

Religious Education in Theory and Practice

RELM-C400-YA1

Spring 2026

Important! You will be notified by email to your Loyola email address when your course web site is available (normally the week before class begins). Please reply to the instructor's email when you receive it to confirm that you are ready to begin the course.

Course Description

Foundational questions of religious education are investigated with particular focus given to the relationship between theory and practice. This course explores a diverse array of perspectives, approaches, and models for analyzing and practicing religious education. An analysis of historical practices and theories of religious education is examined so as to uncover the best practices for contemporary religious education.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to

- understand foundational elements of religious education and their effects on the field.
- identify theories of religious education and apply specific approaches to teaching and learning in religious education.
- appreciate and evaluate religious education as practiced in a variety of diverse settings.
- understand and develop practices that include awareness of how differing cultural contexts effect practices and disciplines of Christian education and formation.

Required Texts

Please order the required text as soon as possible from the Loyola Bookstore or another bookstore of your choice.

Westerhoff, John H. *Will Our Children Have Faith?* 3rd ed. Morehouse Publishing, 2012. ISBN-13: 978-0-8192-2800-0 This text is available as an [ebook](#) through Loyola's Monroe Library and is linked in the Canvas course.

Additional readings and media as included in the Canvas course.

Recommended Texts

Boys, Mary C. *Educating in Faith: Maps and Visions*. Sheed & Ward, 1993. Academic Renewal Press, 2001. ISBN-13: 978-0-7880-9906-9 Note: You can read this text online at the [Internet Archive Library](#). You must register for a free account before accessing the text. Please check out the text for one-hour increments so as to allow others to access it.

Directory for Catechesis. New edition, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2020. ISBN-13: 978-1-6013-7669-5

Course Requirements and Evaluation

The writing assignments in the course are designed to help you to achieve the Learning Outcomes listed above. During the course, you will complete weekly discussion questions, 4 papers, and a journal of your reflections and prayer experiences with weekly assigned Scripture passages. Specifics on the content and length requirements for each are listed in the final syllabus available in the Canvas course.

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, 1/18 by 11:59pm Central Time, or risk being administratively dropped from the course and your discussion questions by Tuesday, 1/20, due to the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday on 1/19.

Week	Topic	Assignments
Week 1 1/12 – 1/19	Introductions and Overview of Religious Education 1/19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Holiday	Complete readings, videos, personal introduction, discussion questions
Week 2 1/20 – 1/26	Historical Developments in Religious Education	Complete readings, videos, discussion questions
Week 3 1/27 – 2/2	Philosophical, Theological, and Spiritual Foundations of Religious Education	Complete readings, videos, discussion questions; submit spiritual formation journal #1 by 2/2 at 11:59 pm CT
Week 4 2/3 – 2/9	Influence of the Social Sciences and Education on Religious Education	Complete readings, videos, discussion questions; attend synchronous class meeting (optional); begin work on midterm essay
Week 5 2/10 – 2/16	Religious and Cultural Pluralism and RE Foundations of Religious Education	Complete readings, videos, discussion questions; upload midterm essay by 2/10 at 11:59 pm CT
Week 6 2/17 – 2/23	Mardi Grad Holiday (Feb. 16-20, no class)	
Week 7 2/24 – 3/2	Catechetical Model of Religious Education and Adult Education	Complete readings, videos, discussion questions; submit

		spiritual formation journal #2 by 3/2at 11:59 pm CT
Week 8 3/3 – 3/9	Religious Education in the Context of Contemporary Culture	Complete readings, videos, discussion questions; attend synchronous class meeting (optional)
Week 9 3/10 – 3/15	The Prophetic and Cosmological Nature of Religious Education	Complete readings, video, audio; submit final paper by 3/10 at 11:59 pm CT

Feb. 11: Due date for posting mid-term grades by 11:59 PM

March 17: Due date for posting final grades by 11:59 PM

Week 1 Reading Assignments

- John Westerhoff, *Will our Children Have Faith?*, Preface, pp. ix-xvii. (in Canvas)
- Gabriel Moran, “The Need for Religious Education,” *Interplay*. pp. 9-19 (in Canvas)
- Joyce Ann Mercer, “The Many-Sidedness of Religious Education,” *Religious Education*, vol. 113 no.1, 2018, pp. 1-2 (in Canvas)
- Mary Boys, *Educating in Faith*, Introduction & chapter 1 (optional)

Assessment

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

		Percent of Grade
1	Substantive participation in weekly discussions	50%
2	Spiritual Formation	15%
3	Midterm Essay (3-5 pages)	10%
4	Final Essay (5-7 pages)	25%
Total		100%

1) Discussion Questions (50% of final grade)

Each discussion question is worth 4 points. As in all RELM courses, the strength of our program is the intentional learning community and its ongoing invitation to disciplined conversation. Contributions to Discussions should be the fruit of, and therefore demonstrate, a critical engagement with the course assignments. To achieve this, you are asked to note comments, questions, observations, reflections, insights that surface as the natural result of thoughtful reading. Your weekly postings should be substantive and respect the word limit posted for each week’s questions. A substantive response will include both your own reflections on the question and some interaction with course materials you’re your fellow students’ reflections. Complete instructions can be found on the final syllabus posted in Canvas.

2) Spiritual Formation (15% of final grade)

Students will be asked to submit two journal entries, by the close of week three and week seven. See the full directions in the final syllabus in Canvas.

3) Midterm Essay (10% of final grade)

Compose a statement of your religious educational philosophy in light of what you have learned and experienced, envisioning the religious education context most relevant for your work. Complete instructions can be found on the final syllabus posted in Canvas.

4) Final Essay (25% of final grade)

How can the method of practical theology, or theological reflection, and the course readings/videos, your own independent research help you create an understanding of the field of religious education, its future, and its application to your ministry of education? Complete instructions can be found on the final syllabus posted in Canvas.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	B+	87-89.9	C+	77-79.9	D	65-69.9	F	64.9 or below
A-	90-92.9	B	83-86.9	C	73-76.9				
		B-	80-82.9	C-	70-72.9				

Late or Delinquent Work

You are expected to post or submit assignments by the due date. If you need additional time to complete an assignment, please contact me before the due date to discuss the situation and determine an acceptable resolution. Routine submission of late assignments is unacceptable and will result in points deducted from your final course grade.

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 students may not receive Incompletes in LIM courses in consecutive

semesters.

Attendance & Participation

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, accessible education, and more.