

Introduction to Religion

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COURSE DETAILS

Course: REL 101

Instructor: Dr. Betsy Barre (she/her/hers)

Class Location: ZSR 665 ([map](#))

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:30-5:00 ([sign up](#))

Term: Spring 2020

Office Location: ZSR 663 ([map](#))

Time: MW, 2:00-3:15

Email: barreea@wfu.edu

WHY ARE WE HERE? (COURSE DESCRIPTION)

According to one famous theologian, religious attitudes are best understood as those which capture the “ultimate concern” of individual practitioners.¹ A quick scan of the front page of any newspaper, whether local or international, suggests that religion may also be an ultimate concern of the various communities in which we find ourselves. And even those who would prefer a world without religion seem to be *concerned* about religion and religiosity in important ways.

Yet, paradoxically, religion is also something many of us have a hard time talking about. In fact, we’re often explicitly instructed to *avoid* the subject of religion “in polite company.”² But how can this be? How can we be so bad at talking about something that seems to be so important to us? Some might argue our inability to sustain robust conversations about religion is a natural outgrowth of its importance to us. The more we care about something, the more we want to protect it. And conversations are rarely successful when the parties enter into them in defensive postures.

¹ Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*.

² <https://religionandpolitics.org/tag/fit-for-polite-company/>

But others, your professor included, consider this way of thinking wrong-headed. While it may be true that talking about something of such importance is hard, it doesn't follow that we should retreat. If the hard task has a major pay-off, as I believe thoughtful conversations about religion do, it's worth it to put in the effort. What do we gain when we learn to talk about religion? We gain the ability to increase our understanding of ourselves, our neighbors, and whatever we take to be of "ultimate concern." It is hard to imagine a pay-off greater than this.

Although this course has a number of goals, my ultimate aim is to help you develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to engage in critically-informed conversations about religion over the course of your life. If I'm particularly successful this term, you may sign up to take more courses in religious studies. But even if this is the only class you will ever take on religion, you should be prepared to engage, and hopefully lead, thoughtful conversations about religion and the way it functions in our individual and social lives.

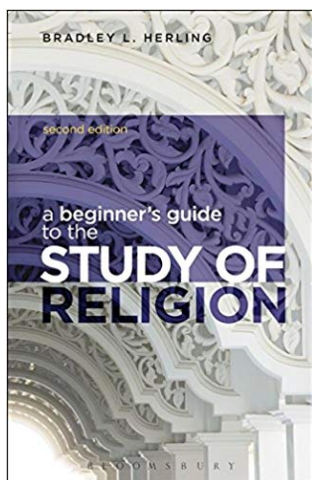
HOW WILL I GROW? (LEARNING GOALS)

By taking this course and taking it seriously, you will develop the ability to:

- Identify and describe the personal experiences and social contexts that have shaped your religious identity.
- Engage in productive dialogue with those who disagree with you about religious matters.
- Explain the challenges associated with defining "religion," noting the difficulties with both popular and academic uses of the term.
- Compare the goals, methods, and theories of paradigmatic approaches to the study of religion.
- Construct and defend hypotheses about the social function of popular conversations about religion.
- Learn about yourself and the world through the practice of regular, critically-engaged reading.

WHAT DO I NEED? (COURSE TEXTS)

We will be reading from the following texts this semester. They are available for purchase at the University Bookstore, and copies have been placed on reserve at ZSR Library:



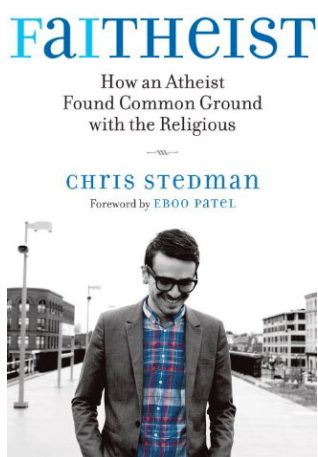
Herling, Bradley L. ***A Beginner's Guide to the Study of Religion***. 2nd edition. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.

A Beginner's Guide to the Study of Religion provides an approachable, comprehensive introduction theory and method in the field. Beginning with a discussion of the pressing need for understanding religion today, this lively, readable text moves on to describe the basic methodological, theoretical operations that students new to the discipline must comprehend and master. Then the book provides an accessible survey of the classic theorists in the modern study of religion, leading up to a concluding account of current, pressing issues in the field.



Hughes, Aaron W., and Russell T. McCutcheon, eds. **Religion in 5 Minutes**. 1st edition. Bristol: Equinox Publishing, 2017.

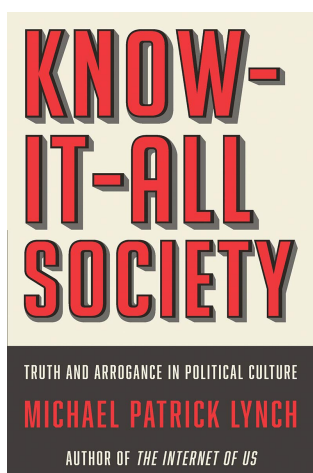
Religion in Five Minutes provides an accessible and lively introduction to the questions about religion and religious behavior that interest most of us, whether or not we personally identify with — or practice — a religion. Suitable for beginning students and the general reader, the book offers more than 60 brief essays on a wide range of fascinating questions about religion and its study, such as: How did religion start? What religion is the oldest? Who are the Nones? Why do women seem to play lesser roles in many religions? What's the difference between a religion and a cult? Is Europe less religious than North America? Is Buddhism a philosophy? How do we study religions of groups who no longer exist?



Stedman, Chris. **Faitheist: How an Atheist Found Common Ground with the Religious**. Boston, Mass: Beacon Press, 2013.

In *Faitheist*, Chris Stedman draws on his work organizing interfaith and secular communities, his academic study of religion, and his own experiences to argue for the necessity of bridging the growing chasm between atheists and the religious. As someone who has stood on both sides of the divide, Stedman is uniquely positioned to present a way for atheists and the religious to find common ground.

Important Note: This work is not intended to be a "textbook" for this class (i.e., an authoritative, academic source). Instead, we will use this primary source in three ways: to serve as a model for how we might make sense of our own religious stories; to prompt us to think about the difficulty of dialogue across difference; and to provide an example of the way popular discourse about religion (and non-religion) advances specific interests.



Lynch, Michael P. **Know-It-All Society: Truth and Arrogance in Political Culture**. 1st edition. New York: Liveright, 2019.

In addition to identifying an ascendant "know-it-all-ism" in our culture, Lynch offers practical solutions for how we might start reversing this dangerous trend—from rejecting the banality of emoticons that rarely reveal insight to embracing the tenets of Socrates, who exemplified the humility of admitting how little we often know about the world, to the importance of dialogue if we want to know more. With bracing and deeply original analysis, Lynch holds a mirror up to American culture to reveal that the sources of our fragmentation start with our attitudes toward truth. Ultimately, *Know-It-All Society* makes a powerful new argument for the indispensable value of truth and humility in democracy.

WHAT WILL I DO? (COURSE REQUIREMENTS)

Office Hours

Because my teaching philosophy is centered on the belief that learning happens in and through relationships, I want to get to know you! To accelerate the process, I ask that you sign up to attend one of my office hours within the first two weeks of classes. You don't need to prepare anything for this meeting and I will be happy to set up appointments to accommodate your schedules. You can sign up for an appointment, which should take no longer than 30 minutes, [here](#). I will maintain a similar appointment calendar throughout the semester, and I encourage you to sign up for appointments any time you would like to meet.

Class Participation

As a teacher, I have a responsibility to design meaningful course experiences that will promote your learning. But you also have some responsibility for your own learning. Unless you actively participate, you are unlikely to develop and master the outcomes of this course. What does it mean to actively participate? At a minimum, it means completing all pre-class assignments with a good faith effort, attending class on a regular basis, and earnestly participating in all in-class activities. But it also means contributing to our in-class conversations by commenting on the course readings, asking questions when perplexed, responding to other students, and constructively disagreeing with claims being discussed.

Collaborative Reading Assignments

The success of this course depends upon you reading, and reading closely, all that is assigned throughout the semester. To help you prepare for class discussions, most reading assignments will be read through software that allows you and your classmates to annotate and discuss the text before class. We will spend some time in the first few weeks of class introducing you to this software, but once you are familiar with the tool you will be expected to use it while you read to summarize key points, highlight unclear passages, raise questions, and indicate points of agreement and disagreement with the author and/or your classmates.

Weekly Journal Assignments

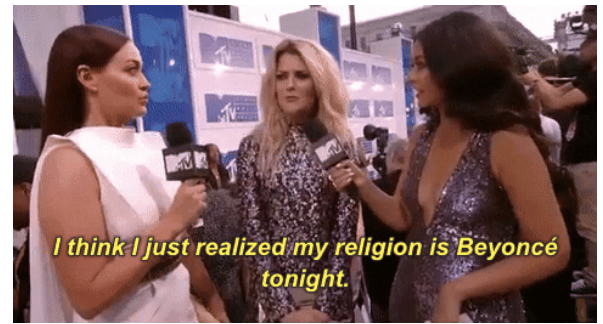
You will keep a weekly journal in this course. Each week you will be given a specific prompt related to the course content and asked to produce a response. At times, you may have to complete a task and report back. At other times, you will simply need to reflect on your own views. One week you might be asked to decide whether you agree with an argument you've read. Another week you might be asked to "invent" a religion. Still other weeks may ask you to go out and interview your friends.

The rubrics used to assess you do not assess your writing ability, so you do not have to submit these entries in written form. Although that will be the easiest and most natural format for most of you, you are free to get creative and submit Instagram stories, podcasts, or other mixed media formats. The key is that you choose a format that allows you to display the knowledge and skills assessed in the rubric. If you have an idea but are unsure whether it will work, feel free to drop by my office hours and chat.

Group Project

One of the central themes of this course is that our conversations about religion could be improved if we all had a better understanding of the way the concept of "religion" functions when it is invoked in various public settings.

We will spend a good deal of time spelling this out in the first half of the course, working through some popular examples together (e.g., a GIF that suggests Beyoncé might be someone's "religion."). Toward the end of the semester, you and your classmates will be asked to present and analyze your own examples of popular references to the idea of religion. You will work alongside five classmates to prepare an in-class presentation and then complete your own individual paper following your presentation. To ensure you have enough ideas when the time comes, I suggest you keep notes anytime you hear or see someone reference religion throughout the semester.



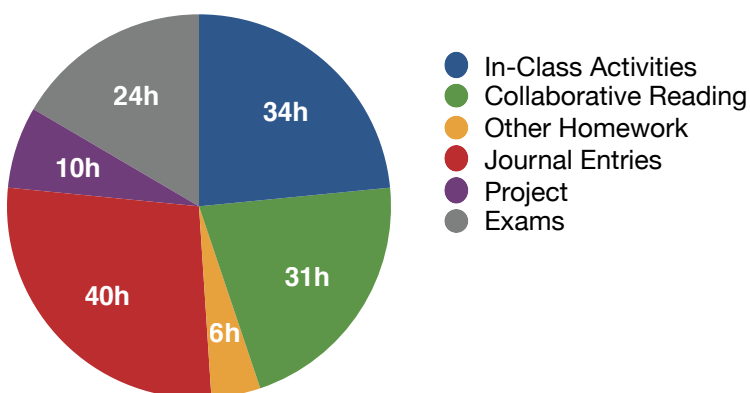
Midterm & Final Exams

You will complete two take-home essay exams in this course. The first will be distributed after we have finished our discussions of classical theories of religion and will be due before you leave for Spring Break. The second will be distributed on the last day of classes and you will be due at 11:59PM on May 8th. I estimate you will need to devote around 8 hours to completing the mid-term exam and around 16 hours to completing the final exam.

OK, so how much work is this really going to be?

Federal guidelines define a single semester credit hour as "one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks." Under this definition, a three credit-hour semester course like this will require at least 135 hours of your time. Because this is Wake Forest, I will be requiring slightly more of you than the federal minimum, and you should plan to devote 145 hours to this course over the next 16 and a half weeks. This amounts to 8-10 hours per week, including the 2.5 hours you spend in class.

I've done my best to estimate the amount of time it should take the average WFU student to complete the assignments in this course, and I have indicated these estimates in the course schedule below. Variation in prior experience and work habits make it difficult to estimate how long a task will take any individual student, but they should give you a good target when planning your semester. The chart below will give you a quick sense of how this course distributes the 145 hours of work across various types of activities and assignments:



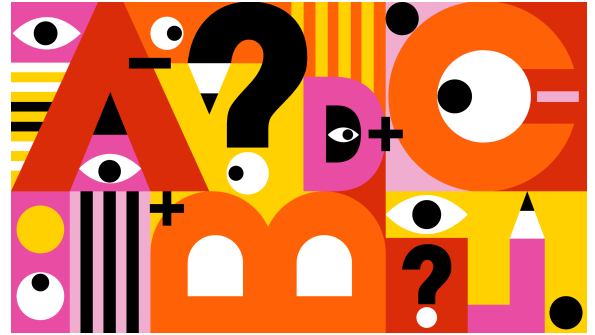
HOW WILL I BE GRADED?

Why do we have to be graded?

As someone who reads and writes a lot about teaching, I've gone on the record as a critic of grades and grading. Based on years of experience and my reading of the research literature, it's become clear that grades are often an impediment to sustained and joyful learning. While grades are certainly a powerful motivator, they often motivate strategic behavior rather than deep learning. And when grades received do not match expectations, they are more likely to prompt crippling anxiety than a desire to work harder to master the material.

Nevertheless, we live in a world where we have to give grades, and where grades are at least partially determinant of where you (and others) will end up once you graduate. So I need to give you grades, whether I like it or not, and it wouldn't be fair to those not in this class to just throw up my hands and give you all As. The best I can do is adopt an alternative grading system that turns your attention to what matters: whether you've done the work and learned the things I want you to learn this semester.

Toward that end, every assignment in this class will be graded in two, and only two, ways. First, it will be marked "complete" or "incomplete," and this grade will be used to calculate an overall participation grade for the semester. Second, I will assess whether the assignment does or does not demonstrate mastery of one or more of the specific outcomes of this course. These assessments will then be combined to determine whether you've mastered the outcomes of the course at the end of the semester. In both cases, I will be making binary judgments about your work. Did you do it or not? Did you demonstrate mastery or not? In other words, it is impossible to receive an "A-", an "82.5%", or a "5/10" on any one assignment in this class. While your final grade for the course will be a traditional letter grade, it will be a function of the degree to which you've participated and mastered the outcomes of the course.




How will my participation grade be calculated?


Your participation grade is a weighted average of your attendance score, your weekly in-class participation score, and your assignment completion score(s). The points and weights are allocated as follows:


- Attendance (30%)
- In-Class Participation (30%)
- Completion of Collaborative Reading Annotations (20%)
- Completion of Journal Entries (10%)
- Completion of Comprehensive Assessments (5%)
- Completion of Other Assignments (5%)


To provide some flexibility and respite throughout the semester, you are allowed 3 unexcused absences, 1 week with no participation, and 5 missed reading annotations before it will affect your participation grade.


If you don't feel like calculating this by hand, the traditional gradebook in Canvas will allow you to track your participation score throughout the semester. Ensure the "Assignments" tab is selected and scroll to the bottom to see your current grade.





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Spring 2020

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Grades for Test Student

Print Grades

Arrange By

Due Date

▼

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Assignments

Learning Mastery

Name	Due	Status	Score	Out of
Diagnostic Survey	Jan 15 by 9am		1	1
Week 1 Participation	Jan 15 by 11:59pm		1	1
Week 1 Journal	Jan 17 by 11:59pm		1	1
How to Read for History	Jan 22 by 2pm		1	1
Pew Research Religious Survey FAQ			1	1
Roll Call Attendance			90	100
Attendance			90%	90.00 / 100.00
In Class Participation			60%	9.00 / 15.00
Reading			100%	8.00 / 8.00
Other Assignments			100%	2.00 / 2.00
Journals			100%	1.00 / 1.00
Comprehensive Assessments			100%	2.00 / 2.00
Total			85%	

How will you determine if I've mastered course outcomes?

As noted above, this course is designed to develop your knowledge and skills in six domains. To progress in this way, you will be expected to master three-four discrete skills (aka "outcomes") in each domain. You will be assessed (aka "graded") on each outcome 5 times throughout the semester. As you'll recall, this assessment will be binary. Either you mastered the outcome in the assignment, or you didn't. To master the outcome for the entire course, you will need to master the outcome in 3/5 assignments.

Canvas tracks all of this for you in the "Mastery Learning Gradebook." When you open your grades, select the "Learning Mastery" tab to see the six domains and the number of outcomes you've mastered in each. Click on

each domain to see the specific outcomes in that domain, the assignments that have been aligned to them, and which you have mastered.

REL 101-A > Grades > Test Student

Spring 2020

Grades for Test Student

Print Grades

Arrange By

Due Date

Apply

Assignments

Learning Mastery

> 1. Self-Reflection & Social Awareness

0 OF 4 MASTERED

> 2. Deliberative Skills

0 OF 3 MASTERED

> 3. The Challenge of Definition

0 OF 4 MASTERED

> 4. Theories of Religion & Approaches to its Study

0 OF 4 MASTERED

> 5. The Social Function(s) of Conversations about "Religion"

0 OF 4 MASTERED

> 6. Lifelong Reading Skills

0 OF 4 MASTERED

How will my final grade be calculated?

Your final grade will be a function of an overall participation grade and the extent to which you have mastered the outcomes in the course. Note that these two scores operate independently of one another, so if you want to receive a B+ in the course, you must receive at least a 80% participation grade and master all of the outcomes in five domains.

Participation Grade	Mastery Grade	Final Grade
90%	Mastered all of the outcomes in all six domains.	A
90%	Mastered all of the outcomes in five domains and more than half of the outcomes in a sixth.	A-
80%	Mastered all of the outcomes in five domains.	B+
80%	Mastered all of the outcomes in four domains and more than half of the outcomes in a fifth.	B
80%	Mastered all of the outcomes in four domains.	B-
70%	Mastered all of the outcomes in three domains and more than half of the outcomes in a fourth.	C+
70%	Mastered all of the outcomes in three domains.	C
70%	Mastered all of the outcomes in two domains and more than half of the outcomes in a third.	C-
60%	Mastered all of the outcomes in two domains.	D+

60%	Mastered all of the outcomes in one domain and more than half of the outcomes in a second.	D
60%	Mastered all of the outcomes in one domain.	D-
< 60%	Did not master all of the outcomes in any domain.	F

SCHEDULE

* = graded for completion

** = assessed for mastery

Date	Details	Est. Time	Due @
Mon, Jan 13	Why are we here and where are we going?	75 minutes	
	Purchase Books	30 minutes	
	*Required Office Hours	45 minutes	
Wed, Jan 15	Why are we here and where are we going?	75 minutes	
	*Beginning of the Semester Survey	45-60 minutes	9:00 AM
	Review Syllabus	30 minutes	2:00 PM
Mon, Jan 20	No Class: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day		
Wed, Jan 22	Why is reading so hard (and important)?	75 minutes	
	Listen to "The Future of The Reading Brain in an Increasingly Digital World"	60 minutes	2:00PM
	Read "Reading Philosophy"	15 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "How to Read for History"	30 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "Introduction to the Hypothesis LMS App for Students"	15 minutes	2:00 PM
	*Read and Annotate Syllabus	15 minutes	2:00 PM
Fri, Jan 24	**First Journal Entry	3 hours	11:59 PM
Mon, Jan 27	Why should we study religion?	75 minutes	
	Complete the Pew U.S. Religious Knowledge Quiz	20 minutes	9:00 AM
	*Read and Annotate "Beginnings in the Study of Religion"	2 hours	2:00 PM
	Read "Why is it important that we study religion?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM

	Read "Why do we need the study of religion if we already have historians, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and folklorists?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
Wed, Jan 29	How should we study religion?	75 minutes	
	**Read and Annotate "Theory in the Field: An Introduction," Part I	2 hours	2:00 PM
	Read "Can't I just learn about religion in my church, mosque, or temple?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "In what ways can religion be legally discussed in US public schools?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
Fri, Jan 31	**Second Journal Entry	3 hours	11:59 PM
Mon, Feb 3	How should we study religion?	75 minutes	
	*Read and Annotate "Theory in the Field: An Introduction," Part II	60 minutes	9:00 AM
	Complete the Pew American Religious Typology Quiz	15 minutes	
	Read "Is there a difference between religious studies and theology?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "Is it possible to study religion academically and still be religious?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "Can one study one's own religion objectively?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "Does the academic study of religion deny the existence of God?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
Wed, Feb 5	What is the religious story of the United States?	75 minutes	
	*Read and Annotate "In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace"	30 minutes	2:00 PM
	Explore Pew U.S. State Religiosity Interactive	15 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "Who are the 'Nones' and why are they so important?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "Is Europe less religious than North America?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
Fri, Feb 7	**Third Journal Entry	3 hours	11:59 PM
Mon, Feb 10	How do we determine who is and is not "religious," anyway?	75 minutes	
	Read "Is everyone religious?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "Where does the word religion come from?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM

	Read "What does it take for something to be classified as a 'religion'?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "How many religions are there?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "Can people belong to more than one religion?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	*Read and Annotate "How Does Pew Research Center Measure the Religious Composition of the U.S.?"	60 minutes	2:00 PM
Wed, Feb 12	Why is it so hard to define religion?	75 minutes	
	Listen to Radiolab: "Why Isn't the Sky Blue?"	25 minutes	2:00 PM
	*Read and Annotate "Can I be spiritual but not religious?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "Can sports be a religion?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "Is yoga religious?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "What's the difference between religion and mythology?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "What's the difference between religion and philosophy?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "What's the difference between a religion and a cult?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "Is atheism, or secularism, just another religion?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
Fri, Feb 14	**Fourth Journal Entry	3 hours	11:59 PM
Mon, Feb 17	What are the Classic Theories of Religion?	75 minutes	
	*Read and Annotate "Classic Theories of Religion," Part I	95 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "How did religion start?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
Wed, Feb 19	What are the Classic Theories of Religion?	75 minutes	
	**Read and Annotate "Classic Theories of Religion," Part II	95 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "What's the function of religion?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
Fri, Feb 21	**Fifth Journal Entry	3 hours	11:59 PM
Mon, Feb 24	What are the Classic Theories of Religion?	75 minutes	
	*Read and Annotate "Classic Theories of Religion," Part III	95 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "How does religion spread and what is its appeal?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
Wed, Feb 26	What are the Classic Theories of Religion?	75 minutes	
	*Read and Annotate "Classic Theories of Religion," Part IV	95 minutes	2:00 PM

	Read "Do people actually believe in their religious practices because they want to, or because of how they were raised?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
Fri, Feb 28	**Sixth Journal Entry	3 hours	11:59 PM
Mon, Mar 2	How do we tell our religious stories?	75 minutes	
	*Annotate _Faitheist_, Chapters 2-3	75 minutes	
Wed, Mar 4	How do we tell our religious stories?	75 minutes	
	*Annotate _Faitheist_, Chapters 4-5	75 minutes	2:00 PM
Thu, Mar 5	**Take Home Midterm Exam	8 hours	11:59 PM
Mon, Mar 16	How do we tell our religious stories?	75 minutes	
	*Annotate _Faitheist_, Chapters 6-7	75 minutes	2:00 PM
Tue, March 17	**Seventh Journal Entry	3 hours	11:59 PM
Wed, March 18	How should I engage with those who have different stories?	75 minutes	
	**Annotate _Faitheist_, Chapters 1,8	60 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "Talking about Religion"	15 minutes	
Fri, March 20	**Eighth Journal Entry	3 hours	11:59 PM
Mon, March 23	How should I engage with those who have different stories?	75 minutes	
	Read "Why do so many people believe that only one religion can be right?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	Read "Why do people fight so much over their religious beliefs?"	10 minutes	2:00 PM
	*Listen to and Annotate Transcript of Hidden Brain: "The Vegetable Lamb"	40 minutes	2:00 PM
Wed, March 25	How should I engage with those who have different stories?	75 minutes	
	*Annotate "Montaigne's Warning" and "The Outrage Factory"	90 minutes	2:00PM
Fri, March 27	**Ninth Journal Entry	3 hours	11:59 PM
Mon, March 30	How should I engage with those who have different stories?	75 minutes	

	*Annotate "Where the Spade Turns" and "Truth and Humility as Democratic Values"	90 minutes	2:00PM
Wed, Apr 1	What's going on in popular conversations about 'religion'?	75 minutes	
	*Annotate "Religion and the Problem of Definition" in A Critical Introduction to the Study of Religion	90 minutes	2:00PM
Fri, Apr 3	**Tenth Journal Entry	3 hours	11:59 PM
Mon, Apr 6	What's going on in popular conversations about 'religion'?	75 minutes	
	**Re-Annotate _Faitheist_, Chapters 1,8	90 minutes	2:00 PM
Wed, Apr 8	No Class: Dr. Barre @ Georgetown		
	Work on Group Projects	3 hours	
Fri, Apr 10	**Eleventh Journal Entry	3 hours	11:59 PM
Mon, Apr 13	Group Project Presentations	75 minutes	
	Work on Group Projects	90 minutes	
Wed, Apr 15	Group Project Presentations	75 minutes	
	Work on Group Projects	90 minutes	
Fri, Apr 17	**Twelfth Journal Entry	3 hours	11:59 PM
Mon, Apr 20	Group Project Presentations	75 minutes	
Wed, Apr 22	No Class: Inclusive Teaching Conference		
	**Group Project Analysis	4 hours	11:59 PM
Fri, April 24	**Thirteenth Journal Entry	3 hours	11:59PM
Mon, Apr 27	TBD, topics chosen by class	75 minutes	
	*Annotate TBD	90 minutes	
Wed, Apr 29	TBD, topics chosen by class	75 minutes	
	*Annotate TBD	90 minutes	
Fri, May 8	**Take Home Final Exam	16 hours	11:59PM

FAQ

What should I do if I need an accommodation to help me learn?

As an employee of Wake Forest University, I'm required to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. As a teacher who cares about creating classroom spaces that are welcoming and supportive of all students, I am *eager* to do so. I've done my best to design a course that is accessible to a diverse set of learners, but I understand that accommodations may still be necessary. So if you have a documented disability and are in need of support, please come see me as soon as possible to work out a plan (in the interest of fairness to other students, we can't provide accommodations after the fact). And if you haven't already done so, you must also register with the Learning Assistance Center & Disability Services in 118 Reynolda Hall (336-758-5929, lac.wfu.edu).

What happens if I have to miss class?

You are free to miss up to three class periods with no questions asked (i.e., you don't even need to let me know!). Beyond that, every absence will lower your attendance grade by around 5%. Your attendance grade is 30% of your overall participation grade, so each absence will lower your participation grade by around 1.5%. Because you're given three "freebies," I rarely excuse further absences. However, I do make exceptions at my discretion. If you wish to receive an excused absence, you must receive approval from me before the missed class period. The only exceptions to this rule are medical emergencies affecting yourself or your family. In all cases, I may or may not ask for supporting documentation for excused absences.

What happens if I can't complete an assignment by the due date?

If a required assignment is not submitted by the due date, it will be marked incomplete and you will lose the opportunity to display mastery of any assigned outcomes. However, I recognize that sometimes life happens and you may need to miss a deadline. For that reason, you can submit up to 5 assignments late throughout the semester. Barring emergencies, I will not extend deadlines for any assignments beyond these 5, so you should use them wisely.

What counts as academic dishonesty in this course? And what happens if I'm accused?

As with all courses, you will be held to the standards of the WFU Honor Code in this class. If you are unfamiliar with the details of this code and how it is administered, you should consult the [Honor System Handbook](#). This handbook outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of your academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process.

Beyond this university wide policy, my own policy is the following: You are free to work together on most assignments, but your annotation entries, journal entries, midterm, project analysis, and final exam should be your own. If I detect plagiarism in an assignment, the assignment will be marked incomplete and you will lose the opportunity to display mastery of any aligned outcomes. In the case of unintentional citation errors, students will be required to revise their essays to receive completion and mastery credit.

What should I do if I have emotional or psychological distress?

Students experiencing psychological/emotional distress may avail themselves of support through the University Counseling Center Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM in Reynolda 117 (336.758.5273 or counselingcenter.wfu.edu). Crisis support is also available after-hours by calling 336.758.5273 and pressing 1 to speak to a crisis counselor. Support outside of the University Counseling Center may also include the Chaplain's Office (336.758.5210 or chaplain.wfu.edu) and the Student Health Service (336.758.5218 or shs.wfu.edu).

What if I experience gender discrimination or sexual misconduct?

To ensure a safe and productive learning environment, university policies prohibit gender discrimination, sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, and stalking. If you have experienced, or think you may have experienced, gender discrimination or any form of sexual misconduct, I encourage you to talk to someone about your experience so you can get the support you need.

Because I often encourage students to share information related to their life experiences in classroom discussions and one-on-one meetings, you may wish to share this experience with me. However, you should know that, as a faculty member, I am required to share information regarding alleged sexual misconduct or information about alleged criminal conduct that may have occurred on campus with certain University administrators. You can get the confidential support you need through the 24-hour crisis line of the University Safe Office (336-758-5285).

Alleged sexual misconduct can also be reported to the Title IX Office (a non-confidential resource) by emailing titleixcoordinator@wfu.edu or calling 336-758-7258. The Student Sexual Misconduct Policy may be reviewed by visiting the Title IX [website](#). Alleged criminal conduct may also be reported to law enforcement by calling University Police at 336-758-5911 or by submitting a [silent witness report](#).