

FREN 3040.401/COML 3040.401

Religious Conflict in France from Past to Present

Tuesday and Thursday, 1:45-3:15

Instructor

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Hours: TBD



French history, culture, and politics have all been shaped by centuries of religious conflict, theological controversy, and civil strife. In many ways, Frenchness has always been defined against some kind of religious and/or ethnic Other: heretics, protestants, Jews, or Muslims. At the same time, however, France's unique religious environment has given rise to some of the most important thought on tolerance. What gave rise to these conflicting tendencies, and how can understanding the history of French religious conflict give us perspective on issues in contemporary France?

In this course, we will attempt to answer these questions by studying a series of key historical events and episodes from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century and the present day: the Seventh and Eighth Crusades under Louis IX in the thirteenth century, the travels of Jean de Mandeville in the mid-fourteenth century, the Wars of Religion and French encounters with indigenous peoples in the Americas during the sixteenth century, Molière's *Tartuffe* and conflict between free-thinking and religious orthodoxy enforced by Catholic confraternities and their prominent role in politics and society under Louis XIV in the seventeenth century, Voltaire's

conception of religious tolerance in the wake of the “Affaire Calas” in the 1760’s, the “Affaire Dreyfus” (1894-1906) and antisemitism in modern France, and contemporary controversies over religion (particularly Islam) and the public sphere. In addition to discussion-based class meetings, the course will feature visits from specialists working on the materials to be studied as well as visits to the Kislak Center for Rare Books, Special Collections, and Manuscripts to examine original materials, including the Lorraine Beitler Collection of the Dreyfus Affair. All readings, discussions, and assignments are in French.

This course counts toward the Minor in Global Medieval and Renaissance Studies.

Course Materials

Available through the Penn Bookstore

- Molière, *Le Tartuffe* (ISBN: 9782035859174)
- Jean-Paul Sartre, *Réflexions sur la question juive* (ISBN: 978-2070322879)
- Voltaire, *Traité sur la tolérance* (ISBN: 978-2-08-070552-0)

If at all possible, versions of these texts will be made available in online format, either as digital editions or as scans for the course reserve. However, the library may be unable to procure digital versions of the same editions. As such, students are strongly encouraged to acquire physical copies of the specified editions.

All other readings will be available on Canvas.

Recommended reference works

- *Le Robert & Collins Dictionnaire Français-Anglais/Anglais-Français*, or a similar unabridged or college-level dictionary
- Le dictionnaire libre de TV5 (<http://dictionnaire.tv5.org/dictionnaire>)
- A French grammar manual like *Nouvelle grammaire du français* (Hachette) or *Grammaire expliquée du français* (CLE International)
- Le Conjugueur du *Figaro* (<http://leconjugueur.lefigaro.fr/>)

Important documents available on Canvas

- Explanations of the *passé simple* and other literary past tenses (under *Course Documents*)
- A list of literary terms and figures to use in discussions and writing (*Course Documents*)
- An explanation of French versification, or how to read a poem in French (*Course Documents*)

Grades

Attendance and participation: 25%

Discussion posts: 25%

Presentations: 20%

Essay: 30%

Attendance and participation

Students are expected to attend and participate in all class meetings, which will be devoted to discussion of the assigned reading for that day. These discussions will take the discussion threads and students' responses as a point of departure.

To receive full credit for participation, you must make at least one relevant contribution to the discussion. If you are unable to attend a meeting for any reason, please contact the instructor ASAP so that the absence can be excused.

Discussion posts

Starting in Week 2, students must post to the discussion thread on Canvas for each class meeting.

To get full credit for this assignment, you must choose one of two options for each class session:

1) You can generate your own comment, question, clarification, or appraisal with a thoughtful explanation for your reaction and react to a peer's comment (agree, disagree, expand, support, etc.).

2) Alternatively, you can react to two of your peers' comments.

Each of your two contributions should be in French and between 100 and 200 words. They must be submitted no later than 10:00 AM on the day they are due.

For each class session, points will be awarded as follows:

- Annotations or discussion posts meet the above guidelines and are submitted on time: 5
- Annotations or discussion posts are submitted late or do not meet the guidelines: 3
- No annotations submitted: 0 points

Presentations

During the last week of class, each student will give a 5-10 minute presentation on a work studied during the course of the semester. This presentation is meant to be a first step toward the final essay, and questions and feedback received from the instructor and fellow students should be taken on board for the writing of the first draft. Presentations will be graded on both content and delivery, and visual aids (e.g. handouts or PowerPoint slides), while not necessary, are highly encouraged.

Essay

Students will write one essay, 6-10 pages long (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12). This will be an analytical essay on a work studied in the course; you will be given a list of possible topics for analysis for both compositions, but you may write on a topic of your choosing, as well. Students will first submit a draft of the essay that will be reviewed by the professor and by a fellow student in a guided peer review exercise. They will then revise the essay accordingly and submit the final version to be graded. Satisfactory performance in the peer review of a fellow student's paper will factor into the final grade.