

# **TS 550C ▪ Religions in America**

## **SYLLABUS**

2 Hour Course

### **Description**

This course is a survey of religious groups that claim to be "Christian" but whose theological positions are inconsistent with orthodox Christianity. Historical data about each group and its religious roots as well as a systematic comparison of each group's doctrine as compared to Scripture are emphasized.

### **Objectives**

By taking this course the student will:

1. Compare biblical Christianity with counterfeit religious groups and identify basic differences by practicing critical thinking.
2. Quote from memory verses of Scripture that defend key doctrines of biblical Christianity.
3. Use the library for scholarly research.
4. Distinguish primary sources from secondary sources in order to do the highest quality of documentation.
5. Use the Internet and computer sources for research.
6. Write logically and clearly, according to accepted writing style.
7. Make applications to life from the doctrines studied.

### **Materials**

The following books are required for this course:

*Encyclopedic Dictionary of Cults, Sects, and World Religions*  
Mather, George A, Larry A. Nichols, and Alvin J. Schmidt.  
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2006  
ISBN: 0310239540

*What They Believe*  
Berry, Harold J.  
Lincoln, NE: Back to the Bible, 2006  
ISBN: 0847467007

*Handbook of Today's Religions*  
McDowell, Josh and Stewart, Don  
Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983  
ISBN: 0785212191

*A Pocket Style Manual. 5th edition*  
Hacker, Diana. Boston, MA: Bedford/ St. Martins, 2008  
ISBN: 0312452756

## Learning Experiences

1. Reading *What They Believe*, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Cults, Sects, and World Religions*, and *Handbook of Today's Religions* and answering questions related to the content of these books.
2. Short projects with the first two lessons allowing the student to express his/her testimony and other assignments in written form.
3. Research assignments that teach the student about the resources of the library and how to use its services, especially online sources.
4. Scripture memorization to fortify specific doctrines in order that the student might give a biblical defense of biblical Christianity.
5. Writing a research paper comparing several religions.
6. Writing two research papers, one on the Hindu Religion and one on Islam.

## Grading

Grades will be assessed according to the following criteria:

Textbook reading	27.5%
Short writings	10%
Research	10%
Memorization	10%
Research Papers	42.5%

## Selected Bibliography

The following bibliography has been prepared to enhance further study of this subject. These sources may be used for research projects included in the class.

- Ankerberg, John. *The Secret Teachings of the Masonic Lodge*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1990.
- Ankerberg, John, and Weldon, John. *Cult Watch: What You Need to Know About Spiritual Deception*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Facts on Hinduism*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Facts on the Masonic Lodge*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1988.
- Archer, Gleason. *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982.
- Bickel, Bruce, and Jantz, Stan. *World Religions & Cults 101: A Guide to Spiritual Beliefs*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2002.
- Bjornstad, James. *Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church*. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1984.
- Boa, Kenneth. *Cults, World Religions & the Occult*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1990.
- Boa, Kenneth, and Moody, Larry. *I'm Glad You Asked: In-Depth Answers to Difficult Questions About Christianity*. Colorado Springs, CO: ChariotVictor Publishing, 1994.
- Braswell, George W., Jr. *Understanding Sectarian Groups in America*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994.
- Byers, Dale. *I Left the Lodge*. Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 1989.
- Cairns, Earle E. *Christianity Through the Centuries*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981.

- Caner, Ergun and Caner, Emir. *Unveiling Islam: An Insider's Look at Muslim Life and Beliefs*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2002.
- Carlson, Ron, and Decker, Ed. *Fast Facts on False Teachings*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1994.
- Decker, Ed. *Decker's Complete Handbook on Mormonism*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1995.
- Ehrenborg, Todd. *Mind Sciences: Christian Science, Religious Science, Unity School of Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995.
- Enroth, Ronald, & others. *A Guide to Cults & New Religions*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983.
- Esposito, John L., ed. *The Oxford History of Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Fraser, Gordon H. *Is Mormonism Christian?* Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1977.
- Geisler, Norman L. *The New Age Movement*, Bibliotheca Sacra. Dallas Theological Seminary, January - March 1987.
- Geisler, Norman L., and Amano, J. Yutaka *The Reincarnation Sensation*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1986.
- Geisler, Norman L., and Rhodes, Ron. *Correcting the Cults*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997.
- Geisler, Norman L., and Saleeb, Abdul. *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002.
- Gomes, Alan. *Unitarian Universalism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Unmasking the Cults*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995.
- Groothuis, Douglas R. *Unmasking the New Age*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986.
- Gruss, Edmond C. *Cults and the Occult*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1994.
- Halverson, Dean C., Gen. Ed. *The Compact Guide to World Religions*. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1996.
- Hutchinson, Janis. *The Mormon Missionaries: An Inside Look at Their Real Message and Methods*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1995.
- Johnson, Phillip E. *Reason in the Balance: The Case Against Naturalism in Science, Law & Education*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995.
- Lewis, Gordon R. *Confronting the Cults*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, 1966.
- Magnani, Duane, and Barrett, Arthur. *The Watchtower Files: Dialogue with a Jehovah's Witness*. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1985.
- Martin, Walter. *The Kingdom of the Cults*. Ravi Zacharias, gen. ed. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2003.
- Mather, George A. and Nichols, Larry A. *Masonic Lodge*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995.
- McClain, Alva J. *Freemasonry and Christianity*. Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1979.
- McDowell, Josh and Gilchrist, John. *The Islam Debate*. San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, Inc., 1983.
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- Mead, Frank S., rev. by Samuel Hill. *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995.

- Miller, Elliot. *A Crash Course on the New Age Movement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989.
- Pipes, Daniel. *Militant Islam Reaches America*. New York, NY: W.W, Norton and Company, 2002.
- Reed, David A. *Jehovah's Witnesses Answered Verse by Verse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986.
- Reed, David A., and Farkas, John R. *Mormons Answered Verse by Verse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992.
- Rhodes, Ron. *New Age Movement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Jehovah's Witnesses*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Culting of America*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1994.
- Ridenour, Fritz. *So What's the Difference?* Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1979.
- Robertson, Irvine. *What the Cults Believe*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1991.
- Ryrie, Charles C. *Basic Theology*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1986.
- Safa, Reza. *Inside Islam: Exposing and Reaching the World of Islam*. Orlando, FL: Creation House, 1997.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. *A Christian Manifesto*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1981.
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- Scott, Latayne C. *Why We Left Mormonism: Eight People Tell Their Stories*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990.
- Shorrosh, Anis A. *Islam Revealed: A Christian Arab's View of Islam*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1988.
- Tanner, Jerald, and Tanner, Sandra. *The Changing World of Mormonism: A Behind-the-Scenes Look at Changes in Mormon Doctrine & Practice*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980.
- White, James R. *Letters to a Mormon Elder: Eye-opening Information for the Mormons and Christians Who Talk With Them*. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1993.
- Yamamoto, J. Isamu. *Unification Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995.
- Zacharias, Ravi. *Light in the Shadow of Jihad*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Jesus Among Other Gods: The Absolute Claims of the Christian Message*. Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 2000.

[www.answering-islam.org](http://www.answering-islam.org)

[www.faithfacts.org](http://www.faithfacts.org)

[www.gospelcom.net](http://www.gospelcom.net) (search for organizations and subjects)