Global Religious Diversity

SOCI 398
3 Credits
Spring 2018

Instructor
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Office Hours
MWF 9:00-10:00 (available in office, via phone, or through email)

Course Description
Global Religious Diversity is an online course. We will examine a variety of religions around the world, emphasizing interaction between people from diverse religious backgrounds in our increasingly multicultural and globally interconnected world. After a brief introduction to the beliefs and practices of various religions, the bulk of the course content will explore interactions between the people and institutions of different religions. This course integrates the study of global religious diversity into the mainstream sociology curriculum by applying sociological theories to interreligious contact and dialogue. We will focus on differences in power and influence, the role of closed and open social networks, meaning-making in religiously heterogeneous environments, and religious institutions that paradoxically promote both inclusion and exclusion.

A Note on the Sociological Study of Religion
As participants in this course, we come from a variety of religious and secular backgrounds. In fact, diversity of religious beliefs and perspectives is the focus of the course. We must respect these diverse religious backgrounds. At the same time, it is important to remember that as sociologists we must leave subjective perspectives aside. We must endeavor to approach the subject in as objective a manner as possible.

Course Goals & Objectives
1. Gain knowledge of the basic tenets and beliefs of major world religions.
2. Gain basic understanding of history of global religious diversity.
3. Gain basic understanding of contemporary prevalence of global religious diversity.
4. Gain in-depth knowledge of problems and benefits associated with religious diversity in several locations outside of the United States.
Instructor Role

As the instructor, I have designed this course to employ a variety of instructional methods, including PowerPoint “lectures,” videos, discussion board activities, exams, essays, and homework assignments. You will see my PowerPoint presentation in many (but not all) modules. Various assignments and activities will then expand on that material. If you find yourself having difficulty understanding or completing any assignments or activities, it is better to contact me sooner rather than later. While I have specific office hours when I am always available, I also have a virtual “open door” policy for arranging in-person, phone, or online appointments.

Required Texts


Additional readings, videos, and assignments posted on Canvas.

Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes (14 @ 10 points each)</td>
<td>140 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>90 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>90 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Board (15 @ 5 points each)</td>
<td>75 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essays (2 @ 30 points each)</td>
<td>60 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARDA Modules (3 @ 15 points each)</td>
<td>45 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points Possible</strong></td>
<td><strong>500 Points</strong></td>
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<table>
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<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>490-500</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>360-389</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>460-489</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>350-359</td>
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<td>340-349</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>440-449</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>310-339</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>410-439</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>300-309</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<tr>
<td>400-409</td>
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<td>299 or less</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>390-399</td>
<td>C+</td>
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Exams

Exams will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and short essays. The exams cover material from class and information from the assigned readings. All exam are administered in the DIGITAL LEARNING CENTER EXAM COMMONS, which is located in the southeast corner of the Adele Coryell Hall Learning Commons (Love Library North). *Students must reserve a
time to take the exams (https://its.unl.edu/dlc). Exams will be available Monday through Thursday of the week of the exam (see course schedule).

Essays
All essays should have the following format: 12-point Times New Roman, one inch margins, double spaced, with page numbers on the bottom of each page. Failure to do so will result in a lower grade. Essays should be uploaded to Canvas as .doc documents. Late essays will receive a reduced grade (5% per day). Essays will not be accepted more than a week late. Essay assignments are described in the Canvas modules in which they are due (see course schedule).

Weekly Discussion Boards
Each week students are required to participate in weekly discussions. A question/prompt will be posted in the Canvas module for each week. Note that questions/prompts will not be posted far in advance. This approach allows the instructor to adjust the course based on previous discussions, responses to readings, and current events. Students will compose a response to the questions/prompts using the course material. Original posts must be a minimum of 200 words. Original posts are due by Saturday at 11:59 p.m.

Students are also required to write a minimum 75 word response to the post of at least one other student in the course. Responses are due the following Wednesday by 11:59 p.m., thus allowing students at least four days to post responses.

Both original post and response should be intelligently written using correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Add the word count to the bottom of each post. Responses must also utilize course material (unless otherwise specified in the question/prompt). These criteria will factor into discussion post grades.

Quizzes
Students must complete a quiz most weeks (see class schedule). Quizzes must be completed on Canvas. The weekly quiz will become available on Monday at 12:00 AM and close on Saturday at 11:59 PM. The quizzes are timed and each quiz can only be attempted one time. You should complete the readings, lectures, videos, and any other learning materials for the week before attempting that week’s quiz. Be sure you are ready to complete a quiz once you begin.

ARDA Modules
Students are required to complete an assigned learning module from the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) in several modules (see course schedule). You must have internet access while working on the ARDA modules. Be sure to upload each completed ARDA module as a .doc document. Late assignments will receive a reduced grade (5% per day) and will not be accepted more than a week late.

Keys to Success
• Online courses can be difficult if not taken seriously from the start. To maximize your success in this course, keep up with the readings each week.
• Keep up with the work from the beginning of the class to avoid being overwhelmed with the work later on.
• Be honest in your work. Do not cheat on quizzes/exams or plagiarize written assignments. Plagiarism will result in failing the course and being reported to the Office of Student Affairs.
• Respect your classmates’ contributions on the discussion board. You can disagree with a perspective that another student or I may present, but you should treat the material, idea, and person with respect.
• Take responsibility for your own learning. If you have a question regarding an assignment or any course materials, ask it!

Course Format
The class is an online class where students are required to complete the course with limited instructor interaction. Make sure to become familiar with all due dates and course requirements. ALL DUE DATE TIMES ARE CENTRAL STANDARD TIME ZONE. The course is designed in Canvas with “Weekly Folders.” Each folder contains the appropriate assignments, PowerPoints, and material needed for each week. Assignments are generally due Saturday (by 11:59 PM). Replies to other students’ comments on the Discussion Board are due by Wednesday of the following week at 11:59 p.m. (allowing at least four days for responses since original posts are due on Saturday).

Learning Platform
We will be using Canvas for this course. The use of Canvas is a central part of this class. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the functions of Canvas, especially for the purposes of viewing assignment directions and uploading assignments. With this in mind, please approach the course with patience as we all adjust to this new platform.

Announcements
Throughout the semester, important reminders and updates will be posted on Canvas. Students should check for announcements regularly and ensure that they are receiving emails from Canvas to when an announcement has been posted. You may need to check your spam settings in your email program as well as your notification settings in Canvas.

Communication
The best way to contact me is via email. I check my email regularly, but not obsessively. I will do my best to respond to emails within 48 hours. I will generally respond to emails during my office hours.

E-Mail Etiquette
When contacting the instructor via e-mail, proper e-mail etiquette should be utilized. Your e-mail should include a subject line, name and time of the course, proper greeting (e.g., “dear,” “hello,” “hi,” etc.), correct spelling and grammar, and a signature including your name. When sending an attachment via e-mail, it should be referred to within the body of the e-mail and not sent independently.
Student Responsibility for Online Learning

Students are responsible for reading and reviewing the syllabus throughout the course as it may change (though I will post an announcement if there are any changes). Students are responsible for all material throughout the course. This includes material from lectures (PowerPoints), reading assignments, videos, and handouts. Quizzes and exams will cover material from the PowerPoints as well as the readings and any assigned videos.

Students with Disabilities

In accordance with the University policy, if a student has a documented disability and requires accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, he/she should contact the instructor via email as soon as possible. It is the policy of UNL to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, you must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office. For more information from the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, please visit their website (http://www.unl.edu/ssd/home), contact them by phone (402-472-3787), or visit their office (232 Canfield Administration Building).

Technology Issues

All activity in the course is monitored and recorded by our online campus administrator and can be retrieved. The course materials on Canvas can be accessed from any computer with an internet connection. If an assignment (quiz, discussion board posting, essay, or exam) is not submitted on time or properly, the instructor reserves the right to consider the assignment as incomplete, resulting in a zero for the assignment. If you are experiencing a problem with Canvas, click the Help button in the gray global navigation menu to reach Canvas Tech Support via chat/phone or view the Canvas Guides. You can also contact UNL Help Desk website http://its.unl.edu/helpcenter or email the helpdesk at mysupport@unl.edu.