

THE OREGON EXTENSION

COURSE OFFERINGS & SAMPLE TOPICS OF STUDY

The Oregon Extension fall semester is divided into four month-long segments of study. Students choose one course as their focus for each segment. Course descriptions are expressed in very general terms in order to honor our courses' interdisciplinary character as well as their individualized, guided-study format, allowing maximum flexibility in meeting both students' true interests and scholarly discipline.

This booklet offers examples of the kinds of topics chosen by OE students in the past. The possibilities are limited only by the course you need for your academic program, and your own imagination for what topics of study that course might include.

Segment One: The Natural World

(Credit: 4 semester hours. Choose one)

HIST 395 OE – Selected Issues in Contemporary World History

SOC 395 OE – Selected Issues in Contemporary Social Criticism

An introduction to major issues in American environmentalism and naturalism, focusing on the historical development of environmental attitudes and the sociological impact of growing cultural interest in the environment.

Note: Only this first segment does not have an individualized research component. During these first weeks, we gain experience in careful reading, note-taking and small group discussion. Books used for this segment in recent years include the following:

- Roderick Nash, *Wilderness in the American Mind*
- Michael Lewis, ed., *American Wilderness: A New History*
- Michael Pollan, *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education*
- Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*
- Donald Worster, *A Passion for Nature: The Life of John Muir*
- Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*
- John McPhee, *Encounters with the Archdruid*
- William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*
- Ellen Ruppel Shell, *Cheap: The High Cost of Discount Culture*
- Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River*
- Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

Segment Two: The Social World

(Credit: 3 semester hours. Choose one.)

ART 396 OE– Topics in the Intersection of Art and Society

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines, and a research project examining the role of the fine arts in reflecting and/or shaping the social realities of a particular locale and period in world history.

- Theories in photography: Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes, John Berger
- Art criticism through the lens of justice: the essays of John Berger
- Suzanne Lacy's 'Mapping the Terrain': emerging criticism in public and community art
- Christopher Alexander's human-centered architecture
- Art as a social force in the 1930s
- Hieronymus Bosch and the apocalyptic imagination
- Outside Art and populist vision

BIST 396 OE – Selected Social Issues in Biblical Perspective

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining biblical texts relevant to current social issues and helpful in understanding the underlying dynamics of human society.

- Genesis and theories of social contract
- Rene Girard and the scapegoating mechanism in scripture
- God and human violence in Habbakuk
- Brother narratives in Genesis
- Biblical views of homosexuality
- Women and Jesus in the Gospels
- The meaning of the city in biblical perspective
- Christian community in the New Testament

COMM 396 OE - Topics in the Relationship of Society and Human Communications

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the role of human communications in reflecting and/or shaping the social realities of a particular locale and period in world history.

- Brandscaping and the accessorizing of identities
- Electronic media and the disappearance of childhood
- The military and the media in the Iraq War
- The original TV critics: Marshall McLuhan and Neil Postman
- Susan Sontag: Images and the pain of others
- A Journalism of Empathy: John Howard Griffin, Alex Kotlowitz, Adrienne LeBlanc
- How media shapes women's body images and experiences
- Electronic social media and the bonds of community

EDU 396 OE – Topics in Educational Theory and Practice

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining theories and practices of selected educational thinkers or movements, with special concern for their insights into or reflections upon the dynamics of contemporary social life, and their implications for social change.

- The revolutionary pedagogy of Paulo Freire
- Inner city adolescents in the public schools
- Educational controversies: boys and girls in the classroom
- The role of athletics in the educational system
- How working class culture shapes children's educational aspirations
- Allan Bloom on the closing of the American mind

LIT 396 OE – Literary Perspectives on Society

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining a specific writer or writers in a literary period or genre, with special concern for their insights into the shape and meaning of their own social milieu and human society in general.

- Literature of the American West: Edward Abbey, William Kittredge, Cormac McCarthy
- Toni Morrison: literary theory in her novels
- The social vision of Wendell Berry
- Post-colonial women writers: exploring justice through novels
- Walker Percy: death as social principle
- Virginia Woolf: from “A Room of Her Own” to “Three Guineas”
- Commodification of the body in Chuck Palahniuk
- Family relationships in David Duncan’s *The Brothers K*
- Nick Hornby and the isolated self

HIST 396 OE – Selected Topics in Social Thought in Historical Perspective

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the contributions of selected social, economic, or political thinkers to an understanding of contemporary social life and the nature of social change.

- Founding visions: Marx, Weber and Durkheim
- Fuel for the 1960s: Christopher Lasch, Philip Slater, C. Wright Mills
- The Frankfurt School of Social Theory
- Simone de Beauvoir: othering and freedom
- Jacques Ellul and the technological society
- Peter Berger and neo-capitalism
- African-American social thought: W. E. B. DuBois, Malcolm X, Cornel West, bell hooks
- Second- and third-wave feminism: where we are now
- Rene Girard and violence in mimetic theory

PHIL 396 OE – Selected Social Issues in Philosophical Perspective

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the ways selected philosophers have thought about specific social issues or human society in general.

- Susan Bordo: construction of the body in capitalist consumerism
- Kierkegaard’s “simple life”
- Emmanuel Levinas’ approach to the “other”
- Hegel’s “Philosophy of Right”
- Buddhist mindfulness as a path to social engagement
- Simone Weil: social “affliction” and the “need for roots”
- Paul Ricoeur and the ethics of oneself as another
- Charles Taylor on the emergence of secularism

POL 396 OE – Topics in the History of Political Thought

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining theories of selected political thinkers as to the dynamics of human political organization and the implications of their theoretical perspectives for political change.

- Radical Muslim political writing
- Women and development in the third world
- International responses to genocide in Cambodia, Rwanda and Bosnia
- Michael Novak on democratic capitalism
- John Kenneth Galbraith and the liberal society
- Reinhold Niebuhr’s political thought
- Veiling and unveiling: the meaning of the veil in Muslim and western culture
- Postdating the origins of modernity: Oliver O’Donovan
- How do institutions think? Hugh Heclo and Robert Bellah

PSYC 396 OE– Selected Social Issues in Psychological Perspective

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the ways selected psy-chological theorists have thought about specific social issues and human society in general.

- The rise of a “second family” in adolescent culture
- Exploring male violence through object relations theory
- D. W. Winnicott and “good enough” mothering
- Carol Gilligan: development of self and voice in adolescent girls
- Consumerism and the addictive society
- Eating disorders: understanding a cultural epidemic
- Changing historical meanings of masculinity
- Psychological effects of poverty

ENVS 396 OE – Topics in the Relationship of Science and Society

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the place of science in the contemporary world and the scientific method in contemporary thought, with special attention to the impact of science and technology on social and natural environments.

- The deep ecology movement
- Animal rights
- Ecofeminism
- Wendell Berry and the new agrarianism
- Water conflicts in the Klamath Basin
- The ethics of genetic manipulation
- E. O. Wilson and sociobiology
- The environmental justice movement
- Yi-Fu Tuan's cultural geography of place
- John Muir & the American wilderness movement
- The American lawn
- Native American environmental history

SOC 396 OE– Topics in the Study of Society

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the contributions of selected social thinkers to an understanding of the dynamics of human social life and the nature of specific social issues.

- Emile Durkheim & founding concepts of sociology
- Globalization and its discontents
- Sigmund Freud and civilization’s discontents
- Weber on the ‘protestant’ capitalist ethic
- Marx and his disciples
- Michel Foucault and disciplinary power
- Unmasking gender, race and class relations via feminist theory
- “Bowling Alone”: The loss of civic community in America
- Vandana Shiva and the mobilization of third world women
- Ernest Becker and death denial as shaping human culture (and many of the topics listed above under Hi 396)

REL 396 – Topics in the Relationship of Religion and Society

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the contributions of selected religious thinkers to an understanding of specific current social issues and/or the underlying dynamics of human society.

- Brian McLaren’s “postmodern” Christian faith
- Womanist, mujerista and Asian women theologians
- Christian perspectives on war
- Gay marriage in theological perspective
- Theological approaches to women and ordination
- Social and political implications of atonement theories
- Liberation theology
- Neo-Calvinism and the common grace of social forms
- Political realism in the writings of Reinhold Neibuhr

INST 396 OE – Directed Study

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining a topic of critical interest to a student in an academic area not included in the Social Thought course listings.

Topic will be approved by the student’s academic advisor and the Oregon Extension faculty.

BIST 397 OE – Biblical Perspectives on the Human Experience

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the human experience by means of careful, detailed exegesis of selected, pertinent biblical texts.

- Authentic humanity in light of the Sermon on the Mount
- Contrasting gospel portraits of the life of Jesus
- Slavery and freedom in John 8
- Gender roles in I Timothy
- Friendship in the Book of Ruth
- Matthew 16:21-28 and Girard’s mimetic theory
- Guilt and sacrifice in the Old Testament
- Body, flesh, and spirit in the writings of Paul

Segment Three: The Human Person

(Credit: 3 semester hours. Choose one.)

ART 397 OE – Artistic Perspectives on the Human Experience

An individual course of study, with lectures and reading in related disciplines and culminating in a research project, examining selected aspects of the human experience as interpreted by the work and/or thought of a major artist or artists.

- Artistic responses to the Holocaust
- The meaning of the Face: reading portrait photography through the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas
- Ceramics and place: Pueblo potters, M.C. Richards, and ‘finding home’
- Humanism in Renaissance art
- Historical depictions of the crucifixion
- The “people’s art” of Komar and Melamid

LIT 397 OE – Literary Perspectives on the Human Experience

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the human experience as reflected in the writings of one or more authors, supplemented by pertinent biographical and critical sources.

- Humanity as interpreted by Greek drama
- C. S. Lewis and Nikos Kazantzakis on “being human”
- Shusaku Endo and Elie Wiesel on human suffering
- Boyhood in Tobias Wolff, Dan Wakefield and J. D. Salinger
- Native Americans in the stories of Louise Erdrich
- Cormac McCarthy: living on the border
- Post-colonial women writers on language and self: Meena Alexander and Assia Djebar
- The Catholic visions of Graham Greene and Francois Mauriac
- Asian-American women writers
- The Beat poets
- Dostoevsky’s dilemma

PSYC 397 OE – Psychological Perspectives on the Human Experience

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the human experience as understood by selected psychological theorists or systems of thought.

- Shame and anger in therapeutic perspective
- Attachment theory
- The psychology of death row inmates
- Melanie Klein & D. W. Winnicott
- Rollo May's existential psychology
- Paul Tournier and the true self
- Cognitive therapy
- Separation and attachment in mother-daughter relationships
- Jacques Lacan & neo-Freudianism

ENVS 397 – Scientific Perspectives on the Human Experience

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the human experience as understood by selected major scientific thinkers or systems of thought.

- Digital devices and transhumanism
- William Kittredge on the myths of Western identity
- E.O. Wilson and sociobiology
- Biophilia hypothesis
- The Darwinian revolution
- Richard Dawkins and the selfish gene
- Environmental education as character formation

SOC 397 OE – Sociological Perspectives on the Human Experience

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the human experience in light of the scientific study of human social behavior and social theory.

- Does capital punishment lower the crime rate?

- Peter Berger's sociology of knowledge
- Erving Goffman and the rituals of everyday life
- The Frankfurt School's critique of modernity
- Embodied contradictions: shaping gender in boys and girls
- The legitimation crisis in late consumer capitalism
- The culture wars and the rise of the religious right
- Cultural studies and the elevation of the ordinary

REL 397 OE – Religious Perspectives on the Human Experience

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the human experience as understood by selected religious thinkers or systems.

- What can we believe after the Holocaust?
- Jean Vanier and human brokenness
- God's "yes" and "no" in the doctrine of election
- Life and theology of Julian of Norwich
- Jesus and Buddha on the human condition
- Feminine imagery for God and the shaping of personhood
- Dorothy Soelle and Douglas John Hall on human suffering
- The doctrine of original sin and the thought of Reinhold Niebuhr

INST 397 OE – Directed Study

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining a topic of critical interest to a student in an academic area not included in the Social Thought course listings.

Topic will be approved by the student's academic advisor and the Oregon Extension faculty.

Segment Four: Religious Faith

(Credit: 3 semester hours. Choose one.)

ART 398 OE – Topics in the Relationship of Religion and the Arts

An individual course of study, with lectures and reading in related disciplines and culminating in a research project examining the human religious phenomenon as reflected in and/or shaped by the work of selected artists.

- Art and faith in the quarterly journal ‘Image’
- The apotheosis of George Washington in colonial art
- Catholic and Protestant broadsheets in the 16th century
- The icon in Greek Orthodox theology
- Calligraphy as a path to God in Islamic art
- Zen gardens in the Buddhist tradition
- Artistic renditions of Jesus

PHIL 398 OE – Topics in the Philosophy of Religion

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the nature of religious faith and the human religious phenomenon by reference to selected philosophers or world religions.

- The mysticism of Simone Weil
- Hans Kung on the great atheists and the reasonableness of faith
- Kierkegaard’s influence on Barth and Tillich
- The dialogue of eastern and western religions
- The philosophy of the Hindu scriptures
- William James’ healthy-minded and sick souls
- The neo-atheists and new apologetics
- The experience of revelation

PSYC 398 OE– Topics in the Psychology of Religion

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining selected religious doctrines, experiences or sensibilities from a psychological point of view.

- How Freud understood religion
- The psychology of religious doubt
- The brain on prayer
- Stages of faith development
- Psychological portraits of Jesus
- Understanding snake-handlers
- Jungian archetypes

ENVS 398 OE – Topics in the Relationship of Religion and the Natural Sciences

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the historical and philosophical interactions between scientific theory and patterns of religious belief and experience in history.

- Is there a biblical basis for environmental stewardship?
- Intersections between eastern orthodoxy and contemporary views of nature
- Charles Darwin’s struggle with God
- The faith of leading scientists
- Ecotheology and the greening of religion
- Jürgen Moltman’s doctrine of creation
- Teilhard de Chardin's evolutionary theology
- Ecofeminist theology
- Buddhism and ecology
- Lynn White Jr. & Christian responsibility for environmental degradation

SOC 398 OE – Topics in the Sociology of Religion

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining selected religious beliefs, practices, experiences or sensibilities from a sociological point of view.

- The sociology of religious cults in America
- The church and sex
- Changing women's roles in the church
- Peter Berger and religion as sacred canopy
- Christianity and the superhero in American culture
- The demography and spirituality of the mega-church
- Christian intentional communities
- Rites of passage in the writings of Victor Turner
- Rodney Stark's sociological apologetics

BIST 398 OE – Topics in Biblical Exegesis

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the nature and meaning of the core issues of Christian faith, and the human religious phenomenon, by means of careful, detailed exegesis of selected, pertinent biblical texts.

- Old Testament prophets as critics of religion
- Women's roles in Esther
- Trust and doubt in biblical texts
- Pastoral care in the Beatitudes
- "Hard to swallow" biblical texts
- Alternate interpretations of Revelation
- Jesus through the eyes of Luke

COMM 398 OE – Topics in the Relationship of Religion and the Media

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the role of the mass media in reflecting and/or shaping the human religious phenomenon.

- Religion and media in presidential elections
- The public oratory of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Christianity and consumer culture

- The Second Commandment, media images, and iconoclasts
- How the media depict the religious right
- Material Christianity

LIT 398 OE – Topics in the Relationship of Religion and Literature

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining the nature of religious faith and the human religious phenomenon by reference to the works of selected literary figures or movements.

- The literature of confession and spiritual journey
- Encounters with God in "The Brothers Karamazov"
- Despair in Walker Percy
- Madeline L'Engle
- Sin in Flannery O'Connor
- Howard Thurman and Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Annie Dillard and David James Duncan
- Memoirs of growing up Catholic
- Womanist theology in the novels of Toni Morrison and Gloria Naylor
- God novels: the Towing Jehovah Trilogy of James Morrow

HIST 398 OE – Topics in Religious History

An individualized course of study, which includes lectures, readings in related disciplines and a research project, examining selected major themes, persons or events in the history of religion.

- Great conversions in church history
- Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement
- How St. Francis changed the church
- Sex and purity in the early church
- Inter-religious dialogue
- The sacred texts of Buddhism and Hinduism
- History of American fundamentalism
- Mohammed and the founding of Islam
- Women in ministry in the early church