

# ARCH CITY RELIGION

## Religious Life and Practice in St. Louis



Saint Louis is among the most religiously diverse cities in the American Midwest. It boasts mighty cathedrals, towering minarets, synagogues old and modern, extravagant temples, humble storefronts, and endless domestic shrines, altars, and prayer corners. The sounds of the city and county are pierced with voices in song, protest, and prayer. The story of the city—from empire, settlement, enslavement, and immigration, through civil rights, manufacturing, the arts, and, of course, beer and baseball—is intimately wound up with communities of faith, religious practices, and the power of religious thought.

### Course Description

This course places the religious life of St. Louis at the center of the city's history, civic landscape, and public life. While anchored in the local context, the course engages a wide range of global religious traditions and diasporic communities in the city as well as the intersections of local, regional, and global issues, identities, and politics. As such, many of our readings and conversations come directly from the local context, while others explore themes and issues in the study of religion that address religious life and practice in the metro through comparison with other locations.

In addition to the instructional content of this course, students will conduct independent and team research, using ethnographic, archival, and digital methods, in order to create visual and audio storytelling projects that explore local religion and culture.

**DR. RACHEL MCBRIDE LINDSEY**

Saint Louis University

Spring 2019

**THEO 2700**

T-Th 9:30-10:45am || Brouster 040

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@archcityreligion || #archcityreligion || [www.archcityreligion.org](http://www.archcityreligion.org)

## Learning Objectives

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By the end of the semester, students will:

- Identify the history of religious communities and traditions in St. Louis and its environs
- Demonstrate proficiency with key concepts in cultural analyses of urban religion
- Develop competencies with ethnographic, archival, and digital research methods
- Examine local history and culture through the Ignatian paradigm of experience, reflection, and action

## Required Texts

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Matthew John Cressler, *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic: The Rise of Black Catholicism in the Great Migration* (NYU, 2017) ISBN 9781479880966

Katie Day and Edd Conboy, *Faith on the Avenue: Religion on a City Street* (Oxford, 2014) ISBN 9780199860029

Robert A. Orsi, *Gods of the City* (Indiana UP, 1999) ISBN 9780253212764

All other assigned readings are available in the reading folder on Blackboard. All readings are required and should be read actively in advance of class on the day they appear on the syllabus.



## Course Requirements and Grading

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This course is graded out of a semester total of 500 points. Please create a shared Google folder labeled THEO 2700 S19 [SURNAME Firstname] where you will organize and submit your semester work portfolio.

1) **Attendance and Participation** (50 points)

Active, prepared, and respectful attendance is critical to your successful completion of this course. 2 unexcused absences will result in a loss of 10 points; 3 or more unexcused absences result in the loss of all A&P points

2) **Class Case Study** (50 points)

For this assignment, the class will choose a site to observe, document, reflect, and analyze “lived religion” in St. Louis. Working in teams, the class will produce audio and visual content, textual descriptions, and historical information about the site.

Complete the required [Human Subjects Social/Behavioral Research Training](#). (20 points)

3) **Field Journal** (100 points)

Due Tuesday, 4/23. Throughout the semester, you will keep a field journal of sites we visit (journals will be distributed on the first day of class). I will collect them at midterms and again at the end of the semester, but it is your responsibility to keep up with your notes. I recommend using both a physical journal that you can take with you on class and personal visits to area religious spaces and regularly transcribing your notes electronically for better organization of subheadings and metadata.

In general, researchers use field journals to record two classes of information: their descriptions and their reactions. It is important to keep these notes distinct from one another. Your journals are not essays and do not need to be polished writing, but you should strive to be thorough in both your descriptions and in your reactions (see Guidelines).

4) **Audio Storytelling Portfolio** (150 points)

a) Sounds of St. Louis (50 points)

**Sound files DUE 3/26 by 3pm.** Through this assignment, you have the opportunity to contribute to the American Religious Sounds Project, a research initiative through the Ohio State University that seeks to understand religion in the U.S. through sound. Throughout the semester, we will be attending to sound as a mode of religious experience, practice, and research. You and your semester partner will select four sites (including at least one interview) to record while practicing responsible research methods. At least two of your sites should not be class visits.

Your Sounds of St. Louis reports must include the following data and metadata:

- Recording:
  - 30 seconds to 2 minutes of edited sound
  - raw footage of your sound
- Full written citation of the site, including location, time of day, religion/denomination, space classification, and sound type.
- A brief, 1-2 paragraph contextual analysis of your site and sound.
- Completion of provided metadata Google form in class on 4/4.

b) Podcast (100 points)

**Due Tuesday, 4/18 in class.** After reading assigned sections of Cressler's *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic*, create an 8-10 minute podcast with your semester partner (using skills developed in workshops) that addresses the book's key arguments and applies it to religious life and culture in St. Louis. You are encouraged to use content from your Sounds of St. Louis project in the podcast. Practice writing a script, recording audio, inserting appropriately licensed audio content, and editing with Adobe Audition or other software. Include a brief producer's statement that narrates your creation process and editorial decisions.

5) **Final Creative Project: Visual or Audio Storytelling** (150 points)

For your semester assignment, you will work with a team and choose one of two options:

Audio Storytelling: Your group may opt to create an audio product (podcast, album, spoken word media, etc.) on some aspect of religious life and/or practice in St. Louis. The final product will be evaluated by creativity, quality, and intellectual content. You may build from but not replicate your Audio Storytelling Portfolio.

Visual Storytelling: Your group may opt to create a visual product (photojournalistic essay, documentary, gallery exhibit, etc.) on some aspect of religious life and/or practice in St. Louis. The will be evaluated by creativity, quality, and intellectual content.

*Final Project Timeline:*

Meet with Dr. Lindsey (25 points): Schedule one meeting with Dr. Lindsey before 2/14 to discuss your ideas for your project, and one meeting before 4/4 to discuss your progress.

Proposal (25 points): Due 2/15 by 5pm. Identify your topic, storytelling method, research question, and plan for research.

Sources/bibliography (25 points): Due 3/22 by 5pm. Identify at least 8 sources that you will use in your project. At least 4 of these must be primary sources.

Draft (25 points): Due in class 4/23. This draft must be a penultimate, or next to last, draft of your final project. It should be mostly complete and ready for feedback on the final stretch.

Final product (50 points): 4/30 in class. Time to celebrate! We will have an exhibit of class projects in class. Your projects should be ready to share. (Note, we may use this time for fine tuning if time in the schedule allows—in any case, projects should be ready for presentation or final polishing.)

## Grading Scale

Grades in the A range represent exceptional work; grades in B range represent very good work with some minor errors of grammar, fact, or style; grades in C range represent acceptable work that meets the basic criteria of a given assignment; grades in D range represent work that does not meet the basic criteria of a given assignment; failing grades apply to work that falls well below the criteria of an assignment, work that is plagiarized, and work that is late (among other instances of inadequate performance or breaches of the honor code).

Make sure you understand the expectations of each assignment well in advance of the deadline. Remember to cite your sources and *only submit your own original work*.

A:	470-500	C:	370-384
A-:	450-469	C-:	350-369
B+:	435-449	D+:	335-349
B:	420-434	D:	320-334
B-:	400-419	D-:	300-319
C+:	385-399	F:	<300

## Course Policies

### Technology:

This class requires use of free, publically available software and university-provided hardware. Every effort will be made to supply the equipment needed to conduct your research and complete your assignments. Audio recording equipment and cameras are provided through Saint Louis University, through a gift of the Ohio State University, and through a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation. Any equipment you check out is your responsibility to return promptly and in the condition in which it was loaned. Any theft, loss, or damage must be reported immediately.

If you do not have a personal laptop or computer, or if you choose not to use your device for these projects, Saint Louis University's instructional media center in Pius library is an excellent resource to utilize. We will spend time in the labs as a class and you are also free to reserve meeting spaces for small group or individual work throughout the semester.

Technology makes many aspects of academic work more efficient, but it can also break down, become interrupted, or otherwise fail. In most instances, technological disruptions are not acceptable excuses for late

work. Back up your work often and leave yourself enough time to respond to any hiccups. Back up your work often on university-provided cloud subscriptions as well as to accessible local drives.

### Email

I do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours of receipt. Emails received after 8pm will likely not be read until the following day. If an emergency arises and you need to reach me immediately, you may call the Theology Department office at 977-2881.

When corresponding with professors, supervisors, officials, or other professionals on campus and in your career, please make it your habit to address the recipient formally according to their title (Dr., Professor, Ms., Mr., Esq., etc.) and to follow standard rules of grammar, syntax, and structure. A good rule of thumb is to use the title on the syllabus. I may or may not respond to correspondence that does not follow these standards.

### Assignment Submissions:

**I do not accept late work.** Unless otherwise noted, all assignments must be shared/posted in your folder or loaded to Blackboard by the published deadline.

Every assignment must include your name, the date, the assignment name or title, and, if written, page numbers. *I will not grade papers or assignments that do not have these basic elements.* Use 12-point font, double-spaced formatting, and 1-inch margins on all written academic work. Double-check your work for spelling and grammatical errors before submitting.

### Academic Honesty:

Only submit your own original work. This is a fun class and you will have ample opportunity to be creative—don't channel your creativity into nefarious actions.

I am your advocate as well as a resource. If you are struggling with the class, starting to feel overwhelmed, something comes up or happens, or you are just burnt out, come see me first. For the official SLU policy on academic integrity follow this link: <http://www.slu.edu/college-of-arts-and-sciences-home/undergraduate-education/academic-honesty>. The Student Success Center is also a great campus resource for all stages of learning: <http://www.slu.edu/student-success-center>.

### Civility:

We are going to be discussing some hefty topics in this course. Please remember to respect your classmates and their point of view. Vigorous debate may occur, and at times will be encouraged—we learn, after all, through exposure to new ideas and experiences. You don't have to agree with everyone—authors, each other, me—all the time but please work to critique ideas and statements rather than malign or impugn the people raising them.

## UNIT 1: GODS OF THE CITY

### Week 1: Orientations

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- T 1/15: Introductions
- Th 1/17: Michel DeCerteau, “Walking in the City,” *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 91-110  
“[A Brief History of St. Louis](#)”  
Walking Tour (weather permitting)

### Week 2: Imagining and Encountering the City

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- T 1/22: Ben Looker, *A Nation of Neighborhoods*, Introduction + Chapter 1  
“[Neighborhood Histories](#),” *StLouis-MO.gov*  
Site visit: Gateway Arch
- Th 1/24: Eric Sandweiss, *St. Louis*, Chapter 5  
Explore “[Mapping Decline](#),” Colin Gordon, University of Iowa

### Week 3: Religions In/Of the City

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- T 1/29: Orsi, *Gods of the City*, 1-13 + assigned section of introduction  
Omar McRoberts, “Birth of the Black Religious District,” in *Streets of Glory*, 16-43
- Th 1/31: **Photographing Religion**  
Guest speaker: Lauren Pond, award-winning photojournalist and author

### Week 4: Workshop Week 1: Visual and Audio Storytelling as Religious Studies

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- T 2/5: Day and Conboy, *Faith on the Avenue Introduction* + assigned chapter  
In-class: *The Big City* (1956)
- Th 2/7: Spencer Miller, “Radio and Religion” (1935)  
“St. Louis University Radio Service” (1922)  
“Communications: Broadcasting Catholic Doctrine,” *America*, June 14, 1924  
James Andean, “Toward an Ethics of Creative Sound”  
Michael J. Altman, “Podcasting Religious Studies”

### Week 5: Documenting Religion Case Study

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- T 2/12 Site Visit
- Th 2/14: Creating a Digital Story  
**\*\*\*Semester Project Proposals Due by 5pm\*\*\***

## UNIT 2: RELIGIONS IN AND OF ST. LOUIS

### Week 6: “A City of Steeples”

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- T 2/19: Thomas Tweed, “Diasporic Nationalism and Urban Landscape: Cuban Immigrants at a Catholic Shrine in Miami,” in *Gods of the City*, 131-154  
“[When the Saints Came Marching In](#)’: Mormon History in St. Louis, 1831-2017,” Deseret News, June 2, 2017.
- Th 2/21: Sounds of St. Louis Project Time

### Week 7: Jews in the City

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- T 2/26: Lila Corwin Berman, “Jews and the American City,” *Metropolitan Jews*, 1-17
- Th 2/28: **Site visit: Meet at Central Reformed Congregation (CWE)**

### Week 8: Buddhists and Hindus in the Heartland

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- T 3/5: Joanne Punzo Waghorne, “The Hindu Gods in a Split-Level World: The Sri Siva-Vishnu Temple in Suburban Washington, D.C.,” *Gods of the City*, 103-130
- Th 3/7: Jeff Wilson, *Dixie Dharma: Inside a Buddhist Temple in the American South*, skim introduction + read chapter 5

\*\*\*\*\*SPRING BREAK\*\*\*\*\*  
3/12-3/14

- Read: Cressler, *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic: The Rise of Black Catholicism in the Great Migration*, Introduction + at least two more chapters.
- Watch: [“St. Alphonsus ‘the Rock’ Catholic Church,” Living St. Louis \(2008\)](#)
- Create: With your Sounds of St. Louis partner(s), create a 5-7 minute podcast about Cressler’s book that explores it’s contribution to understanding St. Louis religious history and/or culture. Practice writing a script, recording audio, inserting appropriately licensed audio content, and editing with Adobe Audition (available in Pius Library Media Commons). Include a brief written producer’s statement that narrates your creation process and editorial decisions. Draft due in class 3/21.

### Week 9: Muslims along the Mississippi

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- T 3/19: “Twenty Years of Bosnian Identity in St. Louis and in the Homeland,” St. Louis on the Air, April 11, 2013:  
<http://news.stpublicradio.org/post/twenty-years-bosnian-identity-st-louis-and-homeland>  
“America’s Hidden Muslims,” *BBC Magazine*, October 2016  
“Fully Half of the Area’s Muslims are Bosnians,” St. Louis Public Radio, March 27, 2014



“Saint Louis Muslim Women: One Religion, Many Cultures,” St. Louis Public Radio, March 27, 2014

“[Spray-paint artist shakes up Benton Park restaurant with Renaissance-like mural](#),” St. Louis Post-Dispatch, April 14, 2017.

Th 3/21: Sounds of St. Louis Project Time (No class)  
**\*\*\*Semester Project works consulted due\*\*\***

### **Week 10: Cardinals Nation**

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T 3/26 Gary Laderman, *Sacred Matters* (New York: The New Press, 2009), 43-62.  
Laderman, “Is Baseball Sacred?” *Huffington Post* (2013).  
David Walstein, “An Incubator of Baseball Talent,” *New York Times* (October 20, 2011).  
“Cardinals: Why are there Christian Symbols on the Field at Busch Stadium?” *Riverfront Times* (June 25, 2013).  
“Cardinals Manager Mike Matheny on Baseball, Manhood, and Faith,” *The Gospel Coalition*, interview (February 2014).  
Christina Settimi, “The Best Fans in Baseball,” *Forbes* (March 25, 2015).  
Maury Brown, “The Insane Holy War Over Flat Brims in Baseball,” *Forbes* (August 17, 2015).

**\*\*\*Sounds of St. Louis Sound Files Due\*\*\***

Th 3/28: NO CLASS: EASTER BREAK 3/28-4/1

### **Week 11: The Veiled Prophet**

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T 4/2: Chad Seales, *The Secular Spectacle: Performing Religion in a Southern Town* (Oxford, 2013), 1-20, 66-86  
Scott Beachamp, “The Mystery of St. Louis’s Veiled Prophet,” *The Atlantic*, September 2, 2014.  
“History,” Veiled Prophet Organization, website, [www.veiledprophet.org](http://www.veiledprophet.org)

Th 4/4: Complete Sounds of St. Louis metadata forms + podcast discussion in class.

### **Week 12: Religion on Display**

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T 4/9: Self-guided tour of SLUMA (complete gallery walk assignment for credit)

Th 4/11: S. Brent Plate, *Religion in Museums*, Introduction  
Lauren Turek, “Religious History Objects in Museums,” in *Religion in Museums*  
Judith Weisenfeld, “Religion on Display at the National Museum of African American History and Culture,” *Sacred Matters*



## UNIT 3: PROJECTS

### **Week 13: Sounds of St. Louis**

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- T 4/16: Podcast Time  
Th 4/18: Share Your Sounds: Podcasts Due

### **Week 14: Semester Projects**

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- T 4/23: Field Journals Due + Project Drafts Due in Class  
Th 4/25: Project Time

### **Week 15: It's a Wrap!**

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- T 4/30: Project Time: Fine Tuning + Discussion  
Th 5/2: Exhibit of Semester Projects