

Contemporary Religious Quests

"Being religious means asking passionately the question of the meaning of our existence and being willing to receive answers, even if the answers hurt." Paul Tillich

Time: Mondays	6:30 – 9:30 pm.	Rm 304
Course Director:	Dr. Sheila Kappler	e-mail: through the course site on OWL
Office Hours:	Mon. 5:30 - 6:15 pm. and by appointment	Office: BR 177

Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to Religious Studies which incorporates the autobiographies and/or biographies of twentieth and twenty-first century men and women representing different religious perspectives and walks of life. It will introduce the student to the theory of religion: its meaning and function in culture and in the lives of individuals.

The life stories of people such as Mohandas Gandhi, Dorothy Day, Elie Wiesel, Oscar Romero, Martin Luther King, Rigoberta Menchu and others will facilitate the exploration of questions such as: What does it mean to be on a religious quest? How do cultural and social influences affect the quest? What experiences are unique to the individual? Are there any experiences that all those on a religious quest share?

Particular phenomena prevalent in the 20th and 21st centuries and relevant to the study of religion will be considered, such as environmental and new-age spiritualities.

The course will draw on written materials, films, lectures and in class and on-line discussions. 3 hours

Requirements:

RS 0011	
forums participation	25%
two in-class tests, @ 10 marks each	20%
presentation	10%
report on research	10%
final exam	35%

RS 1031E	
forums participation	20%
two in-class tests, @ 10 marks each	20%
presentation	10%
report on research	10%
book review	10%
final exam	30%

Required Text: Gary E. Kessler, *Studying Religion: An Introduction Through Cases*. Third Edition. New York: McGraw Hill, 2006. Additional readings will be assigned.