



**WBUonline Campus  
School of Religion & Philosophy**

**UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT**

Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused and distinctively Christian environment for professional success and service to God and humankind.

**COURSE NUMBER & NAME:**

RLGN 5311 New Religious Movements

**TERM & DATES:**

Spring, 2019 Feb 25-May 18, 2019

**INSTRUCTOR:**

Dr. J. M. Givens Jr., Professor of Religion

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Office phone: 806.291.1166 (assistant 806.291.1160)

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**OFFICE HOURS, BUILDING & LOCATION:**

Flores Bible Building office suite

Mon 2:00-5:00; Tues 9:00-11:00; 2:00-3:00; Wed 2:00-5:00; Thurs 9:00-11:00 CST/CDT (phone and instant messaging)

*Other times available by email and/or appointment; **Cell phone for emergencies***

**COURSE MEETING TIME & LOCATION:**

Asynchronous interaction with specific deadlines managed through [Blackboard](#)

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

Intensive study and analysis of origins, personalities, historical development, and thought of religious or spiritual groups founded after 1800, which evidence deviant beliefs and/or practices from established denominations and religions. Major attention will be given to Latter-Day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, New Age Movements, and other groups which have a significant presence in the United States.

**PREREQUISITE:**

None

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND RESOURCE MATERIAL:

1. Urban, Hugh B. *New Age, Neopagan, and New Religious Movements: Alternative Spirituality in Contemporary America*. Oakland, CA: University of California, 2015.
2. Hexham, Irving, Stephen Rost, and John W. Morehead II, eds. *Encountering New Religious Movements: A Holistic Evangelical Approach*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2004.
3. Bible, any modern translation recognized by mainstream Christianity (if unsure, check with instructor)
4. Students will need access to an internet-enabled computer.
  - a. *WBU Blackboard Course Management Software*
    - i. All assignments and other class issues will be available through the [Blackboard website](#).
    - ii. WBUonline technical support can assist you with log in issues, such as username and password.
    - iii. Contact to technical support is available on the login page of Blackboard. Support is 24/7 support by phone and available also by chat or creating a case.
  - b. *WBU Mabee Learning Resources Center*
    - i. Use the [LRC website](#) to search for book (sent via priority mail), articles, online articles and e-books, and other resources.
    - ii. The website also has tutorials for using their services.
    - iii. Email the Distance Learning Librarian with questions on LRC and assistance identifying/securing resources for papers.

Texts and ISBN information available from [WBU bookstore](#). Either e-book or physical text are fine.

## OPTIONAL MATERIALS

1. Bb for Students—Apple App Store or Google Play
2. Rhodes, Ron. *The Challenge of the Cults and New Religions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

## COURSE OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES:

The student will

1. describe the origins, development, essential doctrines, and present status of new religious movements (NRMs) in America
2. explain the appeal of such groups to the American people
3. formulate a method that facilitates dialogue with persons affiliated with religious cults and sects
4. research the life and beliefs of a founder of a new religious movement
5. create a witnessing strategy to share the Christian gospel to members of a new religious movement based on the methodologies found in *Encountering New Religious Movements*

## ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attendance for online courses is defined fully in the [university catalog](#).
2. Students are expected to participate in all required instructional activities in their courses.
3. Student “attendance” in an online course is defined as active participation in the course as described in the course syllabus (completing weekly assignments).
4. Students aware of necessary absences must inform the professor with as much advance notice as possible in order to make appropriate arrangements.

5. Any student absent 25 percent or more of the online course, i.e., non-participatory during 3 or more weeks of an 11 week term, may receive an F for that course.
6. Any student who has not actively participated in an online class prior to the census date for any given term is considered a "no-show" and will be administratively withdrawn from the class without record. To be counted as actively participating, it is not sufficient to log in and view the course. The student must be submitting work as described in the course syllabus.
7. When a student reaches a number of absences considered by the instructor to be excessive, the instructor will submit a Report of Unsatisfactory Progress to the student's WBU student email account and to appropriate university personnel.

#### **STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**

Wayland Baptist University observes a zero tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty. Per university policy as described in the academic catalog, all cases of academic dishonesty will be reported and second offenses will result in suspension from the university.

#### **DISABILITY STATEMENT:**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Coordinator of Counseling Services serves as the coordinator of students with a disability and should be contacted concerning accommodation requests at (806) 291-3765. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

#### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING CRITERIA:**

1. *Blackboard Scavenger Hunt.* The hunt is designed to help familiarize you with the essential features of Blackboard. **Complete by Wednesday of Week 1 (3<sup>rd</sup> day of class). 1 point** will be deducted each day for **late submissions**.
2. *Weekly Reading Quizzes.* Students will take quizzes over assigned chapters each week.
3. *Weekly Discussions and/or Activities.* Student interaction through class discussion and activities enhances learning and understanding. Discussion will be over the assigned readings and other materials. Discussions will help students understand one or more aspects of the religion more fully. Initial posts should be substantive, informative, and should enhance the learning experience for the student and colleagues. Interaction is expected, so subsequent responses to student posts or to instructor inquiries, and questions to others about their posts to gain clarity or deeper understanding will be part of the evaluation. See weekly grading rubric and the Course Info section of the course in Blackboard for detailed description of expectations.

**NOTE:** Because the university classroom is a place designed for the free exchange of ideas, students are encouraged to think aloud and to be honest about their theological perspectives and concerns. Students should respect the views of their peers, addressing any concerns or questions about another's views with charity and compassion, so that the whole body of Christ might be built up ([Eph. 4:11-15](#)). NRM members during field trips (and any guest speakers, if scheduled) should be extended the same respect in order that they might see Christ reflected in your life ([1 Pet. 2:12](#)).

4. *Research Paper.* Write an **8-12 page** paper on the life and beliefs of a significant leader in one of the new religious movements. Select one name below or another individual in consultation with the instructor.

5. *Research Project.* Create a witnessing strategy for sharing the gospel with members of a selected new religious movement based on the methodologies found in *Encountering New Religious Movements*. Develop a means to communicate this witnessing strategy to the class. This could be a video or multimedia presentation, a written plan, or some other create means that fits well with the strategy selected. You will present the strategy to your classmates and provide critical feedback and suggestions to classmates' projects.
6. *Field Trip Participation.* Students will attend worship services/meetings of other faiths to provide an opportunity to encounter "real-life" adherents of these movements rather than just scholarly statements/analysis of these religions. A report will be submitted for the visit. Details of the report will be posted in Blackboard. **One field trip is required.** **Extra credit** will be available to students for additional field trips with accompanying reports, up to two (2) bonus points on the final average for each.
7. *Guest Speaker/Field Trip Questions.* Prepare a **minimum five** (5) questions for field trips that you take, and for any class meetings where a guest speaker might be scheduled. Questions should be discussion oriented and should be based on related chapter in textbook, assigned reading, and/or research for paper. You can also do outside research to identify beliefs which you might want to discuss with the practitioners. Questions should be discussion oriented and focused to help you learn more about the beliefs and practices of the group represented by the site visited or speaker. Questions will be submitted through Blackboard, either with the field trip material above or separately for a guest speaker. On field trips, you will see if you can get one or more questions answered from the members you encounter, though it should be within normal conversation and not a "can you answer these questions for my class" stilted format. The answers you receive could be included as part of your field trip report above.
8. *Examinations.* There will be a midterm and final exam for the course. The questions will be over reading assignments, lecture material, and class discussions. **MAKEUPS:** Students **must** secure permission to not take the exam at the scheduled time **prior** to the conclusion of the testing period. Makeups must be taken within **two weeks** of the test date.

### GRADING CRITERIA

#### 1. University Grading Scale

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	below 60

#### 2. Computation of Final Grade

a.	Scavenger hunt	1%
b.	Weekly Discussions/Activities	12%
c.	Weekly Quizzes/Speaker Questions	12%
d.	Research	20%
e.	Witnessing Strategy Project	15%
f.	Field Trip Report and Questions	10%
g.	Exams	25%

**Grade Appeal Statement:** Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the Vice

President of Academic Affairs/Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee may instruct that the course grade be upheld, raised, or lowered to a more proper evaluation.

### **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (Selection of some groups based on class interest)**

1. Introduction
2. Defining Cults
3. Understanding Cultic Growth
4. Native American Church
5. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
6. The Jehovah's Witnesses
7. Spiritism and the New Age Movement
8. Wicca
9. Satanism
10. The Church of Scientology
11. The Mind Sciences
12. Nation of Islam
13. Hindu-Based Cults
14. The Unification Church
15. The Baha'i Faith
16. Unitarian Universalism
17. Oneness Pentecostalism
18. Seventh-Day Adventism

### **POSSIBLE RESEARCH TOPICS**

Verify sufficient resources available from library or other avenues. All Internet sources must be pre-approved and should not be bulk of research.

1. Joseph Smith
2. Brigham Young
3. Charles Taze Russell
4. Joseph Franklin Rutherford
5. Phineas Parkhurst Quimby
6. Mary Baker Eddy
7. Charles and Myrtle Fillmore
8. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky
9. Rudolf Steiner
10. Elizabeth Clare Prophet
11. L. Ronald Hubbard
12. Sun Myung Moon
13. Mizra Ali Muhammad ("The Bab")
14. Mirza Husayn Ali ("Baha'u'llah")
15. William Ellery Channing
16. Aleister Crowley
17. Anton La Vey
18. Wallace Dodd Ford ("Fard Muhammad")

19. Elijah Poole (“Elijah Muhammad”)

**POSSIBLE FIELD TRIPS AND GROUPS FOR WITNESSING STRATEGY**

Can be one of any number of smaller groups that are in your local area. All selections must be approved by the instructor before the trip.

1. Jehovah’s Witnesses (Kingdom Halls)
2. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Ward or Stake meeting houses)
3. United Pentecostal or other Pentecostal Church (if it is “Oneness” Pentecostal—do not believe in Trinity)
4. Seventh Day Adventist Church
5. Christian Science
6. Baha’i meeting group
7. Unitarian Universalist Church
8. Scientology meeting site
9. Nation of Islam meeting site
10. Wicca meeting site
11. Native American Church
12. Spiritism meeting
13. Church of Satan (or other Satanist meeting)
14. Theosophy meeting
15. New Age festival (need to visit various booths) or channeling event
16. Unification Church meeting
17. Messianic Jewish congregation