



FALL 2009

12:45PM 2:05PM MW Bowne Hall 111

Joanne Punzo Waghorne, Professor of Religion (PhD Divinity School, University of Chicago, History of Religions/South Asian Studies) *Interests:* Religion and globalization, religion and urbanization, new guru-based religious movements and cosmopolitan societies in India and Singapore, new Hindu temples in urban India, London and New York.

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Office hours Wednesdays: 11:00-12:00 pm or by appointment.

TA: Mark Holland, Currently in the PhD Program (B.A., Hendrix College, 2001; M.A. Columbia University, 2004.) *Interests:* Religion and Technology, Ecology, Globalization, Continental Philosophy of Religion, Christianity, Buddhism, Cognitive Theory and Body Studies, Aesthetics.

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Office hours: Mondays 11:30 to 12:30 or by appointment

Description: Religion is on the rise and at the same time changing rapidly in our globalizing world. From New York to Singapore, newspapers that once headlined "The Death of God" now report on a new religious fervor among well-educated people. New religious movements appear; new leaders emerge within established traditions and call for change. Some worldwide fundamentalist movements espouse violence but many engage in important social service work as part of an emerging global civil society. Technology especially the worldwide web replaces print as the primary form of religious communication. New immigrants from Asia to Europe and America bring an unexpected religious pluralism to formerly Judeo-Christian populations. The modern lines between religion and politics are challenged everywhere. How can we understand this new world?

Books (Available in the book store):

Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives*. New York: Routledge, 2003 ISBN 0-415-94487-2

Brenda E. Brasher, *Give Me That Online Religion*, Rutgers University Press, 2004. ISBN: 0-8135-3436-4

- Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3rd Ed., 2003. ISBN-13: 9780520240117
- Linda Woodhead, ed., *Religions in the Modern World*, Routledge, 2nd ed. 2009 ISBN-13: 9780415458917 also available on Kindle from Amazon.com
- Richard Hughes Seager, *Encountering the Dharma: Daisaku Ikeda, Soka Gakkai, and the Globalization of Buddhist Humanism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. ISBN-13: 9780520245778

Requirements:

- The reading for each week must be completed by Wednesdays at class time. We cannot hope to have informed discussions unless each of the class members is prepared to contribute by speaking or by *actively listening*. We will give unannounced exercises to persuade you to keep up. These will count toward the final grade.
- I will prepare six topics for short paper/projects (between 2-3 pages 12 point Times Roman 600--900 words) and ask you to complete four out of the six. Papers will have different formats but will always cover the reading from the previous week. I will distribute the paper topics on the Monday of prior to the week that paper will be due--giving you a week to do the paper. Papers will be due at the Monday class in the following week. Take care not to procrastinate too long!
- I am also asking each of you to work in groups on a common project called "Contemporary Religious Movements in New York State." I will prepare a list but you may also have suggestions. Your group will present your finding to the class in the form of a PowerPoint presentation or another similar format. Your final paper will be based on this project. There is no final exam in this course.

Course Policies

Please Read Carefully now!

Attendance is required at all class sessions. We will keep records. Because of the unusual number of holidays that will effect the Monday class time, I can allow only 2 unexcused absences. Please plan your schedule to allow for religious holidays within this allowance. Because this is a MW class, those on sports teams should not be affected. However if you take any class days for sports events (with proper documentation), then I can allow NO unexcused absences in addition to your sports commitments. Each unexcused absence over the allotted two absences will lower your final grade by 3 points (for points see below). This requirement is important in this class because tests and papers are only part of the material in a course. Your presence assures us that you have at least heard and participated in the discussions, which will be essential for your understanding.

An excused absence means that you have **emailed** both the TA and myself and received approval for absences in advance due to special circumstances. Please if you speak to me in class--confirm any conversation with an email. In case of illness, you must talk with us afterwards. The policy of the Health services is to provide a note only when the student has been advised to miss classes.

Common Courtesy: (I should not have to mention these points but sad experience makes this necessary.) The class begins at 12:45. Please be on time; walking in late shows little respect for your fellow student or for me. If you have a tight connection between classes let us know and we can seat you accordingly. **All cell phones are to be turned entirely off including text messaging and all I-pods shut down**—you are all paying too much for your classes to be only half present. Repeated lack of courtesy will also result in losing points from your final grade under the participation points.

Academic Integrity: There are writing assignments in the class with no formal tests outside of the short in-class exercises. I expect the work presented to be totally your own with *all* sources, which you have used, fully acknowledged. I will provide full instructions as to citation and form. Both the TA and I are willing to help you if you have any doubts. If we find any evidence of academic dishonesty of any kind, I will report the incident to the Academic Integrity Office. The sanctions will include lowered points on the paper including minus points (i.e. -5 or -10), or failure for the entire course depended on the severity. Please check <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu> for more information.

Paper Deadlines: There are no extensions on papers. The papers will be due at class time. If you miss the deadline you can always wait for the next but take care here that you do not wait until the end.

Evaluation

The following is a basic guide that I will use to determine the grade that you earned in the class: In each category it will be possible to earn the following points:

"Exercises" (likely 3 or 5) =15 points

Four Paper/projects (10 each)= 40 points

Final Project (group up to 10 points per member) + individual paper (20)=30 points

Participation: active listening, speaking, courtesy in class=15 points

You may earn extra points by doing five [**but not six**] of the papers (possible 10 points)

Schedule: *Subject to change with reasonable notice*

Week One [Aug 31, Sept 2]: Thinking About the Rapidly Changing World

The course will ask each of you to look at the world around you, to learn to describe the religious practices and ideas that you see and hear. In this sense each of you will be involved as a keen observer of yourselves and of others. This does not mean that I will be asking for purely subjective opinions but rather that everyone has experience with contemporary religions in some way through family, friends, and neighbors at home or in your dorms. You may not participate in any of these movements but no one can avoid seeing the new religiosity that surrounds us in modern America and indeed in the world. During this first week, we will try to consider how to characterize the increasingly globalizing world in conversation with an essay by Anthony Giddens, an influential social theorist from the UK, *Runaway World*, which he first gave as a talk on the BBC.

Reading: Reading: Read first: Woodhead, Introduction and Chapter 1
Giddens, *Runaway World*,

Week Two (Sept 7, Sept 9): Runaway World continued.

Be prepared to discuss and debate the Giddens essay and to begin to offer your own sense of today's world and the possible interrelations of "religion" with the issues Giddens suggests especially "globalization," "tradition," and "family.":

Reading: Giddens, *Runaway World*

Paper/Project 1: On Giddens, DUE September 14: required of everyone

Week Three (Sept 14, Sept 16): What is *Globalization* for religions?

At the same time that the economies of the world experience arguably unprecedented level of interconnectedness, most societies seem to be undergoing '*de-secularization*' with religious values, ideas, practices, and people increasingly reentering public life. Many scholars and policy makers also assume the slow development of a '*Global Culture*' with emerging *cosmopolitan* values, which are not necessarily connected to any one religious tradition or possibly to any religion at all. Yet these worldwide values such as human rights and gender equality are transforming the world's older religious traditions (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, and many other including indigenous

American and African traditions] at the same time that movements within major traditions (in terms of numbers and distribution) transform local as well as global society.

Reading: (Read in this order) Woodhead chapter 16, and 21 plus selections from Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism, Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2006) on Blackboard

Week Four (Sept 21–Eid, Sept 23): Rethinking the popular distinction between *Religion* and *Spirituality*.

The study of contemporary religion is complicated by many different uses of the term *religion*. We need to pay close attention to the increased use of the term '*spiritual*' as an alternate to '*religion*' and often understood as quite distinct. What do those who use these terms mean and what does this changing terminology signal a world-wide change in the practice and the profession of religiosity?

Reading: Please read in this order: Woodhead, Chapter 12 "Spirituality." ON BLACKBOARD as PDF files: Robert Wuthnow, Chapter One: From Dwelling to Seeking" in *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) p.1-18. *Newsweek* Special Issue "Spirituality in America" September 5, 2005. We will look together at the Special Report from the *Straits Times*, Singapore, July 16, 2005 in class.

Week Five (Sept 28–Yom Kippur, Sept 30]: Creating new religious spaces within global commodity culture:

"Religion" often occurs outside of any traditions or religious movements. The process of "sacralizing" new spaces adds a religious dimension to consumer life that even the participants may not *name* as religious including architecture, use of urban land, and creation of new "sacred" spaces within shopping centers.

Reading: Reading on Blackboard from: Anthony King, *Spaces of Global Culture*, chapters 1, 2, 11

Paper/project 2: Due October 5: for those attending the conference.

Week Six (Oct 5, Oct 7): Technological revolution within religious communication including new styles of print medium and use of the Internet.

In the last two decades, even mainstream churches, mosques, and Hindu temples have websites. Religious education often includes cartoons and comic books. Websites offer everything from religious posters to goddess dolls. Recently religious groups form as new communities solely on the Internet.

Reading: Brenda E. Brasher, *Give Me That Online Religion*

Paper/project 3: Due October 12

Week Seven (Oct 12, Oct 14): Worldwide rise of evangelical Christianity

Even during the days of the colonial empires, conversion to Christianity in Africa and Latin American was not as extensive as now. This rapid conversion of so many, however, is not to so-called mainstream churches but to new evangelical movements, which is also true within the United States. Evangelicals are often conflated with "fundamentalist," which is *not* always true.

Reading: Woodhead, Chapter 8 on Christianity and then posted readings on Blackboard.

Week Eight (Oct 19, Oct 21): Worldwide rise of Buddhist 'evangelical' movements

Buddhists have always allowed and encouraged conversion but only recently have Buddhist movements arisen that actively seek converts on a grand scale. In Singapore, the Soka Gokkai movement is one of the fastest growing religious organizations in the city-state.

Reading: Richard Hughes Seager, *Encountering the Dharma: Daisaku Ikeda, Soka Gakkai, and the Globalization of Buddhist Humanism*.

Paper/project 4 due: October 26

Week Nine (Oct 26, 28): Understanding religion and violence.

Although not always the case, conservative trends toward “*fundamentalism*” within many older religious systems shaped new often-violent global movements and altered religious authority at the local level. Understanding both the rise of fundamentalism and its association with violent protest can be difficult but clearly all-major religious systems have developed forms of violence and terrorism. In this section we will consider Islam, which has been at the center of this issue since Nov 11.

Reading: Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*

Paper/project 5 due: Nov 2

Week Ten (Nov 2, Nov 4): New Religious Movement in the United States

Many new religions form within a global context with new values and new perspectives sometimes in contention but more often in confluence with sciences sharing issues of health, well being and personal fulfillment that adherents claim to be missing in the mainstream traditions.

Reading: Woodhead, chapters 13, 14, 15

Paper Project 6: Due on Nov 9

Week Eleven (Nov 9, Nov 11): WORK ON PROJECTS

NO formal class but Mark Holland and I will be available in our classroom, which will be open for you to begin to organize your groups and projects

Week Twelve (Nov 16, Nov 18): New Religious Movements in Asia—Especially the rise of Hindu-based organizations

This week I will talk about my own research in India and Singapore on the spread of new Hindu-based religious movement usually associated with a living guru (teacher).

Reading: Woodhead, chapter 2, Hinduism.

Project reports: Contemporary Religious Movements in New York State

Week Thirteen (Nov 23, 25):

Week Fourteen (Nov 30, Dec 2):

Week Fifteen [Dec 7, 9]

December 14 Last Day of class: Final Papers due