "shared ethos"
3. Evaluate the contributions of ancient religious traditions to the emergence of this global "shared ethos"
4. Construct fresh approaches to some of the urgent questions of our time:
   - How can we live together?
   - How can religions help us understand our problems and solve them?

Deliverables

Click here to view the 8 week Term Schedules.

Click here to view the 15 week Term Schedules.

Course Schedule

Weeks start on Monday, 12:01 AM ET and end on Sunday, 11:59 PM ET, US.

Unless otherwise noted, all assigned items are due at the end of the module (by 11:59PM, Sunday).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Unit &amp; Title</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Online Discussions</th>
<th>Course Outcomes Related to this Module</th>
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</table>
| Weeks 1 & 2 | Unit 1: Introducing Sociological Views of Religion | Texts:
Required Journal Readings:
D. G. Hart's, 'Mainstream Protestantism, 'Conservative' Religion, and Civil Society'
Klaus J. Milich, 'Fundamentalism Hot and Cold: George W. Bush and the 'Return of the Sacred'
Santa Clara University - Religion, Ethics, and Politics in World Affairs | Submit: First Unit Paper | Introductions | Comparing Religions, Secularism in America, Unit 4 Paper |
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<tr>
<th>Weeks 3 &amp; 4</th>
<th>Unit 2: Ethos and the Challenges of Modernism and Multiculturalism</th>
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Kurtz. Gods in the Global Village. (Ch. VI Modernism and Multiculturalism). |
| **Online Readings:** | An Uncertain Road: Muslims and the Future of Europe  
Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics  
Among Wealthy Nations ...  
Secular Europe and Religious America: Implications for Transatlantic Relations  
Does "Muslim" Turkey Belong in "Christian" Europe?  
Pope Benedict XVI and World Affairs  
Vatican Foreign Policy in the New Pontificate  
Secularism in France |
| Submit: | Second Unit Paper  
Building a Cross-Cultural Ethos |
| Weeks 5 & 6 | Unit 3: Religion, Conflict and Change |
| **Online Readings:** | On Maslow  
On Frankl  
Research at the Center for World Religions, Diplomacy, and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University |
| Submit: | Third Unit Paper  
Citizen Diplomacy  
New Religious Movements |
| Weeks 7 & 8 | Unit 4: Finding the Balance |
| **Texts:** | Kurtz. Gods in the Global Village. (Ch. VIII Religion and Social Conflict) (Continued from Unit 3). |
| Submit: | Final Paper  
Finding Solutions  
Chaos and Community  
Religion in Today's World |
Evaluation

Grade Ranges
A=90-100%
B=80-89%
C=70-79%
D=60-69%
F=below 60%

Breakdown

Grade Weights:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Unit Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Unit Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Unit Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Criteria

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course Activities:

Before beginning your course work, be sure to review the Excelsior College Guidelines for Online Interaction (http://www.excelsior.edu/netiquette) (a.k.a. Online Etiquette or "Netiquette"). If you have any questions regarding these guidelines, please feel free to direct them to your instructor. All student work in this course may be submitted to plagiarism detection software.

Discussion Forums - 20%

Post one thoughtful response to the question listed in the discussion topic. Also, please respond to one student’s posting. Thoughtful means relevant, carefully considered, supported by a text or illustration, helpful to the discussion. You do not need to use external sources for these posts, but if you do you will need to properly cite them according to MLA style. Ideal length: approximately 200 words per posting.

M1A1: Module 1 Short Paper - 20%

Write a short paper of at least 2,000 words in MLA format on one of the themes described in the M1A1: Module 1 Short Paper instructions within the module. Papers are to be submitted as a Word .doc or .docx attachment file.

M2A1: Module 1 Short Paper - 20%

Write a short paper of at least 2,000 words in MLA format on one of the themes described in the M2A1: Module 2 Short Paper instructions within the module. Papers are to be submitted as a Word .doc or .docx attachment file.

M3A1: Module 1 Short Paper - 20%
Write a short paper of at least 2,000 words in MLA format on one of the themes described in the M3A1: Module 3 Short Paper instructions within the module. Papers are to be submitted as a Word .doc or .docx attachment file.

M4A1: Module 1 Short Paper - 20%

Write a short paper of at least 2,000 words in MLA format on one of the themes described in the M4A1: Module 4 Short Paper instructions within the module. Papers are to be submitted as a Word .doc or .docx attachment file.

By registering for a web-based course, you have made a commitment to participate regularly with your instructor and other students in online discussions. You will be expected to use online course tools (Discussions and Chat rooms) to interact with your peers and work collaboratively to improve your understanding of underlying course ideas and issues.

To lessen the risk of losing your work, do not write major discussions directly into a discussion posting. Instead, compose and check your work in other software (such as Microsoft Word) and then use the Create Message button and copy and paste your text into the new posting.

FORMATTING AND STYLE FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

MLA Format

Course Policies

Turnitin.com:

Excelsior College subscribes to Turnitin.com, the world's largest plagiarism-detection service, and reserves the right to check all student work to verify that it meets the guidelines of this policy.

Institutional Policies

COURSE PARTICIPATION:

Weekly course participation is required. Please see the Student Participation Policy [link] for more details.

Instructor Participation

Your instructor will:

- Post a welcome message during the first 24 hours of the course.
- Schedule real time office hours through the chat room and/or by individual appointment.
- Communicate with you through the Blackboard communication tools, including internal course messaging.
- Respond to student communications within two business days.
- Log into the course to review and participate at least three different days a week in 15-week courses, or four different days a week in 8-week courses.
- Provide you with formative feedback midway through the course based on work submitted to that point.
- Grade all formative assignments within 7 business days in 15-week courses and 4 business days in 8-week courses, and will grade final summative work within 5 business days after the end of the term.

POLICIES

You are responsible for being familiar with all the policies that are related to your activity in this course. Complete information on Excelsior College policies can be found in the Course Information area or by visiting [link].

All student work in this course may be submitted to plagiarism detection software. The reports from this software may be used as evidence in support of disciplinary actions. Please see the policy on Academic Honesty [link] for more details.