

# 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 students' true interests.

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: Contemporary Issues***

*(Credit: 4 semester hours. Choose one.)*

### **HIS 395 OE – Selected Issues in Contemporary World History**

### **SOC 395 OE – Selected Issues in Contemporary Social Criticism**

An examination of selected contemporary social, political and economic issues on the national and international scene, with special concern for those which give contemporary individual and social life their distinctive characteristics or spirit and provide insight into the underlying dynamics of contemporary history.

*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:

Azar Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*

Tracy Kidder, *Mountains beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer...*

James Alison, *Raising Abel: The Recovery of the Eschatological Imagination*

David K. Shipler, *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*

Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body*

Jeffrey Goldberg, *Prisoners: A Muslim & a Jew across the Middle East divide*

Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*

*The Simone Weil Reader*

Ellen Ruppel Shell, *Cheap: The High Cost of Discount Culture*

Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River*

Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

Eliza Griswold, *The Tenth Parallel: Dispatches from the Fault Line between Christianity and Islam*

## ***Segment Two: Social Thought***

*(Credit: 3 semester hours. Choose one.)*

### **ARH 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 and feminism in the 'Clothesline Project'*  
*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*

### **BIB 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.

*The principalities and powers as social analysis*  
*James Alison's biblical interpretation through the lens of mimetic theory*  
*Karl Jung's interpretation of the problem of evil in the Book of Job*  
*God and human violence in Habbakuk*  
*Biblical views of homosexuality*  
*Women and Jesus in the Gospels*  
*The meaning of the city in biblical perspective*  
*Christian community in the New Testament*

### **COM 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, and John Hersey*  
*How media shapes women's body images and experiences*

### **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*

## **ENG 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*  
*Social visions of Ayn Rand and Wendell Berry*  
*Post-colonial women writers: exploring justice through novels*  
*Walker Percy: death as social principle*  
*Terry Tempest Williams and the need for refuge*  
*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*

## **HIS 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*  
*Herbert Marcuse’s social Freudianism*  
*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*  
*Remi Brague and European eclecticism*

## **PHI 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”*  
*Ludwig Wittgenstein’s relation to postmodernism*  
*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*

## **POS 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*

## **PSY 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 psychological 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*

## **SCI 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 rise of agribusiness*

*The use of water in the American West*

*The ethics of genetic manipulation*

*E. O. Wilson and sociobiology*

*Social Darwinism*

*John McPhee's environmental writing*

*Christian impulses in the history of science*

## **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 on suicide*  
*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)*

### **THEO 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 Niebuhr*

### **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.

***Segment Three: Human Stories***  
*(Credit: 3 semester hours. Choose one.)*

### **ARH 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*

*Human love in Hindu art*  
*Historical depictions of the crucifixion*  
*The “people’s art” of Komar and Melamid*

## **BIB 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*  
*Judas as the first Christian*

## **ENG 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*

## **HIS 397 OE – Historical 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 selected significant historical events and/or thinkers.

*Forgiveness and the Japanese internment*  
*The Cherokee struggle for identity*  
*Medieval views of humanity as revealed in Catholic sermons*  
*The demise of the family farm and despair in the rural community*  
*Women and gender in Islam*  
*How 13<sup>th</sup> century women mystics understood humanity*  
*The First Crusade as a religious pilgrimage*

## **PHI 397 OE – Philosophical 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 philosophical thinkers or systems of thought.

*Albert Camus and French existentialism*  
*Nietzsche's Zarathustra*  
*Death and life in Heidegger*  
*Kierkegaard's "dialectical self"*  
*Augustine's "Confessions" and Derrida's "Circumfession"*  
*Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir*  
*Self and community in philosophical perspective*  
*Alasdair MacIntyre's critique of modernity*

## **PSY 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*

## **Sci 397 – Biological 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.

*Oliver Sacks' studies of brain disorders*  
*Hormone-disrupting synthetic chemicals*  
*Sociobiology*  
*Loren Eiseley's naturalism*  
*The Darwinian revolution*  
*The selfish gene*

## **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*

## **THEO 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 in 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 Human Stories course listings. Topic will be approved by the student's academic advisor and the Oregon Extension faculty.

### ***Segment Four: Living Faith*** *(Credit: 3 semester hours. Choose one.)*

## **ARH 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*  
*Incarnating art: modern dance as embodied prayer*  
*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*

## **BIB 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*

### **COM 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*

### **ENG 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.

*Francois Mauriac on guilt and grace*  
*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*

### **HIS 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*  
*The mixed legacy of Constantine*

### **PHI 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*  
*Martin Buber*  
*The experience of revelation*

### **PSY 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*  
*Spiritual abuse in the church*  
*Stages of faith development*  
*Psychological portraits of Jesus*  
*Understanding snake-handlers*  
*Jung's archetypes*

### **SCI 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*  
*Creationism and evolution*  
*The God gene*

### **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*  
*Rites of passage in the writings of Victor Turner*  
*Rodney Stark's sociological apologetics*

### **THEO 398 OE – Topics in the Study of Religion**

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 religious faith and the human religious phenomenon, from the perspective of selected religious thinkers and traditions.

*The resurgence of Trinitarian theology*  
*The silence of God and a theology of the cross*  
*Views of the atonement and their implications for healing*  
*The doctrine of God in contemplative thought*  
*Heaven and hell in recent theology*  
*Contemporary feminist theology*  
*Walter Brueggemann's Old Testament theology*  
*How Christians have thought about other religions*  
*Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan on the historical Jesus*  
*Christian apologetics as a historical argument*  
*Sacraments and Sacramentalism*

### **INST 398 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 Living Faith course listings. Topic will be approved by the student's academic advisor and the Oregon Extension faculty.

***Semester-long course for all students:***  
*(Credit: 3 semester hours)*

### **COM 399 OE – Composition and Rhetoric**

Individualized and group instruction in discussion participation, research skills, essay writing and formal oral presentation.