



## **SYLLABUS**

### **Gender, Race, and Class in Religions in the UK**

Dr. Susan M. Shaw

Oregon State University

Fall 2020

Contact Hours: 60

(4 semester/6 quarter credits)

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines many of the religious traditions found throughout the UK with special attention to issues of gender, race, social class, immigration status, and sexual identity within the tradition. Drawing from perspectives from women, gender, and sexuality studies, ethnic studies, religious studies, history, and sociology of religion, we will explore the intersection of religion with significant global issues for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the first class session of each week, we will meet in the classroom to discuss the week's topic and readings. For the second class session, we will visit a site related to that week's religious tradition. We will also take occasional excursions beyond London to significant religious sites.

**A Note on Visiting Religious Sites:** Respect is of utmost importance when we visit religious sites. When we visit a group's place of worship we should respectfully observe its traditions—for example, we may need to remove our shoes or cover our heads in some places. We should not bring food or drink into religious sites. Asking difficult questions of guest speakers is acceptable as long as it is done respectfully.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

As a result of having taken this course, students should be able to:

- Explain basic beliefs of various religious traditions in the U.K.
- Identify issues of social difference in various religious traditions
- Use feminist and critical race lenses to analyze the operations of gender, race, and other forms of difference in various religious traditions
- Analyze the intersections of difference, immigration, and religion in the UK

In addition, students will meet learning outcomes in the Contemporary Global Issues category of OSU's baccalaureate core:

- Analyze the origins, historical contexts, and implications of contemporary global issues.
- Explain the complex nature and interdependence of contemporary global issues using a multi-disciplinary approach.
- Articulate in writing a critical perspective on contemporary global issues using evidence as support.

**TEXTS**

Mary Pat Fisher. *Living Religions*. 10<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2016.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

1. Social Media Pilgrimage 30 points

Using Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, Facebook, and other forms of social media, students will document their pilgrimage through the religions of the UK. Contributions should provide perspective on activities, readings, discussions and offer insightful (albeit short) analysis from feminist and critical race perspectives.

2. Religion Talk 30 points

Each student will select an issue of contemporary social significance within the context of religions in the UK and create a 5-8 minute video of a TED-style talk about the issue. For example, a talk may explore issues surrounding the recent increase in anti-Semitic or anti-Islamic activity in the UK or the struggles in the Church of England for full LGBTQ inclusion. Students will present their videos during the final week of classes.

3. Sacred Place Paper 40 points

Select a place in the UK that has religious or spiritual significance. Using at least 5 scholarly sources and using a critical race feminist perspective, write a 6-8 page paper examining the relationship of that place to gender, race, social class, immigration, and other forms of difference. You may want to select a house of worship (such as Westminster Abbey, Bevis Marks Synagogue, Buddhapadipa Temple) or a sacred place (such as Stonehenge, Avebury, Glastonbury). You should ask questions such as: How is this place gendered? How is it racialized? How are women represented in this place? Where are women in the history of this place? What role has immigration played in this place? Have people in this place faced discrimination and/or violence? How is diversity represented in this place? Is everyone welcome in this place? What does the architecture/geography of the place suggest about the assumed worshiper? Do things happen in this place that contribute to oppression or liberation? How does the specific location of this place in the UK shape relationships of gender, race, and other forms of difference? Have forces of globalization and corporatization affected this place? Is the UK’s history of imperialism evident in this place? Papers should follow MLA style guidelines. Due Week 10.

**GRADING SCALE**

95-100	A	87-89	B+	80-83	B-	74-76	C	67-69	D+	60-63	D-
90-94	A-	84-86	B	77-70	C+	70-73	C-	64-66	D	below 60	F

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Week One: Introduction to Religions in the U.K.  
*Living Religions* Chapter 1

Week Two: Pre-Christian Religions  
London Site: The British Museum

Week Three: Witches and Witch Hunts  
London Site: Smithfield

Week Four: Catholicism and the Church of England

*Living Religions* Chapter 9

London site: Westminster Abbey

Week Five: Protestant Dissenters: Baptists, Quakers, Presbyterians, and Methodists

London Sites: Bloomsbury Baptist Church, Bunhill Meeting House, Wesley's

Week Six: Judaism

*Living Religions* Chapter 8

London site: West London Synagogue

Week Seven: Time off for travel

Week Eight: Islam

*Living Religions* Chapter 10

London site: London Central Mosque and Islamic Cultural Center

Week Nine: Neopaganism

Excursion to Edinburgh, Nov. 1-3

Week Ten: Buddhism

*Living Religions* Chapter 5

London site: Buddhapadipa Temple

Week Eleven: Hinduism

*Living Religions* Chapter 3

London site: Neasden Temple

Week Twelve: Sikhism

*Living Religions* Chapter 11

London site: Central Gurdwara

Week Thirteen: New Religious Movements

*Living Religions* Chapter 12

London site: INFORM (Information Network on Religious Movements)

Week Fourteen: Religion Talk

*Living Religions* Chapter 13