

New Religious Movements
(REL 370A, S-Course)

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Office hours: TR 2:20-3:00, MW 1:00-2:00; or by appointment

Fall 2015
TR 12:40-2:10
JSC 375

Description

This course will explore the idea and emergence of new religious movements (NRMs) over the past several centuries worldwide, though with a focus on the West, where the phenomenon seems to be most pronounced. Sometimes called alternative religions, NRMs represent a division of the study of religion intended to focus on religious groups that are seen as or define themselves as counter-cultural or somehow in-tension with mainstream religions and society—what in the past were labeled “sects” and “cults.” Designed as a collaborative research-based course, we will spend 4-5 weeks reading about theories and ideas related to the formation of NRMs, and then we will form interactive research pods (2-3 students) that focus on specific NRMs and help the class address questions such as: Why do they emerge? Who joins them? What are the common characteristics/traits of NRMs? Why have they grown in number? How does the study of them help us understand “mainstream” religions/religiosity and societies?

Class Expectations

As a 300-level S-seminar, this course will approach its subject material primarily through discussion. This means that each student is responsible for the upkeep and the success of the class. **For each class meeting, students must read the assigned materials, reflect upon them, and identify a minimum of three ideas/quotes/questions that they believe we should discuss.** Everyone in the class is a discussant, including myself. If it seems that students are falling into patterns of silence, I will call on individuals to reinvigorate the discussion. And given the expectation cited above, individuals will always have something to say!! What we are aiming for is informed discussion (that is, discussion based on the readings and reflection), not talking for the sake of talking. I will distinguish between quality and quantity when I calculate the participation grade. **Note: A significant portion of your grade depends on participation. Failure to participate will result in a lowered final grade.** If you have questions about your participation grade, don't hesitate to contact me. Finally, because your participation is so essential for the seminar style of learning, any unexcused absences, especially on your Presentation Day, will negatively impact your grade. I can overlook two “cuts,” but after that each absence will potentially deduct two percentage points from your final grade.

Grading

Two essays	30% (15% x 2)
Two response papers	30% (15% x 2)
Research project	20%
Participation	20%

S-Certification

Since this is an S-course, you will receive not only a regular grade but also a separate evaluation of your competence in oral communication. To earn S-certification, you must demonstrate a consistent ability to communicate your ideas and those of others in a clear, concise manner. 20% of your grade is based on assignments—daily discussion and presentations (group and individual)—that require some form of oral communication. Some of these assignments are ongoing and repetitive; others are one-time opportunities. All require preparation, but the latter demand it. I will be glad to meet with you individually or as a group to help you think through these assignments. You should also take advantage of the tutorial assistance available at the S-Center (1st floor Asbury Hall). I will alert you as early as possible if I believe that you are in danger of not earning your S-certification.

Academic Integrity Policy

I will observe DePauw's policy on academic integrity (i.e., cheating and plagiarism), as outlined in the *Student Handbook*. We will review this issue, along with examples, at the beginning of the semester, but I encourage you to read the policy for yourself.

ADA Policy

DePauw University is committed to providing equal access to academic programs and university administered activities with reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act and Amendments (ADAAA). If you are a student who believes you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability or learning challenge you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Disability Services for further information on how to receive accommodations and support. Contact information for Student Disability Services is: 408 S. Locust Street, Suite 200, in The Memorial Student Union Building (765-658-6267)(studentdisabilityservices@depauw.edu). Accommodations cannot be implemented until the faculty member has received the official ADA letter, released by Student Disability Services. It is critical that you schedule a time to discuss the implementation of the accommodations specified in your letter with each faculty member receiving the letter. Accommodations are not retroactive. Students with documented disabilities have the right to choose not to use accommodations, and in exercising that right, they accept the resulting outcomes. This means that faculty are under no obligation to retroactively address any issue arising from students' choices to forgo accommodations.

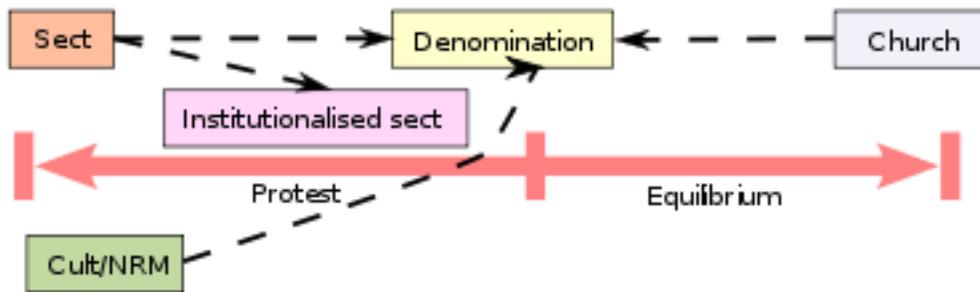
Required Reading

Algar, Hamid. *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay* (Islamic Publications International)
Dawson, Lorne L., ed. *Cults and New Religious Movements* (Blackwell)
Lee, Martha F. *The Nation of Islam* (Syracuse University Press)

Library EReserves

**If you wish to do additional reading on a particular NRM or theories of their formation (for this class or different one), just let me know, and we can discuss possible sources.

The Church-sect continuum



Schedule of Classes and Daily Assignments

GENERAL BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY OF NRMS

- 8/27 Introduction
- 9/1 What are we studying and why
Dawson, 1-31
- 9/3 Identifying NRMs through types and models
Dawson, 33-70

PRELIMINARY CASE STUDIES

- 9/8 Nation of Islam and the Millenarian Frame
Lee, 1-56, 111-12 (Appendix B)
The Muslim Program (<http://www.noi.org/muslim-program/>)
- 9/10 Nation of Islam and the Millenarian Frame
Lee, 57-110
Farrakhan bio on NOI website (<http://www.noi.org/hon-minister-farrakhan/>)
- 9/15 Theosophy and UFOs
“Theosophy” and “UFO Religious Groups” (ereserves)
- ** Response paper

- 9/17 Hare Krishna and Transcendental Meditation
 “Contested Genealogies and Cross-Cultural Dynamics in the Hare Krishna Movement”
 (ereserves)
 Transcendental Meditation, the Art of Living Foundation, and Public Relations”
 (ereserves)
- 9/22 The Adventist Tradition and Branch Davidians
 “The Adventist Tradition” (ereserves)
 “The Branch Davidians” (ereserves)
- 9/24 Scientology
 “Scientology: The Making of a Religion” (ereserves)
 Video
 ** One-paragraph blurb outlining your research interest
- 9/29 Mapping the cases: In-class project

THEMATIC LENSES

- 10/1 Historical and social contexts
 Dawson, 71-112
 ** Essay due
- 10/6 Who joins NRMs and why
 Dawson, 113-142
- 10/8 Brainwashing
 Dawson, 143-180
- 10/13 Violence and NRMs
 Dawson, 181-225
- 10/15 Sex and gender
 Dawson, 226-56
 ** One-page proposal and preliminary annotated bibliography for research focus
- 10/20, Fall Break
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NRMS IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE: LAW, SOCIETY, AND CULTURE

- 10/27 France
 Hervieu-Leger, “Frances Obsession with the ‘Sectarian Threat’” (ereserves)
 Palmer, “The *Secte* Response to Religious Discrimination” (ereserves)

10/29 Globalized Hinduism?
Lucia, "Innovative Gurus: Tradition and Change in Contemporary Hinduism" (ereserves)
Optional: Huffer, "Hinduism without Religion" (ereserves)
** Response paper due

>>>*NEW ISLAMIC TRENDS*<<<

11/3 Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia and beyond
Algar, all

11/5 Islamism... militant and otherwise
<http://www.newsweek.com/short-history-islamism-298235#.VciuTJO1F2c.gmail>
Kenney, "Millennialism and Radical Islamist Movements" (ereserves)

11/10 Salafism
Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action" (ereserves)

11/12 Jihadi-Salafis
Hegghammer, "Jihadi-Salafis or Revolutionaries? On Religion and Politics in the Study
of Militant Islamism" (ereserves)

11/17 Jihadi currents
Firestone, "Jihadism as a new religious movement" (ereserves)

11/19 Debate: Is Islamism/Salafism/Jihadism a NRM?

11/24 Research Day
** Essay due

11/26 Thanksgiving Recess

12/1 Student Presentations

12/3 Student Presentations

12/8 Student Presentations

12/10 Student Presentations/Wrap-up

12/18 Final Examination (1:00-4:00)
** Research papers due