

syllabus: RS 100 Intro Religious Studies, Fall 2014

Catalog number: 14052

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Office hours: 6:45 to 7:45 AM and 2 - 3 PM Friday and via Skype by appointment

Classroom: SH390 8am to 10:45am

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Description: This course introduces students to the discipline of Religious Studies via a look at the sacred texts and tales from a range of world views. Analytical tools of the discipline will be introduced and applied to the reading. Students will learn how to analyze a variety of beliefs academically, and strive to avoid filtering things through their personal belief systems. Because Religious Studies is an interdisciplinary field, students will be able to utilize the skills from this class in other disciplines, as well as in everyday critical assessments of information.

Key Goals: Students will familiarize themselves with the vocabulary of religious studies and the diversity of concepts about the sacred in the world. This will be accomplished by analyzing primary texts and mythologies regarding the divine and then comparing them to what we define as human. The interaction between humanity and divinity will show cultural specificity and reveal possible commonalities between seemingly disparate belief systems. Through actual analysis, students will develop a sense of examining the sacred outside of a faith-driven understanding. A variety of theoretical tools will be given to them to aid in their analyses of unfamiliar religious thought and students must develop their own sets of analytical questions while reading and “discuss” them online with others.

Key Skills: Students will learn how to analyze primary texts, interpret and compare key concepts. These analytical skills outline a methodology of inquiry and application that can be utilized in any field (G.E. F.2 or S.5)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION: will be 25% of your grade! (Sleeping in isn't an option ;-) 100 points. You get one unexcused absence, then your grade will be impacted.

ASSIGNMENTS: 5-10 1-page response papers written and turned in during class, regarding the reading. 10-20 points each for 100 points total.

QUIZZES: 2 major quizzes (online), a vocabulary quiz worth 50 points due midnight September 12th AND a final quiz worth 100 points due midnight December 5th. The **FINAL MAP QUIZ** worth 50 points will be done in-class on December 6th. For 200 points total.

TOTAL POINTS for the class = 400.

WRITING FORMAT will be a part of your grades when part of an assignment. All writing

will be in your best college form and language. Most importantly, it **MUST BE YOUR OWN ORIGINAL WORK** and there are **NO OUTSIDE SOURCES ALLOWED**, instead you will only use your own analysis and the background given in the book and in class. **THE KEY TO SUCCESS IN THIS CLASS IS TO NEVER BE LATE WITH YOUR ASSIGNMENTS! YOU WILL LOSE 1/3 GRADE FOR EVERY DAY LATE.** If you turn in a B+ assignment 2 days late...you will get a B- in points. **ASK QUESTIONS NOW IF THIS IS NOT CLEAR TO YOU.**

FINALLY, I only give one extra credit as I've noticed that students think it is a substitute for applying themselves to the regular assignments. If you want a certain grade, keep up with the work assigned. The extra credit will be the assignment you see listed on November 21st and will only be worth 10-20 points if the questions and comments are deemed good enough by me, which can make up a missed in-class writing. For a legitimate (my discretion) absence, you may arrange with me to make up a missed assignment before the NEXT class after your absence.

PLAIGIARISM: YOU ARE REQUIRED to find CSUN's Academic Dishonesty policy (just type "academic honesty" in the Search CSUN box and then pick the PDF titled "ACADEMIC DISHONESTY." The only copying and pasting you will do in this class is sending me an email by midnight September 5th of the first paragraph of the PDF which starts, "The maintenance of academic integrity and quality education is the responsibility of each student within this university and the California State University system." Do not pick the faculty one. YOU WILL LOSE 10 points if you do not turn this in. Let me make it very clear, **NO OUTSIDE SOURCES**, so if I find any copying (and pasting) in your submissions you will get 0 for the assignment without chance for a make-up.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Mircae Eliade, *Essential Sacred Writings From Around the World*, Harper, San Francisco, 1991. You will bring your book to every class.

Online reading will also be provided during the semester, as well as "lecture" Powerpoints.

COURSE SLOs:

Study of the elements of religion and selected contemporary religious issues. Examines such subjects as myth and ritual, the sacred and profane, dreams and theophanies, priests and prophets, science and religion, history and religion, and the possibility of religious faith today.

- 1 Students will be able to recognize and to articulate (orally and in writing) the difference between an academic approach to religion and a personal, devotional approach.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate a *basic level of proficiency* in recognizing the major contributors to the modern study of religion and their models/theories from philosophy, theology, the history of religions, and the social sciences.
3. Students will be able to understand the following terms in their conventional, popular usage, and then discuss the variety of ways that religious studies scholars have critiqued, expanded, or problematized these: religion, religious, myth, ritual, symbol, philosophy, subjectivity, objectivity, secular/secularization, cult, sect, mysticism, theism, atheism, polytheism, monotheism, spirituality, magic, paganism, animism, canon, religious violence, post-colonialism, individualistic compared to community-based religions.

4. Students will be able to explain and give basic examples of the social function of religion with regard to gender, ethnicity, and nationality.
5. Students will be able to recognize religiosity in an aspect of modern culture such as different forms of media, art, music, films, politics, sports, and the public discourse on science.
6. Students will be able to demonstrate a *basic level of proficiency* in describing two specific religious traditions (perhaps one from North America, one outside of it), including their historical development, major beliefs and practices, and demonstrate a *basic level of proficiency* in interpreting religious texts and rituals from each religious tradition.

GE SLOs:

Goal: Students will understand the rich history and diversity of human knowledge, discourse and achievements of their own and other cultures as they are expressed in the arts, literatures, religions, and philosophy.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will:

1. Explain and reflect critically upon the human search for meaning, values, discourse and expression in one or more eras/stylistic periods or cultures;
2. Analyze, interpret, and reflect critically upon ideas of value, meaning, discourse and expression from a variety of perspectives from the arts and/or humanities;
3. Produce work/works of art that communicate to a diverse audience through a demonstrated understanding and fluency of expressive forms;
4. Demonstrate ability to engage and reflect upon their intellectual and creative development within the arts and humanities;
5. Use appropriate critical vocabulary to describe and analyze works of artistic expression, literature, philosophy, or religion and a comprehension of the historical context within which a body of work was created or a tradition emerged;
6. Describe and explain the historical and/or cultural context within which a body of work was created or a tradition emerged.

GENERAL GRADING RUBRIC:

Qualities of A writing:

- 1) Contains a well-developed, clearly stated thesis or statement sentence.
- 2) Stays focused on topic and completely answers prompt (when applicable).
- 3) Uses evidence from assigned texts, with quotes and explanations of those quotes.
- 4) Is logically organized and information is accurate.
- 5) Is written at a college level, paying attention to style, word choice, flow, transitions, paragraph cohesion, and is PROOFREAD. Also follows all instructions given by instructor.
- 6) Shows independent and critical thought.

Qualities of B writing:

- 1) Clear statement, but underdeveloped.
- 2) Generally addresses topic.
- 3) Evidence is not always relevant or forgotten.
- 4) Some organizational problems.
- 5) Not proofread, weak transitions, other marks of rushed or inadequately considered work.

Qualities of C writing:

- 1) Some attempt to answer the question/issue but no real thesis or statement.
- 2) Disorganized, stream of consciousness writing, no transitions, irrelevant or wrong evidence.
- 3) Lack of originality, simply parrots texts or over-generalizes.
- 4) Too short/long, doesn't follow instructions, misuse of language or terminology, not proofread.

Qualities of D writing:

- 1) Late or untyped work.

- 2) No statement, little if any evidence, off topic.
- 3) Sloppy writing, grammatical errors, frequent misspellings, ignored previous corrections.

Qualities of F writing:

- 1) Not turned in or very late.
- 2) Extemporizing, pejorative or offensive statements, ignored previous corrections.

QUIZ/Response paper RULES

1) YOU MUST write all answers down in full sentences UNLESS the question is a fill in the blank or True/False. YOU MUST turn them in on time. Simple rules, big impact on your grade.

2) Extenuating circumstances will only be considered if you have emailed me more than 3 hours IN ADVANCE of the due date and time. Emergencies within 3 hours before or after an assignment is due means you weren't going to get it done anyway...

RS 100 Intro to Religious Studies SCHEDULE (Subject to change as needed)

CLASS DATE	SUBJECT for the week. Subject for next week.	READ THIS SYLLABUS CAREFULLY and ask ME (instead of a student) any questions you might have. Activities are in class, assignments are due later.
WEEK 1 Aug 29	Introduction Tools for Study	LECTURE: Introduction to course and go over syllabus and expectations for the course. WRITING #1: First in-class written assignment DOES NOT require any previous knowledge. Answer the "Epic of Gilgamesh" essay prompt. 1/2 hour.
		READING DUE NEXT WEEK: Ch 1-2 from Livingston. (Transcripts for Powerpoints are also in the "Powerpoint" folder)

<p>WEEK 2 Sep 5</p>	<p>Tools for study</p>	<p>LECTURE and DISCUSSION: Theory #1 and #2 Powerpoints with vocabulary for the first quiz. (Tools for study)</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT: ONLINE QUIZ #1 on the vocabulary is DUE no later than midnight, next Thursday Sep 11th.</p> <p>READING DUE NEXT WEEK: from <i>Essential Sacred Writings (ESW)</i>: Jain #263 on p. 536-538; Nahuatl #270 & 271 on p. 548-550; Indian #225 on p. 471-5 (What is human life?)</p>
<p>WEEK 3 Sep 12</p>	<p>Discuss vocabulary "Tools for study" and think about "What is human life?"</p>	<p>ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION: Ch 1 & 2 of the Livingston reading, bring in your questions. How was the quiz?</p> <p>LECTURE: Introduces "WHAT IS HUMAN LIFE?" Powerpoint. How to read original myths as a Religious Studies scholar.</p> <p>DISCUSSION: How to make an argument.</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT due Sep 19: re-read the "What is human life" myths and write down a statement/thesis sentence (a point of discussion) that you will use for your focus in next week's in-class writing.</p> <p>READING DUE NEXT WEEK: Then read through for the first time: Melanesian, Indonesian, Australian, Polynesian section D. "Myths of the Origin of Death" on p. 139-144; Hindu, Buddhist, Tibetan "Death and the intermediate state" on p. 335-341. Don't forget to take notes for your in-class writing next week. (What is death?)</p>

<p>WEEK 4 Sep 19</p>	<p>Write about and discuss "What is human life?" and think about "What is death?"</p>	<p>ACTIVITY: peer review of thesis. 1/2 hour.</p> <p>WRITING #2: Your observations about this week's re-reading. (What is human life?) 1/2 hour</p> <p>DISCUSSION: This week's reading analysis of "What is human life?" 45 min</p> <p>LECTURE: "WHAT IS DEATH" Powerpoint. Look at your own notes for questions and points. 1/2 hour</p> <p>ACTIVITY: Write a statement of point or thesis that you will focus on for next week's in-class writing on "What is Death." 1/2 hour</p> <p>READING DUE NEXT WEEK ESW: Review the "What is Death?" myths. And read through for the first time: Native American #174-5 on p. 365-7; Polynesian #177 on p. 369-70; Taoist "Great Awakening" and "Butterfly Dream" on p. 604-5; Greek #181-3 on p. 375-7. (Is there something after death?) Don't forget to take notes...</p>
<p>WEEK 5 Sep 26</p>	<p>Write and discuss "What is death?" and think about "Is there something after death?"</p>	<p>WRITING #3: Your observations about THIS WEEK's topic, (What is death?) 1/2 hour</p> <p>DISCUSSION: of this week's topic, ""What is death?" 1 hour</p> <p>LECTURE: "Is there something after death? Powerpoint 45 min</p>
		<p>ACTIVITY: Write a statement of point or thesis for the "Is there something after death?" myths. 1/2 hour</p> <p>READING FOR NEXT WEEK ESW: Review the myths for "Is there something after death?" Then read through for the first time: African, Native American #1-10 on p. 5-13; Hindu #21 on 31-2; Buddhist #30 on p. 48-9; Zoroastrian #38 on p. 70-1. (Who is divine?) Notes...</p>

<p>WEEK 6 Oct 3</p>	<p>Discuss “Is there something after death?” and think about “Who is divine?”</p>	<p>WRITING #4: Your observations about THIS WEEK’s assigned reading. (Is there something after death?) 1/2 hour.</p> <p>DISCUSSION: of this week’s topic, "Is there something after death?"</p> <p>LECTURE: “Who is Divine” Powerpoint</p> <p>READING FOR NEXT WEEK ESW: Review the myths for "Who is Divine?" Then read through for the first time Hindu #101 on p. 226-8; Jain #84 on p. 175-6; Native American, Australian #77 &78 on p 161-2; and Amerindian #82 on p. 173-4. (What is divine?) Don’t forget notes...</p>
<p>WEEK 7 Oct 10</p>	<p>Discuss “Who is divine?” and think about “What is divine?”</p>	<p>DISCUSSION: of this week’s topic on "Who is divine?"</p> <p>LECTURE: “What is divine” Powerpoint and how to combine 2 topics for a short essay.</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT: re-read "Who is divine?" and "What is divine?" myths and write a statement of point or thesis that you will focus on for next week's in-class writing.</p> <p>READING FOR NEXT WEEK ESW: First reading of Hindu #264 on p. 538-9; Australian #86 on p. 185-7; Greek #238 on p. 491-2. "Are humans divine?"</p>
<p>WEEK 8 Oct 17</p>	<p>Discuss “What is divine?” and think about "Are humans divine?"</p>	<p>WRITING #5: Your observations about both the combined topics of "Who and what are divine?"</p> <p>DISCUSSION: of this week’s topic, "What is divine?"</p> <p>LECTURE: “Are humans Divine?” Powerpoint</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT: re-read "Are humans divine" myths and write a statement of point or thesis that you will focus on for next week's in-class writing.</p> <p>READING FOR NEXT WEEK ESW: First reading of Ainu #92 on p. 206-211; Roman #90 on p. 223-4; Shinto & Aztec #108 & 109 on p. 237-9; Amerindian #194 on p. 403-413. "How do human groups interact with the divine and WHY?"</p>

<p>WEEK 9 Oct 24</p>	<p>Discuss “Are Humans Divine?” and think about “How and why human groups interact with the divine?”</p>	<p>WRITING #6: Your observations about this week's topic. (Are humans divine?)</p> <p>DISCUSSION: of this week’s topic, "Are humans divine?"</p> <p>LECTURE: “How and why do human groups interact with the Divine?” Powerpoint</p> <p>READING FOR NEXT WEEK ESW: Review myths for "How and why human groups interact with the divine?" Read for the first time Siberian & Inuit #208 & 209 on p. 440-2; Norse & Irish #145 & 146 on p. 294-6; African, Amerindian, Polynesian #126-131 on p. 268-272; Sufi #253 on p. 521-2; Greek #267 on p. 542-546. "How and why do individuals interact with the divine?"</p>
<p>WEEK 10 Oct 31</p> <p>Oct 31 <i>continued</i></p>	<p>Discuss "How and why human groups interact with the divine?" and think about "How and why do human individuals and the divine interact?"</p>	<p>DISCUSSION: of this week’s topic, "How and why do human groups interact with the divine?"</p> <p>LECTURE: “How and why do individuals interact with the divine?” Powerpoint</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT: re-read "How and why do human groups interact with the divine?" AND "How and why do individuals interact with the divine?" myths and write a statement of point or thesis that you will focus on for next week’s in-class writing.</p> <p>READING FOR NEXT WEEK ESW: Read for the first time Section E. Prayers and Hymns #125-136 on p. 268-280. "Calling the divine."</p>

<p>WEEK 11 Nov 7</p>	<p>Discuss “How and why do individuals and the Divine interact?” AND think about “Calling the divine.”</p>	<p>WRITING #7: Your observations about both topics, "How and why do human groups AND individuals and the divine interact?"</p> <p>DISCUSSION: of this week’s topic, "How and why do individuals interact with the divine?"</p> <p>LECTURE: “Calling the divine” Powerpoint</p> <p>READING FOR NEXT WEEK <i>ESW</i>: Review Calling the Divine." Read for the first time Amerindian #105 on p. 231-4; Egyptian #110 on p. 239-241; Chinese #106 on p. 234-6 and #112 on p. 242-3; Hindu #117 on p. 251-2. "Rituals"</p>
<p>WEEK 12 Nov 14</p>	<p>Discuss “Calling the Divine?” and think about “Rituals”</p>	<p>DISCUSSION: of this week’s topic, "Calling the Divine."</p> <p>LECTURE: “Rituals” Powerpoint</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT: re-read "Calling the divine" AND "Rituals" myths and write a statement of point or thesis that you will focus on for next week's in-class writing.</p>
<p>WEEK 13 Nov 21</p>	<p>Discuss “Rituals” AND think about “Modern times and religion”</p>	<p>WRITING #8: Your observations about both topics, "Calling the Divine" and "Rituals."</p> <p>DISCUSSION: of this week’s topic, "Rituals."</p> <p>DISCUSSION: “How do we keep old ideas in a modern world?” AND/OR questions about final quiz.</p>
		<p>EXTRA CREDIT: Turn in URL and 5 thoughtful questions with a couple of corresponding paragraphs of commentary about your article on a religious issue Dec 5th, with your final for a POSSIBLE 10 to 20 pts. Complete instructions are on Moodle. This will not “save your grade” but can help borderline grades OR an unexcused missed assignment. I don’t “round” grades up, because then</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Continued...</p>

Nov 21 <i>continued</i>		<p>I'd also have to round them down. Your point total is what it is AND it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to know where you stand in the class. (In case you don't know how to figure out a point system...you take your total points and divide them by the ACTUAL TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE for the assignments completed. Still don't understand, ask me.) AGAIN, CHECK all your points to make sure everything graded has been posted to Moodle. If anything is missing or incorrect it is YOUR responsibility to show me the graded paper to verify it was done and the points.</p> <p>Study guide for map quiz AND the final quiz have been available online this whole semester.</p>
WEEK 14 Nov 26 - Nov 30.	HAPPY THANKSGIVING!	
WEEK 15 Dec 5	Any last observations, FINAL QUIZ and MAP QUIZ	<p>Final observations on how we study religion. WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?</p> <p>Both FINAL and MAP quiz will be given in class.</p>
Dec 10-16	Finals week	<p>CHECK YOUR EMAILS UNTIL midnight DECEMBER 20TH FOR ANY FROM ME JUST IN CASE SOMETHING IS MISSING OR INCOMPLETE. I WILL ALSO SEND OUT A GENERAL EMAIL WHEN THE FINAL POINTS ARE TALLIED SO YOU CAN CHECK ONE LAST TIME.</p>

Grade point ranges:

A 400 -- 372
A- 371 – 360

B+ 359 -- 348
B 347 – 332
B- 331 – 320

C+ 329 – 308
C 307 – 292
C- 291 – 280

D+ 291 – 268
D 267 – 252
D- 251 - 240