COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The basic objective of the course is to provide a long-range historical and global overview of the encounters and changes amongst the religions of the Americas. To what extent can we speak of a common past and present among the religions of the Americas? How has scholarship created various rifts between the studies of North and Latin American religions; Highland and Lowland Native South American religions; Latin American and Brazilian religions; and others? And how can these rifts be overcome and a truly hemispheric perspective be developed for the study of Religions of the Americas?

In this course, we will consider five broad thematic areas: 1. Theoretical and Methodological Questions on a Hemispheric Approach; 2. Pre-Colonial and Colonial Indigenous Religious Traditions and Cultures; 3. African Religious Traditions and Diaspora Religions in the colonial “Atlantic World”; 4. Christianities in the Americas; 5. New Religious Movements. Among the principal factors we shall consider as formative of Religions in the Americas are: Indigeneity, Post-Colonial Displacements, Mestizaje, and “Borderland” Religions, Globalization, Transnationalization, and Diaspora Religions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

This is primarily a reading course. It is unique in that both the instructor and the graduate student participants will be reading and seeking to understand portions of this material. Therefore, we look upon this course as a kind of collective venture into new terrain in which all are expected to participate together, and each can provide a special area of expertise which will help us answer some of the questions posed above.

The course bibliography is based on the Religion and the Americas Area Reading list plus a significant amount of modification in the sections that have to do with indigenous religious traditions, new religious movements, and Asian-American religions. In a spirit of serious adventure, we will read and discuss our way through the semester with each of us bearing some leadership load. Thus, the course requirements consist of participation in seminars, presentations of summaries of the readings, discussion and debate about ideas raised in the readings, as well as book reports and short reflection papers. The central guiding
question of the course: what is entailed by “a hemispheric view” on the Religions of the Americas?

There are five basic requirements:
1. Read and come to the seminar prepared to discuss the material for that week (absences will not be tolerated unless justified with a documented excuse);
2. Each week a student will be responsible for summarizing the issues contained in the week’s readings, which will serve as a starting-point for our discussions.
3. Seven times in the course of the semester, each student will be required to submit a one-page synthesis of the required readings for that day;
4. Two book reports, 3-5 pages in length, double-spaced.
5. Seven (7) reflection papers/essays, due at the end of each unit, 3-5 pp. apiece, reflecting on the key questions and issues raised in the bibliography for that unit.

GRADING:
- active participation in weekly discussions: 10 points
- weekly summaries: 10 points
-8 one-page syntheses of readings: 10 points
-2 book reports: 10 points
-6 reflection papers/essays: 60 points

Total: 100 points

BOOKS TO PURCHASE:

Required or recommended texts:

Text No. 1  Title: RELIGION IN THE ANDES  Author: SABINE MACCORMACK
ISBN: Publisher: PRINCETON Copyright: PRINCETON
Cover: paperback book  Edition: 1991  This text is required

Text No. 2  Title: RELIGIONS OF MESOAMERICA  Author: DAVID CARRASCO
ISBN: Publisher: WAVELAND Copyright: WAVELAND
Cover: paperback book  Edition: 2014  This text is required

Text No. 3  Title: BLACK ATLANTIC RELIGION  Author: J. LORAND MATTORY
ISBN: Publisher: PRINCETON Copyright: PRINCETON
Cover: paperback book  Edition: 2005  This text is required

Text No. 4  Title: OUR LADY OF THE EXILE  Author: THOMAS TWEED
ISBN: Publisher: OXFORD U PRESS Copyright: OXFORD
Cover: paperback book Edition: 1997 This text is required

Text No. 5 Title: BEYOND PRIMITIVISM Author: JACOB OLUPONA
ISBN: Publisher: ROUTLEDGE Copyright: ROUTLEDGE
Cover: paperback book Edition: 2004 This text is recommended

Text No. 6 Title: SEARCHING FOR AFRICA IN BRAZIL: POWER AND TRADITION IN CANDOMBLE Author: STEFANIA CAPONE
ISBN: Publisher: DUKE Copyright: DUKE
Cover: paperback book Edition: 2010 This text is recommended

Comments or Notes for Students and Vendors: Reprints and papers will complement the books; they will be Xeroxed and sent via pdf email to your addresses well before the assigned date of discussion.

Topic Areas and Reading Calendar:

I. Introduction to Theoretical and Methodological Approaches: Readings:


III. African Diaspora and the Genesis of Afro-American Traditions:


V. Asian-American Religious Traditions (Hinduism, Buddhism & Islam): Readings: TBD


VI. Judaism in the Americas: Readings: TBD


Calendar of Assignments:


Week 2 (09/02-04): Introduction to Theoretical and Methodological Approaches. John Beverley, Subalternity and Representation, Duke, 1999;

Week 3 (09/09-11): Introduction to Theoretical and Methodological Approaches; Olupona, Beyond Primitivism, Part 1, “Introduction”, Chs. 1, 2, 3, 4;


Week 11 (11/04-06): *Judaism in the Americas*. TBD


Week 16 (12/09): Final Class – Towards A Hemispheric Perspective on Religions of the Americas.