

RELS 201: RELIGION, RACE CREATION, AND COLONIALISM.

Queen's University School of Religion

Taught by: Dr. Ryan Anningson

Prior to World War II, were Buddhist monks working as spies in Detroit? Did Buddhist leaders write letters supporting Hitler's establishment of an Aryan nation? Religion, Race Creation, and Colonialism will focus specifically on the ways in which religion has been used to create distinct racial groupings and develop ideologies which justified colonialism, slavery, and genocide, while simultaneously creating spaces for resistance against these tropes. The course will focus on religion during the primary age of colonialism, roughly 1700-1950, although we will also discuss colonialism today. We will directly question the historical roles of religion and science in the justification of racism and violence, which not only aided imperial projects, but also created space for resistance from colonized people, as well as BIPOC activists in the West. In this course we will utilize primary sources [provided by instructor], as well as secondary research, so that students will gain firsthand knowledge of reading religious literature created to justify violence and racial division. Students will gain skills in interpretation, critical thinking, and the ability to find information using research.

Course Breakdown

The course will be offered asynchronously and remotely. Students will attend regular discussion sessions once per week, with additional material provided through episodic "podcasts" meant to provide historical background and reading synopses. Students will receive a short historical story episode, and a reading synopsis episode to aid in reading the text; students will be expected to discuss this material during meetings. The podcasts are purposefully designed to be brief so that students can listen while driving, working out, or doing other activities. The course will be evaluated through discussion participation, writing reflections, and a final essay.

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Time Commitment per Week

12+
hours

Prerequisite

Level 2

Required Textbook/Materials

No