



EFFECTIVE: SEPTEMBER 2006
CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

A. Division: **EDUCATION** Effective Date: **SEPTEMBER 2006**

B. Department / Program Area: **PHILOSOPHY/HUMANITIES** Revision New Course
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
& SOCIAL SCIENCES

If Revision, Section(s) Revised:
 Date of Previous Revision:
 Date of Current Revision: **JANUARY 2006**

C: HUMS 1173 **D: NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS** **E: 3**

Subject & Course No.	Descriptive Title	Semester Credits
F: Calendar Description: The mainstream religions are what most people are familiar with yet they only represent a part of the ongoing religious quest in North America. There is vibrant activity in alternative forms of spirituality as displayed in new religious movements. This course will explore some of these dissenting movements in an historical context, from those arising in the 1800's, others associated with the sixties counterculture, to those popular today. Topics discussed will include cult theory, the rise of New Age spirituality, Wicca and related earth-based spirituality and their roots in paganism, Spiritualism, New Thought teachings and the 60s counterculture. The question looked at is whether these alternative movements are better suited to, and reflective of, the current social situation than the mainstream religions and what that may tell us regarding the future of religion in a post-modern society.		
G: Allocation of Contact Hours to Type of Instruction / Learning Settings Primary Methods of Instructional Delivery and/or Learning Settings: Lecture and Seminar Number of Contact Hours: (per week / semester for each descriptor) Lecture: 2 hrs per week / semester Seminar: 2 hrs per week / semester Number of Weeks per Semester: 15	H: Course Prerequisites: NONE I: Course Corequisites: NONE J: Course for which this Course is a Prerequisite NONE K: Maximum Class Size: 35	
L: PLEASE INDICATE: <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Credit <input type="checkbox"/> College Credit Non-Transfer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> College Credit Transfer: SEE BC TRANSFER GUIDE FOR TRANSFER DETAILS (www.bctransferguide.ca)		

M: Course Objectives / Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course the successful student will be able to:

1. Explain and critically evaluate the nature of cults/new religions and the processes of recruitment in the light of various sociological and psychological theories.
2. Explicate an historical overview of the various ideologies and movements that serve to inform various new religious movements.
3. Critically analyse how the salient features of various new religions reflect historical, sociological and psychological adaptations to the ever changing human environment.
4. Demonstrate an ability to contrast and compare the distinctive features of new religious movements with those of the mainstream religions, noting the role historical, sociological and psychological factors play in shaping religious ideology and institutional structures.
5. Formulate their own conclusions regarding how the on-going religious question of humanity mirrors social and cultural trends and how it may be evolving in the decades ahead.

N: Course Content:

Instruction in the course will include areas such as the following:

1. An overview of sociological, psychological and anthropological definitions and theories regarding “cults” and an overview and assessment of various theories regarding “conversion.”
2. An historical overview of the first dissenting movements in North America (e.g., Unitarians and Transcendentalists), the role of Swedenborgianism and Mesmerism, the rise of Spiritualism, Theosophy and the New Thought movement, and how they all play an important role in contributing to alternative religions and a certain metaphysical perspective found to be prevalent among them.
3. An overview of how various eastern religions and eastern thought in general came to the West and their ideological contribution to alternative religions.
4. The rise of the sixties counterculture and its receptivity to, and role in, popularizing various groups and the ideology associated with various alternative religions.
5. A discussion of the roots of contemporary Wicca and neo-paganism in gnosticism and western esotericism at large, as well as their contemporary expressions
6. A critical analysis of how the current popularity of New Age, Wicca, the “pop” psychology and metaphysical teachings of various best-selling authors represent the most recent expressions of the continuing evolution of the alternative religious tradition in North America.
7. An analysis of whether these new religious movements reflect and consequently are better adapted to the current social context than mainstream religions with an evaluation of the benefits and pitfalls stemming from this.
8. A consideration of the congruency among various new religious movements due to historical influence; and how these religions may reflect the social context. One can observe how these historical and social factors shape religion at both an ideological and institutional level.

<p>O: Methods of Instruction</p>	<p>The course will employ a variety of instructional methods to accomplish its objectives, including some of the following: any combination of lecture and seminar where parts and/or entire classes may be devoted to formal lectures or to informal discussion of lecture material or assigned readings; there may be student presentations on particular subjects or assigned readings; there will be some videos and perhaps one or two field trips.</p>						
<p>P: Textbooks and Materials to be Purchased by Students</p>	<p>The students may purchase a course pack consisting of excerpts from sources such as the following:</p> <p>Dawson, Lorne L. <i>Comprehending Cults: The Sociology of New Religious Movements</i>. Oxford UP, 1998.</p> <p>Ellwood, Robert S. <i>Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America</i>. Prentice-Hall, 1988.</p> <p>Lewis, James R. & J. Gordon Melton, eds. <i>Perspectives on the New Age</i>. SUNY, 1992.</p> <p>Miller, Timothy. <i>America’s Alternative Religions</i>. SUNY, 1995.</p> <p>Robbins, Thomas. <i>Cults, Converts and Charisma: the Sociology of New Religious Movements</i>. Sage, 1988.</p> <p>The course may employ a required text to be purchased by the student such as the following:</p> <p>Drury, Nevill. <i>Exploring the Labyrinth: Making Sense of the New Spirituality</i>. Allen & Unwin, 1999.</p> <p>Kemp, Darin. <i>The New Age: A Guide. Alternative Spiritualities from the Aquarian Conspiracy to the Next Age</i>. Edinburgh UP, 2000.</p> <p>Kyle, Richard. <i>The Religious Fringe: A History of Alternative Religions in America</i>. IVP, 1993.</p> <p>Sutcliffe, Steven. <i>Children of the New Age: A History of Spiritual Practices</i>. Routledge, 2003.</p> <p>Sutcliffe, Steven and Marion Bowman, eds.. <i>Beyond the New Age: Exploring Alternative Spirituality</i>. Edinburgh UP, 2000.</p>						
<p>Q: Means of Assessment</p>	<p>Evaluation will be based on course objectives and will be carried out in accordance with Douglas College policy. The instructor will provide a written course outline with specific criteria for assessment during the first week of class. No one evaluation component may exceed 40%.</p> <p>Any possible combination of the following which equals 100%:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">In-class tests, short written assignments</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: right;">20-50%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Class presentations, essays, final exam</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: right;">30-60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Instructor’s general evaluation (e.g., participation, class attendance)</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: right;">0-20%</td> </tr> </table>	In-class tests, short written assignments	20-50%	Class presentations, essays, final exam	30-60%	Instructor’s general evaluation (e.g., participation, class attendance)	0-20%
In-class tests, short written assignments	20-50%						
Class presentations, essays, final exam	30-60%						
Instructor’s general evaluation (e.g., participation, class attendance)	0-20%						
<p>R. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition: specify whether course is open for PLAR</p>	<p>No.</p>						

Course Designer: Linda Christensen

Education Council / Curriculum Committee Representative

Dean / Director

Registrar