

SR553 (Hybrid), Multi-Religious America, Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Fall 2018, 4:00-5:30 pm, three semester hours, Dr. Paul D. Numrich (email pnumrich@mtso.edu, phone 740-362-3443, office hours typically before class and by appointment in Werner 221).

Course description

Catalog description: Examines the social, civic, and theological implications of America's "lively experiment" with religious diversity,¹ paying special attention to developments since the 1960s, including immigration trends and new religious movements.

Elaboration of catalog description: This course addresses both the facts of American religious diversity and the social, civic, and theological implications of those facts. "Social" implications have to do with private sector personal and communal relationships (such as day-to-day interpersonal contacts, neighborhood relationships, workplace dynamics, and voluntary organizations, including churches). "Civic" implications have to do with public sector duties, responsibilities, and activities of the individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions in a society (such as politics, law, public policies, and citizenship). "Theological" implications have to do with faith-based perspectives, attitudes, and interactions, such as applying religious texts and traditions about ministry and mission. Social, civic, and theological implications may overlap; for instance, a proposed mosque may cause neighborhood turmoil (social), political action for or against it (civic), and/or faith-based discussions about Islamic beliefs and practices (theological).

Course objectives

- (1) Enhance the student's role as a responsible gatekeeper of knowledge about American religious diversity, both historically and currently. This objective includes recognizing and interpreting complexity rather than oversimplification. As one cultural observer puts it, "We are losing the ability to understand anything that's even vaguely complex" (Klosterman 217).
- (2) Strengthen the student's ability to articulate the social, civic, and theological implications of American religious diversity.
- (3) Augment the student's capacity for engaging adherents of other faiths with both integrity and sensitivity.

General policies and information

Technology-related requirements for this course include an adequate computer, Internet browser, and software (including the latest versions of Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat Reader), and the ability to navigate the Populi learning management system and Microsoft Office 365. Students should check for course-related emails from the instructor and reply in timely fashion when necessary. All course-related emails to the instructor must be sent through the student's official seminary account (mtso.edu), not through Populi or a private email account. Be sure to keep your

1. The phrase "lively experiment," coined in the 1663 Charter of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, referred to a new notion of religious liberty. The course description adapts that meaning to refer to America's continuing experiment with religious diversity.

sent emails as verification of the dates and times you sent them since emails sometimes do not reach their intended destinations. Inshallah, the instructor will reply to course-related emails within two business days. It is advisable to download digital sources well in advance of class sessions and assignments, and also to retain a copy of all submitted work. Technology-related questions should be directed to support@mtso.edu.

Personal opinions and experiences are welcome in this course as long as they are well-founded, substantive, pertinent to the discussion or assignment, and do not represent one's sole source of authority. Unsupportable generalizations should be avoided.

All sources must be properly cited in written work. Course sources may be cited in abbreviated fashion (e.g., author and page only); non-course sources must be cited according to a conventional style of your choosing (e.g., APA Style, Chicago Manual of Style, or MLA Style; see the Purdue Online Writing Lab Website, owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/). Do not assume that this syllabus or course sources follow scholarly conventions; for instance, the syllabus follows MLA Style for citing sources but does not double-space entries and does not always list sources alphabetically (both MLA requirements). Also, any assertion about something that is not common knowledge in a seminary setting must be supported with an appropriate citation.

Since the Kingdom has not yet arrived in its fullness, incidents of academic or other misconduct will be handled per school policies. Plagiarism is a serious matter of academic, professional, and personal integrity. All students at the master degree level are expected to understand the requirement to provide attribution when the work of others is used. Students are also expected to be familiar with and understand the school's policy on Academic Misconduct found in the Student Handbook. If students have questions about attribution, citation, and how to avoid plagiarism, they should consult the course instructor, the school's writing instructor, or library staff. When in doubt it is better to provide attribution even if one is uncertain about the proper citation form. Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct that results in disciplinary actions per the Student Handbook that may range from failing an assignment or course to expulsion. Please note that plagiarism includes self-plagiarism—in other words, work that you submitted for another course must be cited like any other source for assignments in this course.

A grace period for late submission of some course work may be granted at the instructor's discretion (late or missed online assignments cannot be made up). Students should contact the instructor about potentially late work before the submission due date/time; penalties may be assessed, up to and including the instructor's option not to accept the work.

At the instructor's discretion, a student may revise and resubmit an assignment for consideration of a higher grade, generally not to exceed one full grade increase. Unless otherwise specified by the instructor, the resubmission due date/time is exactly one week from the time stamp of either the instructor's return of the evaluated original work or notification that a revise-and-resubmit is necessary. A writing instructor provided by the school or approved by the course instructor should be consulted when necessary.

A student may propose a substitute for any assignment in this course. The instructor is the final arbiter of the suitability of a proposed substitute assignment, including whether or not it promises to benefit the student more than the original assignment.

Some course sources may be copyrighted and used by permission. Check with the instructor before distributing a course source to anyone not enrolled in the course. Audio or video recordings of class sessions are permitted but their use is strictly confined to students enrolled in the course and they must not be transferred electronically without the instructor's permission. Information about or work produced by a student in this course shall not be shared with anyone not enrolled in the course without that student's permission.

MTSO seeks to remove barriers to inclusion in its learning communities. Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs at the beginning of the semester. Please contact the Director of Student Services to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Any accommodation must be agreed upon prior to the due date of the affected course requirement.

Research by MTSO faculty, students, or affiliated personnel that collects non-public information from and/or about living individuals or contemporary organizations/groups for purposes of publication or public presentation (including class assignments) must be approved by the Human Subjects Research Committee. MTSO faculty, students, or affiliated personnel should err on the side of caution and apply for committee approval of any activity that may fit this description.

Turn mobile devices off or to "vibrate only" during class. Browsing the Internet or engaging in email or social network conversations during class is discouraged. Instructors have the right to impose grading penalties for disruptions due to electronic devices.

In accordance with MTSO's policy on inclusive language, all students are expected to use gender inclusive or gender neutral language in their writing and in the classroom discussions when referring to human beings.

Auditors should consult the Academic Catalog for the stipulations of auditing a course at MTSO.

Finally, a word about choosing sources for a graduate course. Some of the sources for this course were not written or created by scholars. All sources were chosen for their intrinsic merit in covering course topics. Scholarly work is not the only repository of valuable knowledge.

Grading

Components of final grade

(1) Class attendance and participation (20 points total, 8 points for in-class portion, 12 points for online portion). The usual preparation for classroom sessions is not included in this component. The online assignments will be graded on a credit/no credit basis (1.5 points each). The instructor may not be able to provide individualized feedback on these assignments. No make-ups will be allowed for missed or late online assignments. See the course schedule below for details.

Regular attendance is expected in all courses. During unavoidable absences, students are responsible for missed work. A minimal amount of classroom absenteeism (totaling less than 20% of class contact time, including tardiness) may be made up through instructor-approved alternative work (all make-up work is due along with the last assignment of the course). An excessive amount of

classroom absenteeism (totaling 20% or more of class contact time, including tardiness) may result in grade reduction or course failure, despite successful completion of all assigned work. In most cases, a student will not be allowed credit for the course if he or she is absent for 25% or more of the classroom sessions. As it relates to hybrid or blended courses, students may fail the course if they are absent for 25% or more of combined classroom sessions and online assignments. Use of Skype or similar technology is not a substitute for attendance in class. Note that no distinction is made here between excused and unexcused absences. Only the student can decide where to be and what to do. This syllabus merely defines absenteeism and offers make-up options.

(2) Three analytical reflection papers (of varying point values) on the social, civic, and/or theological implications of the facts of American religious diversity, drawing upon specifics from course sources. There is no outside research paper or project—assigned course sources will provide more than enough grist for your writing mills. See the course schedule below for details.

Components at a glance:	Class attendance and participation	20 points
	Paper 1 (due Sept. 11)	20 points
	Paper 2 (due Oct. 30)	30 points
	Paper 3 (due Dec. 11)	30 points

Grading scale and evaluation criteria

The decision to exercise the Pass/Fail option must be made before the end of the second week of the course by completing the appropriate form available through the Registrar. To receive a grade of Pass the student must do at least the equivalent of C-minus work in the course.

To receive a course grade of Incomplete, students must submit the petition form from the Registrar with all signatures to the Dean's Office before the last day of regularly scheduled classes. See the Student Handbook for intensive term deadlines. Any petition submitted without a due date for outstanding work will be denied. If work is not complete by the due date, the Registrar will record the grade of F for the course.

Grades will be assigned according to the following standards:

A range: Excellent, outstanding, superior work.

B range: Good, solid work, better than minimum standards but not yet superior.

C range: Fair work that meets minimum standards (a Pass will be given for a minimum of C-minus work).

D: Substandard, poor work, with enough redeeming value to rise above the failing level.

F: Failing work, does not rise to the D level.

All course work will be evaluated in three areas: (1) Research: range and quality of handling of pertinent sources, both course and non-course; (2) conceptualization: quality of thought and analytical insight; and (3) presentation: quality of writing (from spelling, punctuation, grammar, and citation of sources to organization and development) and disposition (including manner and attitude

in both written and oral work).

Course schedule

August 28 class session
Topics for class session:: Course content and expectations
<p>Sources to be read prior to class session:</p> <p>Numrich, Paul D. "My Expectations about a Seminary Student's Perspective on Other Religions." Fall 2018. Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Course handout. PDF file. Available via Populi "Info" (look under "Files").</p> <p>SR553 Syllabus. Fall 2018. Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Course handout. PDF file. Available via Populi "Info" (look under "Files").</p>
September 4 class session
Topic for class session: Interfaith prayer/worship services
<p>Sources to be read/viewed prior to class session:</p> <p>"New York City Prayer Service." <i>C-Span</i>, 23 Sept. 2001, www.c-span.org/video/?166250-1/york-city-prayer-service. View the contributions of the following individuals (start times approximate): Rabbi Marc Gellman (1:14:40), Inberjit Singh (1:47:05), Sister Zaimah Sabree (unidentified Muslim woman, 2:17:10), Imam Izak-el M. Pasha (2:19:00), Rev. David Benke (2:46:00), Archbishop Demetrious [<i>sic</i>] (2:54:35), and Pandit Roop Sukhram (2:58:30). If you wish to consult a rough transcript of this event, see "Prayer Service at Yankee Stadium," <i>CNN.com</i>, 23 Sept. 2001, transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0109/23/se.03.html (use the find function to locate the speakers).</p> <p>Meilaender, Gilbert. "Interfaith 'Prayer': What Is It and Should We Do It?" <i>Christian Century</i>, vol. 119, nos. 22, 23 Oct.-5 Nov. 2002, pp. 32-37. Available via MTSO library online database: Go to www.mtso.edu/academics/dickhaut-library/, click Resources for Dickhaut Library, then ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials (search Meilaender for Author and Interfaith Prayer for Title).</p> <p>Niose, David. "Why Interfaith Services Are a Problem: Many Interfaith Ceremonies Practice Exclusion, Not Inclusion." <i>Psychologytoday.com</i>, 21 Apr. 2013, www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/our-humanity-naturally/201304/why-interfaith-services-are-a-problem.</p>

September 11 class session
Topic for class session: TBD
Sources to be read/viewed prior to class session: None.
Analytical reflection paper 1 (20 points) due before class session begins, minimum 750 words, submitted as a Microsoft Word document to Populi "Assignments": An analytical paper engages its sources in specific rather than vague or general ways, using critical thinking skills to evaluate arguments, draw conclusions, and/or gain new insights on pertinent topics. Discuss the social, civic, and/or theological implications of the September 4 sources (see the course description above for definitions of social/civic/theological). For instance, you may wish to evaluate interfaith prayer/worship services according to your own faith-based perspective (theological implications) or examine the effects such services may have on social networks or the civic arena. Be sure to say something about each source even if you focus most of your attention on one or two.
Online assignment to be completed following class session will be sent to your Microsoft Office 365 group.

September 18 class session
Topic for class session: Colonial America and its legacy
Sources to be read prior to class session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mead, Sidney E. "From Coercion to Persuasion: Another Look at the Rise of Religious Liberty and the Emergence of Denominationalism." <i>Church History</i>, vol. 25, no. 4, 1956, pp. 317-37, or vol. 57 Supplement, 1988, pp. 68-88. A digital version of this article is available via Populi "Info" (look under "Files"). "A Delicate Balance: The Free Exercise Clause and the Supreme Court." Pew Research Center, 24 Oct. 2007, www.pewforum.org/2007/10/24/a-delicate-balance-the-free-exercise-clause-and-the-supreme-court/. Read only this section of the larger report. "The Free Exercise Clause and the Parameters of Religious Liberty." Pew Research Center, 24 Oct. 2007, www.pewforum.org/2007/10/24/the-free-exercise-clause-and-the-parameters-of-religious-liberty/.
Online assignment to be completed following class session will be sent to your Microsoft Office 365 group.

September 25 class session
Topic for class session: Current American religious diversity
Sources to be read prior to class session: Cook, Keelan. "The De-Europeanization of American Christianity." <i>The Peoples Next Door</i> , 9 Oct. 2017, blog.keelancook.com/2017/10/the-de-europeanization-of-american-christianity.html . Numrich, Paul D. <i>The Faith Next Door: American Christians and Their New Religious Neighbors</i> . Oxford UP, 2009. Read the introduction. A digital version of this book is available from Oxford Scholarship Online via proxy.opal-libraries.org/login?url=http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195386219.001.0001/acprof-9780195386219 . A print version of this book is available on the MTSO library reserve shelf. Warner, R. Stephen. "Immigrants and the Faith They Bring." <i>Religion Online</i> , www.religion-online.org/article/immigrants-and-the-faith-they-bring/ . Accessed 20 July 2018.
Online assignment to be completed following class session will be sent to your Microsoft Office 365 group.

October 2 class session
Topic for class session: Muslim Americans
Sources to be read prior to class session: Numrich, Paul D. "Mecca on the Plains: Chicago's Varied Mosques Reflect Changes on the Country's Religious Landscape." <i>Faith and Form: The Interfaith Journal on Religion, Art and Architecture</i> vol. 44, no. 3 (2011): 17-21. Used by permission. A PDF file version is available via Populi "Info" (look under "Files"). Serhan, Randa B. "Muslim Immigration to America." <i>The Oxford Handbook of American Islam</i> , edited by Jane I. Smith and Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Oxford UP, 2014. A PDF file version is available via Populi "Info" (look under "Files").
Online assignment to be completed following class session will be sent to your Microsoft Office 365 group.

October 9 class session

Topic for class session: Buddhist Americans

Source to be read prior to class session:

Mann, Gurinder Singh, Paul David Numrich, and Raymond B. Williams. *Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs in America*, Oxford UP, 2001. Read chapters 1 (“Buddhism Comes to America”), 2 (“Buddhists Adapt and Explore”), and 3 (“Buddhism’s Growth and Popularity”). A digital version of this book is available via MTSO library online catalog. Do not read the 2008 edition of this book. Also, don’t be fooled by the marketing of this book and its larger series for “young readers.” *Choice Review* called it “An important book and series for academic and general libraries; recommended for professionals and practitioners, as well as undergraduates and general readers.” When the book was repackaged in 2008, the publisher deleted many of the illustrations and sidebars, which is why we are reading the 2001 edition.

Online assignment to be completed following class session will be sent to your Microsoft Office 365 group.

October 16: No class session. Please find some time for rest, relaxation, and refreshment.

October 23 class session

Topic for class session: Local religious diversity

Sources to be consulted prior to class session:

The Association of Religion Data Archives is a repository of information on American religious groups. Go to the page titled “U.S. Congregational Membership: Reports” (www.thearda.com/rcms2010/) and use the search functions titled “Reports” and “GIS Maps” to explore a locale of your choosing.

The Pluralism Project at Harvard University focuses on non-Christian and interfaith initiatives (including Christian participants). Go to the homepage (pluralism.org/) and click the search icon (🔍) in the upper right corner. On the search page, do not type anything into the “Search” box, keep the “Tradition” box default setting of “All traditions,” and choose a city from the drop-down menu in the “All cities” box.

“Religious Landscape Study.” Pew Research Center, www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/. Click a locale of your choosing on the interactive map under “Geography.”

October 30 class session
Topic for class session: TBD
Sources to be read/viewed prior to class session: None.
Analytical reflection paper 2 (30 points) due before class session begins, minimum 1,500 words, submitted as a Microsoft Word document to Populi "Assignments": An analytical paper engages its sources in specific rather than vague or general ways, using critical thinking skills to evaluate arguments, draw conclusions, and/or gain new insights on pertinent topics. Discuss the social, civic, and/or theological implications of selected course sources since paper 1 (see the course description above for definitions of social/civic/theological). For instance, you may wish to describe how you might use this information in conversations with neighbors or co-workers (social implications), in taking a political position (civic), and/or in discerning an appropriate faith-based stance for your own congregation or religious group (theological). Be sure to say something about at least one source from each class session.
Online assignment to be completed following class session will be sent to your Microsoft Office 365 group.

November 6 class session
Topic for class session: New religious movements
Sources to be read prior to class session: Melton, J. Gordon. "Introducing and Defining the Concept of a New Religion." <i>Teaching New Religious Movements</i> , edited by David G. Bromley, Oxford UP, 2007, pp. 29-40. A digital version of this book is available via MTSO library online catalog. "Peoples Temple (Jonestown)." <i>The New Religious Movements Homepage @The University of Virginia</i> , 5 Feb. 2005, web.archive.org/web/20060827231016/http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/Jonestwn.html . Chidester, David. <i>Salvation and Suicide: An Interpretation of Jim Jones, the Peoples Temple, and Jonestown</i> , Indiana UP, 1991. Read section 5.1, "Religious Suicide," pp. 130-38 in the digital version of this book, available via MTSO library online catalog.
Online assignment to be completed following class session will be sent to your Microsoft Office 365 group.

November 13 class session
Topic for class session: Interreligious relations I
Source to be read prior to class session: Numrich, Paul D. <i>The Faith Next Door: American Christians and Their New Religious Neighbors</i> . Oxford UP, 2009. Read chapters 2 ("Evangelizing Fellow Immigrants"), 3 ("Resettling for Christ"), and 5 ("Struggling to Reach Out"). A digital version of this book is available from Oxford Scholarship Online via proxy.opal-libraries.org/login?url=http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195386219.001.0001/acprof-9780195386219 . A print version of this book is available on the MTSO library reserve shelf.

November 20: No class session. Please find some time for rest, relaxation, and refreshment.

November 27 class session

Topic for class session: Interreligious relations II

Sources to be read prior to class session:

- Camp, Lane Gardner. "Heartsong Celebrates Thanksgiving with Memphis Islamic Center," *Memphis Conference*, vol. 157, no. 32, 10 Dec. 2010, pp. 1A+. A PDF file version of this issue of *Memphis Conference* is available via Populi "Info" (look under "Files").
- Samuel, Stephanie. "Tenn. Pastor Who Welcomed Mosque Encourages Christians to Love Muslims." *Christian Post*, 9 Sept. 2011, www.christianpost.com/news/tenn-pastor-who-welcomed-mosque-encourages-christians-to-love-muslims-55338/.
- Numrich, Paul D. "The Rhetoric of American Exceptionalism in the Interfaith Movement in the United States." Excerpt of unpublished article. PDF file. Available via Populi "Info" (look under "Files").
- Simon, Dan. "A Rabbi, a Reverend and an Imam Have a Plan for Peace in Middle America." *CNN*, 19 June 2017, www.cnn.com/2017/06/19/us/tri-faith-initiative-omaha-nebraska/.

Online assignment to be completed following class session will be sent to your Microsoft Office 365 group.

December 4 class session

Topic for class session: Interreligious relations III

Sources to be read prior to class session:

- Numrich, Paul D. *The Faith Next Door: American Christians and Their New Religious Neighbors*. Oxford UP, 2009. Read the conclusion. A digital version of this book is available from Oxford Scholarship Online via proxy.opal-libraries.org/login?url=http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195386219.001.0001/acprof-9780195386219. A print version of this book is available on the MTSO library reserve shelf.
- . "Living among People of Other Faiths: Two Types of Interreligious Cooperation to Create a Better Neighborhood, Town, Nation, and World." Ecumenical Luncheon, Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, 3 July 2007, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Cleveland, OH. Keynote address. PDF file. Available via Populi "Info" (look under "Files").

December 11 class session
Topic for class session: TBD
Sources to be read/viewed prior to class session: TBD
Analytical reflection paper 3 (30 points) due before class session begins, minimum 1,500 words, submitted as a Microsoft Word document to Populi "Assignments": An analytical paper engages its sources in specific rather than vague or general ways, using critical thinking skills to evaluate arguments, draw conclusions, and/or gain new insights on pertinent topics. Discuss the social, civic, and/or theological implications of selected course sources since paper 2 (see the course description above for definitions of social/civic/theological). For instance, you may wish to focus solely on the theological implications: What pastoral counsel might you provide someone who is considering joining an NRM, or how might you educate your congregation about NRMs? Which approaches to interreligious relations resonate positively with your own faith-based perspective or that of your denomination, and which resonate negatively? Be sure to say something about at least one source from each class session.

Work Cited

Klosterman, Chuck. *Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs: A Low Culture Manifesto*. Scribner, 2004.