

North American Gods 86: 254

Brandon University

Moodle link: <https://moodle.brandonu.ca/mod/folder/edit.php>

Moodle Key:

Instructor: Alison Marshall

Telephone: 204-727-7322

Email: marshalla@brandonu.ca

Library guide for off-campus services: <http://libguides.brandonu.ca/c.php?g=315033>

Academic Skills Centre: <https://www.brandonu.ca/student-services/academic-skills/>

Writing Skills (See Services for Students with workshops and drop-in times):

<https://www.brandonu.ca/student-services/academic-skills/writing-skills/>

Voluntary Withdrawal Deadline: November 19, 2018

Course trailer: <https://vimeo.com/284967286>

Course Description:

This course explores the significance of religion and divinity in everyday North American life. From Norse, Christian, Buddhist, Vodou, Daoist, pagan and ancestral gods and spirits to leprechauns, fairies, saints, superheroes of the Marvel universe and beyond, this course examines everyday divinity as well as the beliefs and devotional practices of North Americans within the context of migration and culture.

Statement of "Fair Warning": In this course students examine self/other identities from an interactionist perspective. As a part of this work, students will be asked to examine their own identities and their relations to others. Topics will include (but are not limited to) atheism, secularity, religion, culture, belief, practice, myth, suffering and divinity. Students may find the worldviews and/or practices discussed in class, required readings, or required research personally offensive, disturbing or otherwise troubling. Any student not wishing to undertake this work should contact the instructor immediately so that enrollment in an alternative course more in keeping with the student's interest can be facilitated.

Required text:

Neil Gaiman, *American Gods*. NY: Harper Collins, 2001 (Any edition is fine). Please ensure that you read the entire book before the final exam. (A copy is also on reserve in library and available for 2 hour loan).

Additional readings to be assigned as noted in the weekly lecture schedule.

Required viewing:

- **Bryan Fuller and Michael Green, "American Gods,"** Television Series, Season 1, selections (Amazon Prime/on reserve BU).
- **South Park, The Spirit of Christmas (Jesus vs. Santa)** <https://vimeo.com/149917416>
- **Family Guy, Peter gets tricked by Jesus**
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muSmsqFyltY>
- **American Dad, Rapture's Delight Part 01**
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hskOfIRZdbg>
- **American Dad, Roger on Christianity:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hskOfIRZdbg>

Grading Scheme:

Class Participation 10%

Viewing Responses 10%

Book Review 20%

Summaries 30%

Presentation 30%

Please note: there is no final exam in this course

Responses to viewing (10% - 9 responses (episodes worth 1% and the film response worth 2%) must be relatively free of typos, coherent, and identify the plot, religious themes, North American gods and personal reflections on each episode and one film assigned in week 10). All responses must be submitted by end of term. Responses are required for viewing episodes in week 2, week 4 (two), week 5, week 6, Week 7, week 8 (two), and the film in week 10.

Book Review 20%. Due by October 25.

Book review should be 3-4 typed (hand-written submissions will not be accepted), double-spaced text pages in 12pt Calibri font with one-inch margins and following the Chicago Manual of Style

(http://ezproxy.brandonu.ca:80/login?url=http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citation_guide.html). Please consider looking at the Owl Perdue guide to Chicago:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>. See the Library Citation Guide as well: <http://libguides.brandonu.ca/citations/chicagostyle>.

The title page, and bibliography do not count towards the page limit. Do not number your title page. A list of books you could review is appended to this syllabus.

NO EXTENSIONS (although late assignments will be accepted, with a late penalty; see Notes below for late penalty policy). Submitted via Moodle.

Book reviews will include:

- 1) a complete citation of the book under review--all in proper form following the Chicago Manual of Style. There are two Chicago Styles: Notes and Bibliography and Author-

Date. This confuses students often. I'd like you to use the Author-Date parenthetical style (<http://ezproxy.brandonu.ca:80/login?url=http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/>)

- 2) introductory statement;
- 3) information about the author;
- 4) statement of the purpose of the book/nature of the work;
- 5) summary of content--this is an overview stressing the main ideas and arguments employed by the author;
- 6) critique--an assessment of the work in terms of its content and style and relationship to ecstatic and or extraordinary experience, and an evaluation of its relevancy or usefulness in relation to the course topic. Select sentences from the book that express your points and include at least 5 citations in the review from the book. You should point out both positive and negative aspects of the book;
- 7) concluding statement.

Aim for two citations (aka references or material referencing other sources) from the book per page. There are two Chicago styles for citations: Notes and Bibliography and Author-Date. This confuses students often. I'd like you to use the Author-Date parenthetical style (<http://ezproxy.brandonu.ca/login?url=http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/>)

Proofread for grammatical and spelling errors. Ensure that the document is in proper form following the Chicago Manual of Style. Consult the style guide to ensure proper form.

DO NOT PLAGIARIZE: Plagiarism is a serious academic offence that consists of presenting either someone else's actual words or someone else's ideas as your own. **REFERENCE YOUR SOURCES CONSISTENTLY THROUGHOUT.** Plagiarism: Please consult the university policy on plagiarism, section 3.13 of the academic calendar:

<http://calendar.brandonu.ca:8080/servlet/calendar?book=ugrad2008&key=61718&full=>

Summaries 30%

Three summaries written during one hour of class time, and worth 10 percent each. Summaries are scheduled to be written **October 4, October 25 and November 29** following the lecture for that week. The purpose of the summary is to allow you to synthesize material covered every three or four weeks of the course. While the first summary focusses on just a few weeks of material, the second and third summaries are cumulative and require you to synthesize larger volumes of material.

Presentation 30% (last two classes of term)

Presentations offer the class a glimpse of a topic, not covered in class, and from a different perspective than the instructor's. The presentation is based on research you do at the library or using other types of textual, visual or audio media. If you are not interested in doing traditional research (using secondary sources from the library or from full text databases) you could do your presentation on something like religion in South Park episodes. This is just one example of many topics you could choose. You would work with me to determine the number of episodes you would

watch and the method you would use to analyze the episodes and come up with your own conclusion. Either way students must discuss their presentation topic with me in advance and have that topic approved no later than two weeks before the presentation date.