

**University of Florida  
Department of Religion  
&  
Center for African Studies**

**Religion and Reform in Africa**

**REL 4936 section 5176**

**REL 5365 section 4913**

**AFS 4935 section 099E**

**AFS 6905 section 01FD**

Instructor: Dr. Terje Ostebo

Course Description

Religion and Reform in Africa is a Gordon Rule course that pays attention to contemporary religious dynamics on the African continent, with a focus is on African Islam, African Christianity, and Traditional African Religions. It discusses the impacts of various Islamic reform movements and of African Pentecostalism, as well as changes within Traditional African Religions. The focus will be on altered religious practices, on groups' and individuals' religiosity, trying to analyze this as phenomena closely intersected with social, political, and economical processes. The course will both deal with general trends in Africa, as well as devote attention to different relevant local cases. It aims to give the students insights to the rich varieties of religious life in contemporary Africa, the ability to critically analyze current religious processes, and to understand the dynamics in relations to religious boundaries, practices, identities.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course you should have an:

- Understanding of Islamic and Christian reform movements; Islamism and Pentecostalism
- Understanding of the current situation for African Traditional Religions
- Understanding of current religious processes' impacts on issues of identity and social structures
- Understanding of how current religious processes impact politics and society
- Understanding of how contemporary reform processes are reciprocally affecting each other
- Understanding of the variety found within African Islam and Christianity

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

The final grade will be determined by the total scored for:

- Attendance (10 %). We will circulate an attendance sheet, which you should sign. Signing for others is considered Academic dishonesty.
- Participation / In-class presentations (15 %)
- 3 Response papers (25 % each)

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Tot	94-	88-	82-	76-	71-	66-	61-	56-	51-	46-	40-	<40
%	100	93	87	81	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	

**Active Participation and In-class presentations:** Students are expected to attend **ALL** classes and participate actively in class discussions. Active and informed participation demands that students **read the material carefully before coming to class**. In-class presentations mean that you do 10-min presentations on selected topics.

**Writing Requirements (Gordon Rule):** The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Course grades now have two components. To receive writing credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. Students must write a minimum of 6,000 words in the course (one double spaced, typed page in 12 point type is 300 words). This written work will be evaluated on the effectiveness, organization, clarity, and coherence of the writing as well as the grammar, punctuation and usage of standard written English.

In practice, each student will write and submit **3 Response Papers** during the course: each with a minimum of 7 pages, double spaced and in 12 point type (see Class Calendar below, for submission-deadlines). These response papers will address key issues and methodological and theoretical questions raised in the readings, lectures and class discussions. Each student will receive individual feedback from the instructor on a submitted draft and on the final submission. Such feedback will address issues with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization. This means that each student will meet with the instructor to discuss the draft, and will receive written evaluations on all final submission before the last class meeting.

*Schedule:*

***1<sup>st</sup> Response paper***

- Draft due Monday 9/17 – at 5pm
- Feedback by Wednesday 9/19
- Final submission due Friday 9/28 – at 5pm
- Feedback by Wednesday 10/3

***2<sup>nd</sup> Response paper***

- Draft due Monday 10/22 – at 5pm
- Feedback by Wednesday 10/24
- Final submission due Friday 11/2 – at 5pm
- Feedback by Wednesday 11/7

***3<sup>rd</sup> Response paper***

- Draft due Monday 11/19 – at 5pm
- Feedback by Wednesday 11/21
- Final submission due Friday 11/30 – at 5pm
- Feedback by Tuesday 12/4

**Course Requirements and Grading Criteria – Graduate Section**

The graduate students will follow the lectures for the course, do the readings for each lecture and submit the assigned papers, yet without submitting drafts. In order to get the course registered as a graduate course, there are, however, you will in addition write one larger research paper to be submitted at the end of the semester. You will choose the topic for the

paper, and will meet with me for supervision: on the selected topic, abstract, and the writing process. The format for this paper will be 12 pp, double spaces in 12 point type.

***Deadline for Grad Research paper: Friday 11/30 – at 5pm***

The final grade will be determined by the total scored for:

- Attendance (10 %). We will circulate an attendance sheet, which you should sign. Signing for others is considered Academic dishonesty.
- Participation / In-class presentations (15 %)
- 3 response papers (15 % each)
- Research paper (30 %)

**Make-ups and Attendance:**

Make-up exams and tests will only be allowed in unavoidable circumstances or for compelling reasons that can be convincingly documented. Similarly, absence(s) will detract points except unavoidable ones proven with satisfactory explanation/documentation.

**Student Honor Code:**

As a UF student, you have agreed to follow the university's Honor Code, meaning you will not give or receive unauthorized assistance in completing assignments. Violations can result in failing an exam, paper or the course. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentrights.php>. On all work submitted for credit by University of Florida students, the following pledge is implied, "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." Please note that acts of plagiarism include:

- Turning in a paper or assignment that was written by someone else.
- Copying verbatim a sentence or paragraph of text from the work of another author without proper citation and quotation marks.
- Paraphrasing or restating in your own words, text or ideas written by someone else without proper citation.

For more info, see <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>

**Disabilities:**

"If you are a student with a disability and would like to request disability-related accommodations, you are encouraged to contact me and the Disability Resource Center as early in the semester as possible. The Disability Resource Center is located in 001 Building 0020 (Reid Hall). Their phone number is 392-8565."

**Literature**

**Books** (for purchase, also placed on course-reserve)

Anderson, Allan. 2001. *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. Trenton: Africa World Press.

An-Na'im, Abdullahi Ahmed. 2009. *Proselytization and Communal Self-Determination in Africa*. Eugene: WIPF & STOCK.

Robinson, David. 2004. *Muslim Societies in African History. New Approaches to African History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Olupona, Jacob K. (ed.) 1991. *African Traditional Religions in Contemporary Society*. New York: Paragon House.

Soares, B. F. & Otayek, R. (eds.). 2007. *Islam and the Muslim Politics in Africa*, New York:

Palgrave Macmillan.

**Articles/Book-chapters** (available on course-reserves)

- Collins, Robert O. & James M. Burns (2007) *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp 40-51; 377-389.
- De Witte, Marleen. 2010. "Transnational Tradition: The Global Dynamics of 'African Traditional Religion.'" In Afe Adogame and James Spickard, *Religion Crossing Boundaries: Transnational Religious and Social Dynamics in Africa and the African Diaspora*. Leiden: Brill. pp 253-275.
- Ikenga-Metuh, Emefie. 1987. "The Shattered Microcosm: A Critical Survey of Explanations of Conversion in Africa", in K. Holst Petersen (ed.) *Religion, Development and African Identity*, Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies. pp. 11-27.
- Loimeier, Roman. 2003. "Patterns and Peculiarities of Islamic Reform in Africa", *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33, 3. pp. 237-262.
- Marchal, Roland. 2009. "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali *Harakat Al-Shabaab*", *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 3, 3. pp. 381-404.
- Marshall, Ruth. 1993. "'Power in the Name of Jesus': Social Transformation and Pentecostalism in Western Nigeria 'Revisited.'" In Terence Ranger and Olufemi Vaughan, *Legitimacy and the State in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Africa*. London: Macmillan Press. pp 213-246.
- Meyer, Birgit. 2004 "Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 33. pp. 447-474.
- Meyer, Birgit. 1998. "Make a Complete Break with the past.' Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse." *Journal of Religion in Africa* Vol. 28, 3. pp 316-349.
- Ogbu, Kalu. 1985. "The Gods in Retreat: Models for Interpreting Religious Change in Africa." In Emefie Ikenga-Metuh, *The Gods in Retreat: Continuity and Change in African Religions*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers. pp 1-17.
- Ostebo, Terje. 2012. *Localising Salafism: Religious Change among Oromo Muslims in Bale, Ethiopia*. Leiden Brill. pp 13-40.
- Turner, S. 2009. "These Young Men Show No Respect for Local Customs – Globalisation and Islamic Revival in Zanzibar", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 39. pp 237-261.
- Umar, Muhammad Sani. 1993. "Changing Islamic Identity in Nigeria from the 1960s to the 1980s: From Sufism to Anti-Sufism." In Louis Brenner, *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. pp 154-178.
- Van Dijk, Rijk. 2001. "Time and Transcultural Technologies of the Self in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora." In Andre Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani, *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. pp 216-234.

**Class Calendar and Reading Schedule**

*Note: This document is subject to change, students are responsible for all changes announced in class.*

**Week 1 (8/22-24): Introduction – course and syllabus**

**Week 2 (8/27-31): Religion and Reform**

Ikenga-Metuh (1987) pp 11-27; Ogbu (1985) pp 1-17; Ostebo (2012) pp 13-40

**Week 3 (9/3-7): Introduction to Africa**

Collins & Burns (2007) pp 40-51, 377-389

**Week 4 (9/10-14): *Islamization of Africa/Africanization of Islam***  
Robinson (2004) pp 3-59

**Week 5 (9/17-21): *Islamic Religious Reform***  
Loimeier (2003) pp 237-262; Umar (1993) pp 154-174

**Week 6 (9/24-28): *Islamic Reform and Politics***  
Soares & Otayek (2007) chapt. 7 & 9; Marchal (2009) pp 381-404

**Week 7 (10/1-5): *Islamic Reform and the Question of Identity***  
Turner (2009) pp 237-261; Soares & Otayek (2007) chapt. 13

**Week 8 (10/8-12): *Western Missions and AIC***  
Anderson (2001) pp 3-67; Film: *Man, God, and Africa*

**Week 9 (10/15-19): *African Pentecostalism – Emergence and Growth***  
Meyer (2004) pp. 447-474; Anderson (2001) pp 167-190

**Week 10 (10/22-26): *African Pentecostalism: Themes and Practices***  
Anderson (2001) pp 217-243; Meyer (1998) pp 316-349

**Week 11 (10/29-11/2): *Christian Reform, Politics, and Society***  
Marshall (1993) pp 213-246; Van Dijk (2001) pp 216-234

**Week 12 (11/5-9): *Reform and Religious Conflicts***  
An-Na'im (2009) chapt. 1; Film: *The Battle for Souls*

**Week 13 (11/12-16): *ATR – Continuity and Change of Religious Concepts***  
Olupona (1991) chapt. 3, 11, 14

**Week 14 (11/20): *ATR, Healing, and Modernity***  
Film: *Healers of Ghana*

**Week 15 (11/26-30): *ATR, and 'World Religions'***  
Anderson (2001) pp 193-216; Olupona (1991) chapt. 10; An-Na'im (2009) chapt. 7

**Week 16 (12/3-5) *ATR – New Representations***  
Olupona (1991) chapt 12 &13; De Witte (2010) pp 253-275