

**DRAFT**  
**Subject to change. Full**  
**syllabus available in Canvas**  
**week of August 12<sup>th</sup>.**

**Loyola Institute for Ministry**  
**Loyola University New Orleans**

# **Foundations of Religious Education**

## **LIM G837-Y1G0E**

**Fall 2026**

**Important!** You will be notified by email when your course is available (normally the week before class begins). Please check your *Loyola Gmail* account for instructions. ***Please reply*** to the instructor's email when you receive it.

### **Course Description**

Given the changes and transformations in contemporary society, this course explores an ecology of perspectives and models for analyzing and practicing religious education. What is the meaning of religious education today, what should it be, and how can it contribute to the flourishing of all God's creation? This course begins by laying the ecological foundations for religious education, then problematizes our praxis to reimagine religious education as a practice of redemption and hope. Three distinct currents will run throughout the course: students will explore an approach to religious education as well as a foundation from which they can evaluate the value and appropriateness of resources that inform and enhance religious education as a practice of inhabitation (approach, foundation, resources). The course will compare and contrast classical/historical contemporary models of religious education in terms of their conceptual framework, nature, forms and developmental patterns while familiarizing themselves with the Catholic ecclesial tradition. Participants will immerse themselves in the history and literature of the field, tracing its evolutionary development, distinguishing its modes of practice, exploring its substantive richness, deconstructing the tradition for implicit and explicit hegemony, all in conversation with their own experience as religious educators. From this vantage point they will identify what they consider foundational for their practice and articulate their own vision of the field as they engage in the transformative work that is religious education.

### **Course Goal**

The goal of this course is that those who pursue the MRE degree would realize heightened agency and competence through an investigation of the field by asking critical questions regarding the meaning and purpose of religious education then co-creating a vision for what religious education should be as these questions inform and influence the larger field of religious education and the student's particular practice.

## Learning Goals

As a class, we will work together to:

- engage in collaborative dialogue to construct shared understanding of a comprehensive contextual reflective understanding and analysis of religious education.
- Develop a shared vocabulary for discussing what religious education is and should be in various ecclesial and non-ecclesial contexts.
- engage in dialogue with religious educators from diverse traditions
- critically examine our own assumptions and biases about religious education"

Each student will be encouraged to:

- set individual goals for their learning
- situate your particular practice within the larger, differentiated matrix/field of religious education.
- articulate an informed and comprehensive philosophy of religious education, identifying what is foundational for your own practice.
- develop an approach to religious education that illuminates the meaning and value of all things educative.
- critically examine historical and contemporary forms / models of religious education and their inter-relationship.
- offer an approach to religious education inspired by the divine love of God written into the fabric of all creation that creatively embodies inhabitation as a framework for religious education.

Guiding questions to consider are:

- How do diverse cultural and historical contexts shape approaches to religious education?
- What are the implications of postmodern thought for traditional religious education models?
- How can religious education respond to pluralism and interfaith dialogue?
- What role does religious education play in identity formation and community building?

## Required Readings

***Please order the required texts as soon as possible from the Loyola bookstore or a bookstore of your choice.***

Ayres, Jennifer R. *Inhabitanace: Ecological Religious Education*. Baylor University Press, 2019. ISBN: 978-1481311373; List Price \$38.00 **Note:** This book is also available in Canvas as an ebook whose pages you may download.

Tran, Mai-Anh Le. *Reset the Heart: Unlearning Violence, Relearning Hope*. Abingdon Press, 2017 ISBN- 978-15018-3246-8; List Price \$27.00 **Note:** This book is also available in Canvas as an ebook whose pages you may download.

Groome, Thomas H. *Will There Be Faith? A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples*: HarperOne, 2011. ISBN-13: 978-0062037282; List Price \$15.99

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Directory for Catechesis*. New Edition, USCCB Publishing, 2020. ISBN-13: 978-1601376695; List Price \$24.95

Additional required and recommended articles found in the Canvas course.

For guidance on citations and referencing styles see the *LIM Guide to Written Theological Reflection* (available in Canvas under Resources » Writing Assistance).

## Recommended Texts

Boys, Mary C. *Educating in Faith: Maps and Visions*. Harper & Row, 1989. ISBN-13: 978-0-78809-906-9

Conde-Frazier, Elizabeth. *A Many Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation*. Baker Academic, 2004. ISBN: 978-0801027437

Congregation for the Clergy. *General Directory for Catechesis*. USCCB Publishing, 1998. ISBN 13: 9781574552256;  
[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_17041998\\_directory-for-catechesis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html).

Groome, Thomas H., and Harold D. Horell, editors. *Horizons & Hopes: The Future of Religious Education*. Paulist Press, 2003. ISBN 13: 9780809141548; \$16.95. This book is also available in Canvas as an ebook whose pages you may download.

Harris, Maria, and Gabriel Moran. *Reshaping Religious Education: Conversations on Contemporary Practice*. Westminster John Knox Press, 1998. ISBN 13: 9780664257835; \$18.99. This book is also available in Canvas as an ebook whose pages you may download.

Hill, Kenneth H. *Religious Education in the African American Tradition: A Comprehensive Introduction*, Chalice Press, ISBN 2012 978-0827208209 List Price \$21.67 This book is also available in Canvas as an ebook whose pages you may download.

Kravatz, Marilyn T. *Partners in Wisdom and Grace: Catechesis and Religious Education in Dialogue*. University Press of America, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-0761849384; \$32.99. This book is also available in Canvas as an ebook whose pages you may download.

Lee, Boyung. *Transforming Congregations through Community: Faith Formation from the Seminary to the Church*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2013. ISBN-13: 978-0664233303 This book is also available in Canvas as an ebook whose pages you may download.

Moran, Gabriel. *Religious Education as a Second Language*. Religious Education Press, 1989. ISBN: 0-89135-072-1

---. *Interplay: A Theory of Religion and Education*, St Mary's Press, 1981.

Seymour, Jack L., et al., editors. *Educating for Redemptive Community: Essays in Honor of Jack Seymour and Margaret Ann Crain*. Wipf & Stock, 2015. ISBN 978-1498208161 This book is also available in Canvas as an ebook whose pages you may download.

Thompson, Norma H., ed. *Religious Pluralism and Religious Education*. Religious Education Press, 1988. ISBN:0-89135-061-6

Westerhoff III, John. *Will Our Children Have Faith?* Third edition, Morehouse Publishing, 2012. ISBN: 13: 978-0-8192-2800-0 This book is also available in Canvas as an ebook whose pages you may download.

Wimberly, Anne, et al., editors. *From Lament to Advocacy: Black Religious Education and Public Ministry*. Wesley's Foundery Books, 2020. ISBN 978-1-945935-749

A selective bibliography is in Canvas.

## **Evaluation and Course Requirements**

### **Sequence of Topics/Calendar of Assignments**

Weekly sessions in this course run from Tuesday–Monday. Please note that all assignments must be completed by Midnight on Monday, the last day of the weekly session, except for Week 1; you must complete your personal introduction by Sunday, 8/23 by 11:59pm Central Time, or risk being administratively dropped from the course.

*Note: Zoom and small virtual classes will be created the first week of class. See Canvas for more details.*

<b>Session</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
Week 1 8/17–8/24	Introductions	Introduce self, listen to audio, complete readings and discussion question
Week 2 8/25–31	What's in a Name?	Complete readings, videos, discussion questions
Week 3 9/1–9/7	Laying the Foundation (Sept. 7, Labor Day holiday)	Readings, video, discussion question, Required Reflection Journal
Week 4 9/8–9/14	Who am I in this context?	Complete readings, videos, discussion questions
Week 5 9/15–9/21	What is the purpose of RE in today's world?	Complete readings, videos, discussion questions, Statement of Educational Philosophy
Week 6 9/22–9/28	How is my praxis connected to the larger field of RE?	Complete readings, videos, discussion questions
Week 7 9/29–10/5	What should be the context of RE? (Where does it occur?)	Complete readings, videos, discussion questions, Required Reflection Journal
Week 8 10/6–10/12	Who is responsible for RE?	Complete readings, videos, discussion questions
Week 9 10/13–10/19	Fall Break	
Week 10 10/20–10/26	What do we say about our religious tradition?	Complete readings, videos, discussion questions, Video Assignment due
Week 11 10/27–11/2	What methods or approaches should we use?	Complete readings, video, discussion questions, Required Reflection Journal
Week 12 11/3–11/9	How do we know RE has occurred and that it is good?	Complete readings and discussion questions
Week 13 11/10–11/16	What should be the future of the field of RE: From where have we come and where are we going?	Complete readings and discussion questions
Week 14 11/17–11/23	What should be the future of RE in your life and ministry?	Complete readings and discussion questions and work on final essay
Week 15 11/24–30	Thanksgiving Break	
Week 16 12/1–12/4	Final essay due	Final Research and Reflective Essay (graduate students) or Statement of Impact (CEU students) <i>due</i>

		<i>Dec. 1</i>
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Dec. 15: Duse date for posting grades 11:59 pm CT

## Assessment

Each student’s final grade will include the following parts:

		Percentage of Grade	
		Graduate	CEU
1	Discussion Board activities, small virtual groups, and participation	40%	90%
2	Reflection Journals (Due at the end of Weeks 3, 8, and 11)	10%	5%
3	Short Essay (Due at the end of Week 5)	15%	2.5%
4	Short Video (Due Dec. 5)	10%	2.5%
5	Final Project (Due Dec. 5)	25%	NA

All students, those seeking graduate credit and those seeking continuing education units (CEU’s), must participate in all course activities. This includes the weekly discussions, as well as the three Reflection Journals. Those seeking graduate credit must also complete the Statement of Educational Philosophy and the Final Reflective Essay detailed below. CEU students will complete a 1-2 paragraph Statement on Impact detailed below.

### **1) Discussion Board activities, small virtual groups, and participation (40% of graduate student assessment; 90% of CEU evaluation)**

Each week of this course includes assignments for reading, audio segments (where applicable), videos, and discussion questions. These are provided in the weekly modules in Canvas. In addition to reading all the materials assigned and watching assigned videos, all students will also be expected to participate in the class discussions. Specific details regarding the schedule for posting, length requirements, discussion leaders, and small group meetings will be included in the final syllabus posted in Canvas the week of August 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **2) Reflection Journal (10% of graduate student evaluation; 5% of CEU evaluation)**

A minimum of three reflection journals are required at the close of Weeks Three, Eight, and Eleven. Throughout the semester, you are required reflect on your weekly assignments in order to frame how your learning connects with past and future course material, and to your lived experience. You are asked to engage in this experience of critical thinking, which invites you to reflect about your experience and learning over the course of the semester. Reflection journals should be rooted the method of practical theology. In this way, you are given an opportunity to go deeper in your learning by reflecting on how your thinking has changed, how you have seen yourself grow during the course, and to share this with the class. Complete details are located in the weekly modules in Canvas.

**3-4) Short Essay and Short Video (25% of graduate student assessment; 5% of CEU student assessment)**

Students will complete one short essay assignment and one short video. Full directions will be included in the final syllabus posted in Canvas the week of August 12<sup>th</sup>.

**5) Final Project**

*CEU Assignment*

CEU students will submit a 1-2 paragraph reflection documenting how this course enhanced their ministry context. Complete details are located in the weekly modules in Canvas.

*Graduate Student Assignment (25%)*

Graduate students will complete a final project integrating the course material and the student’s ministry experience and research. Full directions will be included in the final syllabus posted in Canvas the week of August 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Grading Scale**

<b>A</b>	93-100	<b>B-</b>	80-82.9	<b>D+</b>	67-69.9
<b>A-</b>	90-92.9	<b>C+</b>	77-79.9	<b>D</b>	60-66.9
<b>B+</b>	87-89.9	<b>C</b>	73-76.9	<b>F</b>	0-59.9
<b>B</b>	83-86.9	<b>C-</b>	70-72.9		

Please note that the LIM grading scale uses B as the standard for graduate-quality work. A and B+ indicate graduate work done with distinction, with B- and below signifying levels below graduate standards.

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Quality Points</b>	<b>Characteristics of Student Work</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>4.0</b>	Work done with distinction. An outstanding use of all four evaluation criteria as a catalyst for critical reflection.
<b>A-</b>	<b>3.7</b>	Work done with distinction, with a few minor corrections needed.
<b>B+</b>	<b>3.3</b>	Work of very good quality. The assignment is addressed in an exceptional manner with a good balance of personal insight and academic documentation.
<b>B</b>	<b>3.0</b>	The standard for the master’s degree. The assignment is adequately addressed in a clear and concise manner with appropriate documentation. If subsequent work meets this standard of quality, the degree will be awarded.
<b>B-</b>	<b>2.7</b>	The work is slightly below the standard for master’s level work. The assignment is addressed, but a number of corrections is needed to address the assignment in a clear and concise manner. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.

<b>C+</b>	<b>2.3</b>	Substandard graduate work. Evaluation criteria are not adequately met in the assignment. Moderate improvement is needed. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.
<b>C</b>	<b>2</b>	Less than graduate-level work. Evaluation criteria are not met. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.
<b>C-</b>	<b>1.7</b>	Below average, grade does not count towards graduation.
<b>D+</b>	<b>1.3</b>	Minimally passing, grade does not count towards graduation.
<b>D</b>	<b>1</b>	Minimally passing, grade does not count towards graduation.
<b>F</b>	<b>0</b>	Assignment not addressed at all, incomplete assignment, or not submitted on time.

## **Course Policies**

### **Incomplete Grade Policy**

Students are subject to the university policy regarding incomplete grades with the following additions to university policy. Grades of Incomplete are given at the instructor's discretion. Students must complete LIM's Incomplete Grade Request Form found in the Resources » Policies, Forms, & Services section of their Canvas course. Students should first inquire of their instructor whether or not they are eligible for an incomplete; this must occur with sufficient time to complete the process explained here. To be eligible, students may not have received an Incomplete in the previous semester, must have completed at least 75% of the course work to date, and must have at least a C or above in the course. After the instructor makes an initial assessment of eligibility, including checking with the LIM Office to ensure there was no Incomplete in the previous semester and finds the student eligible, by the due date of the course's final assignment, a student must complete and obtain all signatures for LIM's Incomplete Grade Request Form found in the Resources section of their Canvas course and submit it to their instructor, who will forward a copy to the LIM Director. LIM graduate students may not receive Incompletes in LIM courses in consecutive semesters.

### **Attendance & Participation**

Students are subject to the university policy regarding attendance found online in the Bulletin. Students in online courses communicate their presence by active participation in weekly discussions. Each course's instructor sets requirements for how many times students must post on the Discussion Board in Canvas. Failing to post during the first week of class may result in removal from the course. If you foresee that you will be unable to post in a given week, please contact the instructor ahead of time. Extensions for posting are given at the instructor's discretion and for a valid reason may be granted if arranged ahead of time. In extraordinary circumstances, students may arrange with their instructor to post up to two weeks after a deadline, though this may entail a grade reduction. Posts and other assignments submitted more than two weeks late may be subject to a grade of zero. If students do not post in a given week, they are considered absent. Absence for more than one week without contacting the instructor may result in removal from and failure of the course.

## **University Policies**

Please read Part 2 of the syllabus (located in Canvas) for university policies on plagiarism, AI, accessible education, and more.