

**J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College
Course Content Summary**

Course Prefix and Number: REL 240

Credits: 3

Course Title: Religions in America

Course Description (including lecture hours, lab hours, total contacts)

Surveys various manifestations of religion in the American experience. Emphasizes concepts, problems, and issues of religious pluralism and character of American religious life. Examines the role of religion in America with particular emphasis on religion in contemporary America. Includes the history, beliefs, and practices of the world's major religions in America, as well as an examination of new religious developments. Examines the relationship between American religion and American identity, the rise of civil and cultural religion, and the role of religion in public policy and American culture. Lecture 3 hours per week.

General Course Purpose

The purpose of this course is to educate students about the unique role of religion in American history and the diversity of religion that grew out of our founding documents. This course is intended to educate and engage students in the diversity of religion represented in America and to understand how religion continues to play an important role both internally and externally as part of a globalized approach to the curriculum. *Special Note: This course will provide a valuable elective option in the Humanities and Social Sciences.*

Course Prerequisites/Corequisites (Entry-level competencies **required** for enrollment)

Prerequisite: ENG 111; Corequisite: ENG 112

Course Objectives (Each item should complete the following sentence.)

Upon completing the course, the student will be able to:

- ❖ Understand the role of religion in the founding of America
- ❖ Understand the diversity of religion in America throughout its history
- ❖ Understand the relationship between American religion and American identity
- ❖ Understand civil and cultural religion
- ❖ Understand and appreciate religious pluralism
- ❖ Examine the role of religion in public policy and American culture

Major Topics to be Included

- ❖ Role of religion among Native American and early evangelism and missionary work during the age of exploration
- ❖ Role of religion in American's founding
- ❖ History, beliefs, and practices of world's major religion in America
- ❖ History, beliefs, and practices of Metaphysics in America, including witchcraft, new thought, spiritualism, and theosophy
- ❖ African-American religion
- ❖ American religion and American identity
- ❖ New religions of the nineteenth century
- ❖ Civil and cultural religion
- ❖ Religious pluralism
- ❖ Religion, public policy, and American culture

Effective Date of Course Content Summary (Month, Date Year): Fall 2009