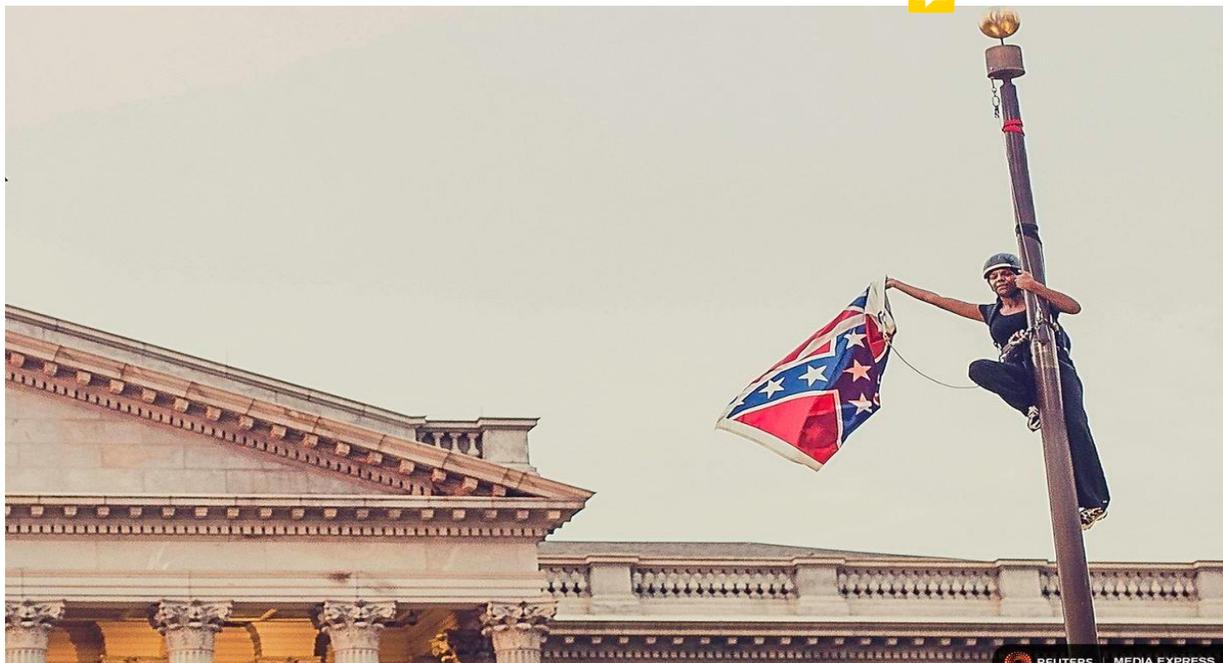


REL 100 Introduction to the Study of Religion
T/Th 9:30-10:45 • Fall 2021
Prof. Jaimie D. Crumley

I see no greater moral cause than liberation, equality, and justice for all God's people. What better reason to risk your own freedom than to fight for the freedom of others? -Bree Newsome, 2015

Course Description

Welcome to Religion 100 (REL 100). This interdisciplinary course offers a general introduction to the academic study of religion. It provides a critical examination of how the word “religion” has been used historically and continues to be used today to organize social worlds. This course will engage with some of the key debates in the field of Religious Studies. For example, we will consider the meaning of the word religion, theories of the origins of religion, and some of the sociological and political functions of religion. By the end of this course, students will develop the critical thinking skills they need to succeed in the humanities and social sciences. Additionally, students will work toward developing the skills they need to succeed in their lives beyond the classroom.



Goals/Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Articulate the complications in and complications of defining “religion” in an intellectually sophisticated manner,
2. Engage with some of the key theorists and debates in the field of Religious Studies,
3. Describe the role of religion in producing or reifying social boundaries,
4. Apply key theories in Religious Studies to contemporary cultural life.

Required Reading, Listening, and Viewing

Required Texts

- *Religion and the Creation of Race and Ethnicity: An Introduction* Craig R. Prentiss, ed (For use during Unit 2) 
- Ta-nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (For use during Unit 3) 
- Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* (For use during Unit 3) 

Additional Texts

- *Other essays, videos, and podcasts that appear on the syllabus*

Optional Textbook

- Russell T. McCutcheon *Studying Religion: An Introduction* 

Preparing for class

Preparing for college classes can be challenging. Please complete all the reading, viewing, and listening on our course schedule **before** you attend the lecture so you can fully participate during the time we spend together in the class. Some of the videos, podcasts, and chapters/articles that appear on our course schedule are long and dense. Please use the tips found [here](#) for advice on how to effectively skim long readings, take notes, and retain as you prepare for class. Effective reading and communication are skills that we all will work on throughout our lives. Be patient with yourself and be open to learning new ways to discover the world around you. We strive not for perfection, but for progress.

Attendance and Participation Policy

At their best, classrooms are collaborative spaces meant to cultivate lively intellectual exchanges. We all have contributions to make to this collaborative space! ***Make every effort to attend each class meeting.*** Please arrive on time and remain until the class is over. Contribute to the class by completing each day's assignment before class. During class, please take notes, practice active listening, and to contribute verbally to the class when you can. We will also have at least one anonymous poll question each session which will provide you with an opportunity to contribute to our shared learning environment.

Regarding Communication: On weekdays (Monday-Thursday), please allow 24 hours for me to respond to your emails. If you believe I might have overlooked your email, please forward it to me to ensure I see it. Please expect a delay in my responses on the weekends. In the subject line of your email, please state the name of the course and the nature of your question. **While I am happy to correspond with you via email, I prefer to speak with you directly during my office hours.** Please let me know if you want to make an appointment to meet outside of my office hours. I look forward to being in open conversation with you!

Academic Integrity

All students must comply with the University's code of academic integrity, including policies concerning plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. To plagiarize is to pass off

someone else's work as your own. The rule of thumb is to **always** cite any words or ideas that are not your own. To avoid plagiarism, take careful notes when you read, watch documentaries and videos, or listen to podcasts for this class so you can track where you might have originally seen an idea.

For additional information about plagiarism and how to avoid it, please visit https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/avoiding_plagiarism/best_practices.html.

For additional information about citations, please visit https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html.

Course Requirements

1. **Lecture Responses (10%):** After the Thursday lecture, a prompt will be posted on the course website based on the topics covered during the week's lectures. Your assignment is to respond to the prompt in 4-6 sentences (75-100 words). You will receive full credit for each complete lecture response. 
2. **Theory Meets Culture (15%):** Near the end of each unit, you will dig into your personal archive to bring an item (or a photo of an item) to our class meeting that represents the unit's theme. In a small group, you will discuss the item you brought. You all will write collectively about the items you brought and how they speak to the material in the unit. 
3. **Take-home exam 1 (15%):** The first exam in this course is a take-home exam. The exam will ask you to respond to a series of short and long answer questions. The exam will be posted on the course website on Thursday, October 7, at the start of class. You will have until Sunday, October 10, at 11:59 pm to complete it. It will test you on everything we have covered before the exam. The exam is open-book and open-notes. 
4. **Take-home exam 2 (20%):** The second exam in this course is a take-home exam. The exam will ask you to respond to a series of short and long answer questions. It will be posed on the course website on Thursday, November 11, at the start of class. You will have until Sunday, November 14, at 11:59 pm to complete it. It will test you on everything we cover after exam 1. The exam is open-book and open-notes. 
5. **Final Exam (40%):** You will have one in-person cumulative short answer, long answer, and essay exam at the end of the term at the date and time assigned by the University. Please plan accordingly. The essay will ask you to analyze one primary source. The exam will be closed-book and closed-notes. 

Course Schedule

Below is the course schedule. This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced verbally during class and via email.

Unit 1: Stories, Myths, and Rituals

Thursday, August 19, 2021 *Introduction to the Course* 

Tuesday, August 24, 2021

View: ReligionForBreakfast, *The Academic Study of Religion Explained*, 2017, 
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VAX4jZbBr8>.

Thursday, August 26, 2021

Read: Malory Nye, "Decolonizing the Study of Religion," *Open Library of Humanities* 5, no. 1 (June 14, 2019).

Listen: All My Relations, "ThanksTaking or ThanksGiving?," 
<https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cHM6Ly9mZWVkcyc5idXp6c3Byb3V0LmNvbS8yNjIxOTYucnNz>.

Tuesday, August 31, 2021

Read: Sabrina Strings and Long T. Bui, "'She Is Not Acting, She Is': The Conflict between Gender and Racial Realness on RuPaul's Drag Race," *Feminist Media Studies* 14, no. 5 (September 3, 2014): 822–36. 

View: *What Is Essentialism?* 2020,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHVIDAvmywI&t=0s>.

Thursday, September 2, 2021

Read: Robert J. Miller, "The Doctrine of Discovery, Manifest Destiny, and American Indians," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, May 14, 2015), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2689279>.

View: ReligionForBreakfast, "Intro to Indigenous Religions - YouTube,"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izuLOWquvkw>.

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

Read: "Jefferson's Letter to the Danbury Baptists - Library of Congress Information Bulletin," January 1, 1802, <https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.html>.

Read: Tisa Wenger, "Indian Dances and the Politics of Religious Freedom, 1870-1930," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 79, no. 4 (December 1, 2011): 850–78. 

Thursday, September 9, 2021

Read: Ula Taylor, "As-Salaam Alaikum, My Sister, Peace Be unto You: The Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Women Who Followed Him," *Race and Society* 1, no. 2 (January 1998): 177–96.

Tuesday, September 14, 2021

Read: Smith, Jonathan Z. (1998). Religion, religions, religious. In: M. Taylor (ed.), *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 269-84.

Thursday, September 16, 2021

Read: Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "Religion, Politics, and Gender: The Leadership of Nannie Helen Burroughs," in *This Far By Faith: Readings in African-American Women's Religious Biography*, ed. Judith Weisenfeld and Richard Newman (New York: Routledge, 1996), 140-57.

Read: Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others," *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (September 2002): 783-90.

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

Read: Eddie S. Glaude, "The Black Church Is Dead | HuffPost," April 26, 2010, <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-black-church-is-dead-b-473815>.

View: ReligionForBreakfast, *Religion and the No True Scotsman Fallacy*, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9pdWyAaDs>. 

Thursday, September 23, 2021

Read: Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, "We Are All Religious Now. Again," *Social Research* 76, no. 4 (2009): 1181-98.

View: ReligionForBreakfast, *3 Things Everyone Should Know About Religion*, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2GxRSW8DAE>.

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

Read: Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Good Day Columbus: Silences, Power and Public History (1492-1892)," *Public Culture* 3, no. 1 (October 1, 1990): 1-24. 

Thursday, September 30, 2021

For today's class, dig into your personal archive. Bring something (or a photo of it) that represents a part of your family's story. Think about the idea of family in the broadest possible terms. You might bring something that represents your family of origin's story. Alternatively, you might bring something that represents the story of a group that is like family to you. During class, you will discuss your item with a small group of peers.

Tuesday, October 5, 2021 ***Exam prep during class. Take-home exam will be distributed via the course website on Thursday.*** 

Thursday, October 7, 2021 ***EXAM 1* There is no class today. Instead, work on your exam for submission by Sunday, October 10, 2021, at 11:59 pm ET.**

Unit 2: Invention of Self/Other

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

Read: Introduction, *Religion and the Creation of Race and Ethnicity* 

Read: Darryl Fears, "Mixed-Race Heritage, Mixed Emotions; In Census and Society, Question of Categories Yields Many Answers: [FINAL Edition]," *The Washington Post*, April 16, 2001, sec. A SECTION.

Thursday, October 14, 2021

Read: Chapter 1, *Religion and the Creation of Race and Ethnicity* 

Read: David Walker, "David Walker, 1785-1830. Walker's Appeal . . .", 1830, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/walker/walker.html>.

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

Read: Chapter 3, *Religion and the Creation of Race and Ethnicity* 

Read: Audra Simpson, "From White into Red: Captivity Narratives as Alchemies of Race and Citizenship," *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (2008): 251-57.

Thursday, October 21, 2021

Read: Chapter 5, *Religion and the Creation of Race and Ethnicity*

View: Origin Of Everything, *What Is Ethnicity?*, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1AY95Z64gg>.



Tuesday, October 26, 2021

Read: Chapter 6, *Religion and the Creation of Race and Ethnicity*

View: Isha Camara - "Black Muslim Problems," 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuRh3ny-piE>.

Thursday, October 28, 2021

Read: Chapter 8, *Religion and the Creation of Race and Ethnicity*

Read: MOLLY IVINS, "Mormon Decision on Blacks Promises Impact on Utah: Mormon Decision to End Ban on Blacks in Priesthood to Have Wide Impact on Utah 'A Socio-Religious System' Brthrte Is High The Curse of Cain 'An Enormous Transformation' Special Type of Revelation Racism Seen as Blatant," *New York Times*, 1978. 

Tuesday, November 2, 2021

Read: Chapter 9, *Religion and the Creation of Race and Ethnicity*

Listen: "Anything For Selena | Episode 3: Birth Of A Symbol,"  <https://www.wbur.org/anythingforselena/2021/01/20/birth-of-a-symbol>.

Thursday, November 4, 2021

*For today's class, dig into your personal archive. Bring something to class (or a photo of it) that represents what differentiates you from the people around you. Perhaps you will bring

something that represents a hobby, a distinct cultural practice, or a favorite meal. During class, you will discuss your item with a small group of peers.*

Tuesday, November 9, 2021 ***Exam prep during class. Take-home exam will be distributed via the course website on Thursday.***

Thursday, November 11, 2021 ***EXAM 2* There is no class today. Instead, work on your exam for submission by Sunday, November 14, at 11:59 pm ET.**

Unit 3: Authority

Tuesday, November 16, 2021

Read: Paul A. Djupe, "Religion and Authority," *Religion in Public* (blog), May 30, 2017, <https://religioninpublic.blog/2017/05/30/religion-and-authority/>.



View: ReligionForBreakfast, *The Conversion of Constantine: What Really Happened?*, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKZAuKGG0M>.

Thursday, November 18, 2021

Read: *Between the World and Me* (Part 1)

Tuesday, November 23, 2021

Read: *Between the World and Me* (Parts 2 and 3)



Thursday, November 25, 2021 ***THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY***

Tuesday, November 30, 2021

Read: *The Color Purple* (1-83)

Thursday, December 2, 2021

Read: *The Color Purple* (pages 84-183)



Tuesday, December 7, 2021

Read: *The Color Purple* (pages 184-288)

Thursday, December 9, 2021

Read: "EXCLUSIVE: Bree Newsome Speaks For The First Time After Courageous Act of Civil Disobedience," *BNR* (blog), June 29, 2015,

<https://archives.bluenationreview.com/exclusive-bree-newsome-speaks-for-the-first-time-after-courageous-act-of-civil-disobedience/>.

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

*For today's class, dig into your personal archive. Bring something to class (or a photo of it) that represents your relationship to power, control, or authority. How has power emerged

in your life or in the lives of people around you? During class, you will discuss your item with a small group of peers.*

Thursday, December 16, 2021 * **Final Exam Prep during class***

Final Exam, Date and Time

Congratulations, you have completed Religion 100!