

## R202 - Syllabus

**CLASS:** R202 - L01

**TERM:** Fall 2016

**TIME:** Wednesdays 6:00-8:50pm

**LOCATION:** NSH 110

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Timothy Watson

**OFFICE HOURS:** 5:30-6:00pm (in classroom)

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### TEXTBOOKS

Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (ISBN: 978-0385721677)

The Dalai Lama, *The Universe In A Single Atom* (ISBN: 978-0767920810)

(see online syllabus for online resources as well)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Explores the nature of religion as experienced historically throughout the world. Examines the nature of religious experience with the divine and the relationship between science and religion. Discusses the roles of language, myths, and symbols in religion.

### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- articulate an awareness of the varieties of religious expression and the dynamic nature of religious traditions;
- describe a variety of methodological approaches to the study of religion (e.g. anthropological, philosophical, sociological, feminist, postcolonial);
- discuss and examine the diverse debates and issues related to the study of religion;
- practice reflexivity, identifying and critically examining the source and content of one's own cultural perspectives and world-views.

### REQUIREMENTS

In order to fulfill the learning outcomes above, student performance in this class is focused in the following three coordinating channels: attendance/participation; reading/journaling; and a narrative project. Student performance in each of these channels will be assessed equally as 1/3 the overall grade.

## ATTENDANCE / PARTICIPATION

Beyond just "attendance" or absorbing information from a lecture, the scheduled class sessions are meant to be a collaborative forum for discussion and feedback. Thus attending class and engaging in dialogue is essential to fulfilling the student learning objectives above and will be assessed accordingly. Since this is a hybrid modality, in addition to the other assignments and attending the class sessions, each student must post two substantive posts to the online reading forums per week.

## READING / JOURNALING

Key to understanding any religion is a basic knowledge of its primary texts. A selection of readings from these texts is provided below and is divided into somewhat equal portions to be completed each week, along with hand-written reading journals (RJ's) of your thoughts and reactions to the reading. See Appendix A for more details.

## NARRATIVE PROJECT – Build Your Own Religion (BYOR)

This is a project you will create in the medium of your choice (written paper, art, podcast, graphic novel, movie, etc.) to tell the story of the survivors of some global cataclysm (natural or otherwise) and the reinvention of religion for future generations of humans (and/or other species). See Appendix B for more details.

## COURSE CALENDAR

RJ = Reading Journal

BYOR = Build Your Own Religion

W#	DATE	RJ	BYOR
1	Sep-28	-	-
2	Oct-5	-	BYOR1
3	Oct-12	RJ1	-
4	Oct-19	RJ2	-
5	Oct-26	RJ3	-
6	Nov-2	-	BYOR2
7	Nov-9	RJ4	-
8	Nov-16	RJ5	-
9	Nov-23	no class	
10	Nov-30	RJ6	-
11	Dec-7	-	BYOR3

## APPENDIX A: Reading Journals

### Reading Journals:

The reading journal is NOT a summary or outline of what you read, it is a record of what you think about what you read. These journals will be used to assess the extent to which you engage with the assigned reading. Therefore, unless you indicate otherwise, it will be assumed that you read all the pages of the assigned reading and your journal should reflect this. Also, for complete fulfillment (X) of this requirement, the reading journals must be HAND-WRITTEN and at least one page (8.5/11 inches) of notes for the readings listed for the week.

### SCHEDULE:

**Week 1** – (begin RJ1 for week three)

**Week 2** – (continue RJ1 for week three)

**Week 3** (RJ1) *Oryx and Crake* (whole book)

**Week 4** (RJ2) – choose 3 of the following online readings:

Tolstoy, *What Is Religion?* (1-7)

Durkeim, *Elementary Forms* (1-8)

Frazer, *Golden Bough* (1-6)

Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (1-10)

Weber, *Sociology of Religion A1* (1-3)

James, *Varieties* (3-10)

Eliade, *Sacred and Profane* (8-18)

Schleiermacher, *On Religion* (1-10)

Feuerbach, *Atheism Alone* (all)

**Week 5** (RJ3) – choose 1 of the following online readings:

Tolstoy, *What Is Religion?* (8-27)

Durkeim, *Elementary Forms* (8-26)

Frazer, *Golden Bough* (7-30)

Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (10-43)

Weber, *Sociology of Religion B* (3-15)

James, *Varieties* (10-26)

Eliade, *Sacred and Profane* (20-42)

Schleiermacher, *On Religion* (10-38)

**Week 6** – (begin RJ4 for week seven)

**Week 7** (RJ4) *The Universe In A Single Atom* (1-69)

**Week 8** (RJ5) *The Universe In A Single Atom* (73-137)

**Week 9** (no class)

**Week 10** (RJ6) *The Universe In A Single Atom* (141-209)

## **APPENDIX B: *Build Your Own Religion (BYOR)***

This is a narrative project you will create, in the medium of your choice (written paper, art, podcast, graphic novel, movie, etc.) to tell the story of the survivors of some global cataclysm (natural or otherwise) and the (re)invention of a religion for future generations of humans (and/or other species). Your project should have 3 parts, 2+ pages typed (or equivalent) each, submitted separately.

### **Part One (BYOR1): *The COMMANDMENTS!*** (2+ pages or equivalent)

Your story begins sometime in the near future, shortly after some global cataclysm. There are a few survivors who must repopulate and start over. But as the only survivors, they get to decide how to tell the story of humanity and our world to the subsequent generations. Thus, this part tells the story of the cataclysm and how your group survived. Then, someone(s) from your group introduces a list of commands, rules or laws that must be followed to remain in the group.

### **Part Two (BYOR2): *Who Are We? Where Did We Come From?*** (2+ pages or equivalent)

In this part, your audience finds out about what happened before the cataclysm, beginning with the origin of humans on this planet, what humans are, and how they are different from other species. This part of the story should also address things such as:

- whether any gods were involved in the creation and where they are now
- heroes, prophets, sages, shamen, villains, etc.
- human free will
- good and evil, good and evil “in” humans and how this is improved, morality
- how we got to where we were before the mess
- whether the cataclysm be avoided and how

Try to connect as many parts of the story with the commands from part one.

### **Part Three (BYOR3): *Where Are We Going? How Do We Get There?*** (2+ pages or equivalent)

Your storyteller(s) will conclude the narrative with our destiny as members of the group. What is our motivation or reward for following the rules introduced in part one and what are the consequences for disobeying? This can involve things such as:

- heaven and hell
- better health, prosperity, or longevity in this world
- social advancement
- happiness, contentment, fulfillment, enlightenment, etc.
- union with god(s), the universe, each other, etc.

In other words, the destiny/destination of humanity can be anything your storyteller(s) believe will achieve the best results for the future of your group. And of course, how we get there is to follow the commandments/rules/laws introduced in part one. Thus, try to show how these rules will bring about the glorious future promised the group!

**Assessment Criteria:**

*content* - does this project demonstrate the meaning of "religion" as defined in class?

*ownership* - does this project reflect the unique perspective and experience of its author?

*format* - does this project tell a story?

*presentation* - is the quality and medium used in this expression appropriate to the goal?

## APPENDIX C: Course Policies and Grading

### Class Preparedness and Student Conduct:

All of the performance categories are meant to support and feed each other, then to converge in class through discussion and collaborative experience. But this convergence is dependent on individual student preparedness in terms of completing the reading selections, journals and narrative segments. Therefore it is important that students keep pace with the course calendar and performance items that are not submitted as scheduled are subject to a reduction in assessment value.

Finally, anything submitted is assumed to be the student's own 'original' work, unless otherwise instructed. Collaboration is encouraged but misuse of sources or copying other students' work will not be tolerated. In this class, "plagiarism" or "misuse of sources" will be defined as the following: the appropriation of any substantial ideas or grouping of words from a source other than the student and submitted in an assignment or test as an original contribution.

### Grading Policies:

Instead of a numerical/point grading system, your performance in this class will be represented by the following symbols for each category assessed:

complete fulfilment = X  
partial fulfilment = /  
negligible fulfilment = null (sometimes represented with a "-")

These symbols will be used to assess each item graded as well as your overall grade in each category.

Thus, your overall grade in the class will translate into a letter grade as follows:

XX/ or XXX = A  
X// = B  
/// = C  
XX or X/ = D  
none, // or / = F

NOTICE: for a C and above you must have at least a "/" in each of the three performance categories.

### Title IX/Non-Discrimination statement:

Linn-Benton Community College is committed to creating and fostering a learning and working environment based on open communication and mutual respect. If you believe you have encountered sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, national origin, veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability please contact the title IX coordinator at (541) 917-4425