

Peru State College
HP 302 ANALYSIS OF EVIL II
Syllabus – Spring – 2010

Instructor: James R. Nevitt, Ph.D.

Office Hours: 9:30 – 11:00 a.m. and 11:00 – 12:00 p.m. on Mon. and Wed.

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. on Tues. and Thur.

Fridays from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon by appointment only.

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Course Meets: 2:00 – 3:15 p.m. Tues. - Thurs., T.J. Majors Room 326

Required Textbook: *Understanding New Religious Movements* by John Saliba and J. Gordon Melton, 2nd ed. (2003), Rowman and Littlefield.

ISBN 0759103569

Book Description - Discussions of any religion can easily raise passions. But arguments tend to become even more heated when the religion under discussion is characterized as new. Divisions around the study of new religious movements (NRMs), or cults, or nontraditional or alternative or emergent religions are so acute that there is even controversy over what to call them. John Saliba strives to bring balance to these discussions by offering perspectives on new religions from different academic perspectives: history, psychology, sociology, law, theology, and counseling. This approach provides rich descriptions of a broad range of movements while demonstrating how the differing aims of the disciplines can create much of the controversy around NRMs.

Required Software: MS Word

Course Description & Objectives

This course provides an overview and understanding of ritualistic crime and deviant cult activities, particularly as it applies to small folk groups, isolated societies, small towns and rural environments. The course includes an exploration of the definition of evil as portrayed by religion, an understanding of various psychological, philosophical, sociological, and behavioral theories of evil, insights into the dynamics of groups that exhibit extreme violence or self-destructive behaviors and the people that lead them. Particular focus will be given to individual and group deviance, psychological dynamics of charismatic cult leaders and their followers, and church, community, civic agency/law enforcement responses to the acts of such people.

Prerequisites: Permission of the Honors Program Director; HP 301 desirable

Upon completion of this course you should be able to:

- A. To demonstrate verbally and in writing an understanding of the definition and historical evolution of evil violence as it relates to deviant subcultures and cult activity.
- B. To compare and contrast verbally and in writing various religious viewpoints concepts of evil.
- C. Compare and contrast verbally and in writing various NRM's world views.
- D. Demonstrate an understanding of psychological, sociological and behavioral theories of evil through verbal interaction with the instructor and in writing.
- E. Demonstrate verbally and in writing a greater understanding of various groups and individual leaders deemed by society as evil within the last century, including a significant review of ritual torture, ritual killings, and homicide.
- F. Articulate an understanding verbally and in writing of the processes, procedures and aspects of law enforcement investigations associated with ritualistic crime and the topic of cult-related homicide.

Expectations & Instructional Approach

Class will include lectures and power point presentations, guided discourse, recording attendance, unit exams, assignment and/or discussion of outside readings and brief occasional streaming or DVD presentations. Your attendance and participation will be vital to the learning experience. Consequently I expect you to be at each class, having read the material of the day, and ready to participate in the day's discussion and learning experience. Do not bring a radio, i-pod or CD player with or without headphones to class. Please place pagers and cell phones on silent mode.

Assessment and Grading

Class Attendance and Participation:

It is important that you attend each session as scheduled. Class time is important. Attendance will be taken and will count as a significant part of your grade. Attending a lecture or DVD presentation is defined as "being present throughout the entire period"; as such, attendance will be taken during the first ten minutes of class. **Late arrivals will be counted on the attendance roster at the discretion of the instructor if the reason seems valid.**

In the event a student may miss a class, the student is **required to notify the instructor via e-mail or phone a minimum of one (1) hour prior to that class.** Students may miss the equivalent of two (2) classes without an adverse effect on their grade...thereafter **ten (10) points shall be deducted from the student's final grade.** In the event that a student misses a class due to reasons beyond his or her control and wishes to make up a percentage of those points, additional reading and written assignment(s) may be permitted at the discretion of the instructor. **Any student missing more than 5 classes shall not pass this course. Regular unit exams must**

be taken at the scheduled time unless excused in advance by Dr. Nevitt, with the exception of a medical emergency verified by a doctor's confirmation. Exams must be taken within one week of the time administered to the class to be considered as part of a student's grade.

Weekly Assignments: (50 points)

Weekly assignments will be given in the form of videolab experiences or other written homework. They must be turned in upon the next meeting period for full credit. These weekly assignments will be graded on the merit of timely completion, content, creativity, and thoughtfulness.

Project/Paper: (50 points)

An APA formatted paper, 5-7 pages long, using 12 point font, double spacing, and including a reference section and cover sheet is required in this course. Students should contact the lead instructor with their topics prior to beginning research.

Topics for a paper may include:

- 1) Societal, religious, or cultural connotations of evil as embodied by a small group.
- 2) A specific cult killing or ritualistic crime, their methodology, and underlying sociological or behavioral traits of that chosen group as well as analysis of the characteristics of the group leader(s).
- 3) A perspectives or reflection paper on infamous leaders of groups/cults described as evil or known for acts associated with evil
- 4) A mutually agreed upon topic between the lead instructor and the student

Book/DVD Report (20 points)

As a scholarly venture, students shall be required to submit a book report. The reports shall include an overview, synopsis, and learner perspective on current scholarly topics related to the course content e.g. fiction or nonfiction books related to concept of evil, serial murder, theories of evil, or a mutually agreed upon topic with the lead instructor.

Each book report should be approximately two typewritten, double-spaced pages in length.

Exams: (300 points)

There will be 3 exams scheduled throughout the semester. Each exam is worth 100 points. The exams are multiple-choice, true/false, completion, matching and essay format. Students are expected to be present when all assessments are given. Only by prearranged, mutual agreement between the student and instructor shall assessments be taken at a different time than scheduled. There shall be no exceptions to this policy.

Late Assignment Policy:

Assigned written homework that is turned in late will be docked 50% of the assigned points or more. Homework over a week (7 days) late is worth zero points.

Exams must be taken the day they are scheduled unless there is a valid medical or other reason (as determined by the instructor). All missed exams must be made up within a week (seven days) of the time they are offered; otherwise the student will receive zero credit.

Grading Scale

Final grade will be determined by percentage of total points awarded on the following assignments

3 Homeworks @ 20 points each	60 points
3 Exams over textbook chapters and lecture @ 100 points each	300 points
1 Individual Research Paper	50 points
1 Book/DVD Report	20 points
TOTAL	430 points

The grading scale used this semester appears below:

100 – 90 A	Superior
89 – 88 B+	Above Average
87 – 80 B	
79 – 78 C+	Average
77 – 70 C	
69 – 68 D+	Below Average
67 – 60 D	
Below 60	Failing

College's Incomplete Coursework Policy

To designate a student's work in a course as incomplete at the end of a term, the instructor records the incomplete grade (I). Students may receive this grade only when serious illness, hardship, death in the immediate family, or military service during the semester in which they are registered prevents them from completing course requirements. In addition, to receive an incomplete, a student must have completed substantially all of the course's major requirements.

Unless extenuating circumstances dictate otherwise, students must initiate requests for an incomplete by filling out an Incomplete Grade Completion Contract, which requires the signature of the student, instructor, and Dean. The Incomplete Grade Completion contract cites the reason(s) for the incomplete and details the specific obligations the student must meet to change the incomplete to a letter grade. The date by which the student agrees to complete required work must appear in the contract. The Dean, the instructor, and the student receive signed copies of the Incomplete Grade Completion Contract.

Even if the student does not attend Peru State College, all incomplete course work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester. Unless the appropriate Dean approves an extension and if the student does not fulfill contract obligations in the allotted time, the incomplete grade automatically becomes an F.

College's Academic Integrity Policy

The College expects all students to conduct themselves in a manner that supports an honest assessment of student learning outcomes and the assignment of grades that appropriately reflect student performance. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to understand and comply with instructions regarding the completion of assignments, exams, and other academic activities. At a minimum, students should assume that at each assessment opportunity they are expected to do their own original academic work and/or clearly acknowledge in an appropriate fashion the intellectual work of others, when such contributions are allowed. Students helping others to circumvent honest assessments of learning outcomes, or who fail to report instances of academic dishonesty, are also subject to the sanctions defined in this policy.

Instances of academic dishonesty may be discovered in a variety of ways. Faculty members who assign written work ordinarily check citations for accuracy, run data base and online checks, and/or may simply recognize familiar passages that are not cited. They may observe students in the act of cheating or may become aware of instances of cheating from the statements of others. All persons who observe or otherwise know about instances of cheating are expected to report such instances to the proper instructor or Dean.

In order to promote academic integrity, the College subscribes to an electronic service to review papers for the appropriate citations and originality. Key elements of submitted papers are stored electronically in a limited access database and thus become a permanent part of the material to which future submissions are compared. Submission of an application and continued enrollment signifies your permission for this use of your written work.

NSCS Board of Trustees Policy 4220 states that each College “. . . will establish

a distance learning assessment policy that will include, at a minimum, a substantial culminating experience that is proctored.” Peru State College’s policy is that each course that is offered entirely online will feature a proctored final exam that substantially measures the extent the course’s stated learning objectives are achieved. Online course syllabi will clearly state that, regardless of grades earned previously, the proctored final exam must be passed in order to receive credit for the course. Courses which feature graded site-based activities (e.g., teaching demonstrations) and/or video-taped presentations that occur near the end of the term, and that are designed to substantially assess the achievement of learning objectives, can be considered in compliance with this policy. Project-based capstone and graduate courses utilizing real-time discussions held by web-cam, phone or in person with the faculty member as part of the assessment process can also be considered in compliance with this policy.

Should an occurrence of academic misconduct occur, the faculty member may assign a failing grade for the assignment or a failing grade for the course. Each incident of academic misconduct should be reported to the Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). The VPAA may suspend students for two semesters found to be responsible for multiple instances of academic dishonesty. The reason for the suspension will be noted on the student’s transcript.

A faculty member need present only basic evidence of academic dishonesty. There is no requirement for proof of intent. Students are responsible for understanding these tenets of academic honesty and integrity. Students may appeal penalties for academic dishonesty using the process established for grades appeals.

Title IX Compliance Notice

Peru State College is an equal opportunity institution. PSC does not discriminate against any student, employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or age in employment and education opportunities, including but not limited to admission decisions. The College has designated an individual to coordinate the College’s nondiscrimination efforts to comply with regulations implementing Title VI, VII, IX, and Section 504. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies and practices may be directed to Eulanda Cade, Director of Human Resources, Title VI, VII, IX Compliance Coordinator, Peru State College, PO Box 10, Peru, NE 68421-0010, (402) 872-2230.

Students requesting reasonable accommodation and tutoring services should contact the Center for Achievement and Transition Services (CATS).

Tentative Course Schedule

Week Topics

- 1 Chapter 1 - New Religious Movements in Contemporary Western Culture: An Overview. A Timeline: New Religions, Cults and Spiritual Movements
- 2 Definitions and Distinctions
- 3 Cults: A Connection with History
Term Paper Topics Due
- 4 Chapter 2 – A History of New Religious Movements in the West
- 5 Theories of Social Deviance
- 5 Chapter 3 – New Religious Movements in Psychological Perspective
Exam 1
- 6 America: A Breeding Ground for Bizarre New Religions; Cults in America: About the Term Cult
7. Chapter 4 – New Religious Movements in Sociological Perspective
8. Satanism; Syncretic Cults
Spring Break
9. New Religious Movements in the Law Courts
10. Millennial Cults
Exam 2
11. Student Presentations
12. Cults and Ritualistic Crime
Term Papers Due
13. Chapter 7 – Counseling and the New Religious Movements
14. Persuasion and Deprogramming
15. Review for Final Exam/Final Exam