

ROWAN UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL TITLE: New Course: New Religious Movements

CHECK APPROPRIATE: UNDERGRADUATE GRADUATE SEMESTER HOURS

SPONSOR(S): D. Ashm, J. Grace FEB 09 1998

DEPARTMENT/TELEPHONE #

CHECK ONE: COURSE MINOR PROGRAM CONCENTRATION SPECIALIZATION

ACHIEVEMENT CERTIFICATE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM MAJOR PROGRAM

<p>Step #1 (Department)</p> <p><u>10/24/97</u> Approved (Date)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved (Date)</p> <p><u>Dave Willaway</u> Dept. Curriculum Chr.</p> <p><u>10/24/97</u> Reviewed (Date)</p> <p><u>Dave Willaway</u> Dept. Chr.</p>	<p>Step #2 (Receipt)</p> <p>SCC# <u>97-98-233</u></p> <p><u>2-5-98</u> Date Received Senate</p> <p>_____ Senate Curriculum Chr.</p>	<p>Step #3 (School)</p> <p>Reviewed Date: <u>1/27/98</u></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recommend to Approved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Recommend NOT to Approve</p> <p>Forward for Open Hearing:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WITHOUT Reservations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WITH Reservations:</p> <p>Comments: <u>suggest consultation with Sociology Dept.</u></p> <p><u>Joe Zitterburg</u> School Committee Chr.</p>
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Step #4 (Academic Dean): Recommended NOT Recommended Conditionally Recommended (See Comments)

Comments:

Dean Signature/Date _____

Step #5 (Senate Curriculum Committee): Open Hearing Date: _____ Approved by Curriculum Committee Date _____

Returned to Sponsor(s) for the following reason:

Step #6 (Senate) Date announced/voted on at Senate _____ If voted on: Approved NOT Approved

De. _____
warded to Executive Vice President/Provost _____

Senate Curriculum Committee chair Signature/Date: _____

PROPOSAL FOR THE COURSE "NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS"

I. Details

- A. Course title: New Religious Movements
- B. Sponsors: Dianne Ashton, Philosophy/Religion
James H. Grace, Philosophy/Religion
- C. Credit Hours: 3
- D. Course Level 300
- E. Curricular Effect: This course will be required of students majoring in Religion and Philosophy with an emphasis in Religion Studies. It will also be open to all other students at Rowan university who have taken one course in either Philosophy or Religion Studies. We hope that it also will fulfill General Education requirements at the upper level. It is a Multicultural/Global course.
- F. Prerequisite: One course in either Philosophy or Religion Studies.
- G. Implementation:
 1. Time: Fall semester, 1998
 2. Scale: At least one section of this course will be offered every third semester, depending on student demand.
- H. Adequacy of:
 1. Staffing: The Philosophy/Religion Department presently has two members who are qualified to teach this course. It is expected that other current or new staff may be interested in teaching this course subsequently.
 2. Library Facilities and Holdings: The Philosophy/Religion Department has over the past ten years ordered many books that address this topic and related issues. With these, and future additions, the library's collection will continue to suffice for the purpose of an undergraduate course on this topic.
 3. Space Needs: One classroom with blackboards and with seating for thirty, at least once every third semester, will be needed for this course.

II. Rationale

A standard world religions textbook offers brief overviews of twenty-one new religions and discusses the ways in which various secular philosophies function, in some manner, as religions. In a July, 1997 New York Times article, book publishers report a 5.3% drop in book sales overall but a 5.1% rise in sales of books on religion. Hollywood blockbusters illustrate American interest in the return of angels mentioned in the Bible (John Travolta in "Michael") as well as the spiritual dimension of space exploration (Contact). Despite common wisdom on the secular nature of the modern world, the last 200 years has seen new religions arise as well as a sharp increase in the number and variety of religious organizations and popular support

for them. As governments removed their support for a single religious institution widespread popular interest and energy created new religious movements.

The scholarly studies of these movements and trends devolve primarily on sociology and history. This scholarly foundation provides a rigorous grounding for an upper division course in New Religious Movements. As an upper division course, it would look closely at both the religions themselves (beliefs, rituals, ethics, cosmology, structure) and at the historical circumstances and the cultural context in which they emerged. Thus, this course will offer students a way to understand a continuing phenomenon of the contemporary world.

This course will offer new material. These religions are seldom covered in the course, Religions of the World, which focuses on the major historical traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Some new religions, such as the Church of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons), are covered in the course, Religion in America, but only those that have made a major impact, or that reveal some widespread cultural or historical American dilemma (such as varieties of communitarianism in Antebellum America). The course herein proposed, New Religious Movements, will look at new religions as a contemporary phenomenon worldwide.

III. Essence of the Course

A. Course Objectives: A student who successfully completes this course should have minimally acquired the following:

1. Some appreciation of the sociological conditions that give rise to new religious movements.
2. Some understanding of the beliefs, rituals, cosmology, ethics, structure of some new religious movements.
3. Some understanding of the historical circumstances that have supported or triggered the rise of a new religion or religious movement.
4. An appreciation of the role religion plays in providing meaning to a wide variety of human experiences.
5. The critical acumen to discern the ambiguous role of religion in both challenging and supporting contemporary social structures.

B. Topical Outline/Content

A. Introduction:

1. Overview of worldwide growth of religions and religious movements over the last 200 years.
2. Major Sociological theories, analyses, and case studies of new religious movements in general.

B. Case Study of a New Religious Movement.

Religions to be studied will be drawn from at least three continents (Africa, Asia, South America, the Caribbean, Europe, and North America are possibilities) to be selected at the discretion of

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the instructor.

1. Discussion of the new religion
2. Discussion of the historical circumstances of its emergence and growth.
3. Application of analyses.

C. Case study # 2

D. Case study # 3

C. Evaluation and Grading At the discretion of the instructor students may be evaluated on the basis of examinations, journals, class participation, research projects, and other written assignments.

D. Course Evaluations SIRs and peer review as well as students' qualitative assessments presented at the end of the course concerning what they liked most or least about i) the course, ii) the instructor, iii) the material used, e.g., texts, tests, audio-visuals, etc., iv) suggestions to improve the course.

E. Consultations The following persons have been consulted informally about the content and structure of this course: Prof. Colleen McDannell, University of Utah; Prof. John Raines, Temple University; Prof. David Watt, Temple University. Their suggestions were incorporated into this proposal.

F. Additional Information:

Selected Bibliography

- Adler, Margot, Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today Beacon Press, 1986
- Albanese, Catherine, Nature Religion in America: From the Algonkian Indians to the New Age University of Chicago Press, 1990
- Ammerman, Nancy Tatom, Bible Believers: Fundamentalists in the Modern world Rutgers University Press, 1987
- Beckford, James A., ed., New Religious Movements and Rapid Social Change Sage Publications, 1986
- Braude, Ann, Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America Beacon Press, 1989
- Chandler, Russell, Understanding the New Age Word Publishing, 1988
- Davidman, Lynn, Tradition in a Rootless World: Women Turn to Orthodox Judaism University of California Press, 1992
- Ellwood, Robert and Partin, Harry B., Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America Prentice Hall, 1988
- Fishman, Sylvia Barak, A Breath of Life: Feminism in the American Jewish Community Free Press, 1994
- Hadden, Jeffrey K. and Anson Shupe, Televangelism: Power and Politics on God's Frontier Henry Holt, 1988

- Hatcher, William S. and J. Douglas Martin, The Baha'i Faith: The Emerging Global Religion Harper & Row, 1984
- Hesselgrave, David J., ed., Dynamic Religious Movements: Case Studies of Rapidly Growing Religious Movements Around the World, Baker Book House, 1978
- Holloway, Mark, Heavens Upon Earth: Utopian Communities in America, 1680-1880 Dover, 1966
- Gottschalk, Stephen, The Emergence of Christian Science in American Religious Life University of California Press, 1973
- Miller, Timothy, ed., When Prophets Die: The Post-Charismatic Fate of New Religious Movements SUNY Press,
- Mintz, Jerome, Hasidic People 1993
- Robbins, Thomas and Dick Anthony, ed.s, In Gods We Trust: New Patterns of Religious Pluralism Transaction Publishers, 1991
- Shibley, Mark, Resurgent Evangelicalism in the U.S.: Mapping Cultural Change Since 1970 University of South Carolina Press, 1996
- Shippo, Jan, Mormonism, The Story of a New Religious Tradition University of Illinois Press, 1985

G. Catalog Description

300 Level

Prerequisite: one course in Philosophy or Religion
Studies or permission of the instructor

NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS 3 s.h.

This course will examine the development of new religious movements both within North America and around the world. It will explore new religious trends, religions that identify themselves as new, and the ways scholars understand and misunderstand them.