

syllabus: RS150 World Religions, Fall 2014

Catalog number: 14214

REVISED: 8/7/2014

Classroom: SH390 Friday 11am - 1:45pm

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

Office location: Santa Susana Hall 2nd floor

Description: This course takes you on a whirlwind “tour” of the world, stopping to investigate religions of various regions. The introductions will start with a brief history and then take a general look at the beliefs, practices, and texts or images associated with each religion. The goal of this overview is not to simply “know” some facts about each religion, but rather to attempt to view them without personal culturally constructed presumptions. In other words this class will not view these beliefs through a western or Eurocentric religious lens, but rather the student should understand the various practices and philosophies within the context of their origins. This class should help the student recognize “religious” responses to historical processes including politics, culture, economics, and time.

Students will also read primary sacred texts to get a sense of the sacred for followers. Students will be introduced to the images, places, rituals, and symbols that play an important role in defining the sacred around the world

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

CLASS WORK: attendance, preparation, interpretation, and discussion are an important part of your grade, which also includes following instructions. Participation means speaking in class and you must actively and effectively contribute during class if you want to work toward the full 100 points. Your grade will be dropped 1/3 after the 1st unexcused absence, and another 1/3 for each consecutive unexcused absence (I determine what is a valid excuse). You must notify me no later than the day of your absence.

READING: All assigned reading below must be read BEFORE class the following week.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

A Concise Introduction to World Religions, edited by Oxtoby. Additional reading will include excerpts of sacred texts from various religions that will be available online. Students will print these and bring them for class discussion, along with their textbook. Please check Moodle for the "Read everything but..." for the edition of the book that you have. This tells you what parts you can skip in the reading.

QUIZZES: 7 x 50 points each for 350 points. These can include a variety of short answer, ids, and/or paragraph “essay,” and will be taken directly from the vocabulary and reading questions. Final map quiz 50 points.

THE KEY TO SUCCESS IN THIS CLASS IS TO NEVER BE LATE WITH YOUR QUIZZES! Points add up, no matter how many. 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 points if the questions are deemed good enough by me, which can make up for a bad quiz grade. For a legitimate (my discretion) absence, you may arrange with me to make up a missed assignment BEFORE the NEXT class after your absence via email.

1. 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. **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.

COURSE SLOs:

1. Think empathetically and critically about conflicting religious claims.
2. Acquire knowledge of the history and culture of more than one major religious tradition.
3. Become familiar with the broad outlines of several world religions that continue to shape major civilizations and which have important influences on the culture of Southern California.
4. Grasp the phenomenological approach (as exemplified in the textbook) to the study of religion and culture through the study of clear descriptions and sympathetic insights into the religion of others.
5. Become a more proficient and critical reader through careful study and discussion of a masterfully written survey of selected world religions.

GE SLOs:

Goal: Students will understand the diversity and multiplicity of cultural forces that shape the world through the study of cultures, gender, sexuality, race, religion, class, ethnicities and languages with special focus on the contributions, differences, and global perspectives of diverse cultures and societies.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will:

1. Describe and compare different cultures;
2. Explain how various cultures contribute to the development of our multicultural world;
3. Describe and explain how race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, sexuality and other markers of social identity impact life experiences and social relations;
4. Analyze and explain the deleterious impact and the privileges sustained by racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, classism, homophobia, religious intolerance or stereotyping on all sectors of society;
5. Demonstrate linguistic and cultural proficiency in a language other than English.

POINTS:

	A 500-465	A- 464-450
B+ 449-435	B 434-415	B- 414-400
C+ 399-385	C 384-365	C- 364-350
D+ 349-335	D 334-315	D- 314-300

RS 150 Intro to World Religions SCHEDULE (Subject to change as needed)

WEEK 1 Aug 29	<p>LECTURE: Introduction to the course, subject matter, and introduction to methodology for notebook and making this a successful class.</p> <p>IN-CLASS WRITING SAMPLE: Epic of Gilgamesh</p> <p>LECTURE: Harappa (2700 BCE) to today.</p> <p>READING: Due before Friday of next week: Oxtoby1 Ch 5/Oxtoby 2 Ch 6</p>
WEEK 2 Sep 5	<p>LECTURE: Religions of India (Hinduism)</p> <p>DISCUSSION: Culture of polytheism.</p>
	<p>READING: Due before Friday of next week: Oxtoby1 Ch 6&7/Oxtoby2 7&9</p>
WEEK 3 Sep 12	<p>LECTURE: Religions of India (Finish Hinduism, then Jain and Sikhism)</p> <p>DISCUSSION: The dangers of being an “unknown minority” religion at home and abroad.</p> <p>DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Sep 14: QUIZ #1 HINDUISM</p> <p>READING: Due before Friday of next week: Oxtoby1 Ch 8/Oxtoby 2 Ch 8 (pages 373-398)</p>
WEEK 4 Sep 19	<p>LECTURE: Religions of India (Buddhism)</p> <p>DISCUSSION: The answer to an ancient social system? Dhammapada pg 383, Nagasena 395 Today: Engaged Buddhism</p> <p>DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Sep 21: QUIZ #2 Jain & Sikhism</p> <p>READING: Due before Friday of next week: Oxtoby1 Ch 8/Oxtoby2 Ch 8 (pages 399-434)</p>
WEEK 5 Sep 26	<p>LECTURE: Religions of China (Buddhism)</p> <p>DISCUSSION: To India and BEYOND, the most adaptable religion. Platform Sutra 409</p> <p>READING: Due before Friday of next week: Oxtoby1 Ch 9/Oxtoby2 Ch 10</p>

<p>WEEK 6 Oct 3</p>	<p>LECTURE: Religions of China (Daoism and Confucianism)</p> <p>DISCUSSION: The answer and response in Chinese world views</p> <p>DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Oct 5: QUIZ #3 Daoism & Confucianism</p> <p>READING: Due before Friday of next week: Oxtoby1 Ch 10/Oxtoby2 Ch 11</p>
<p>WEEK 7 Oct 10</p>	<p>LECTURE: Religions of Japan (Shinto and Buddhism)</p> <p>DISCUSSION: Politicizing of religion</p> <p>DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Oct 12: QUIZ # 4 Buddhism & Shinto (Japan)</p>
	<p>READING: Due before Friday of next week: Oxtoby1 Ch 1/Oxtoby2 Ch 2</p>
<p>WEEK 8 Oct 17</p>	<p>LECTURE: Indigenous peoples of (student choice from Australia, North, Central, or South American, Polynesia and headhunting)</p> <p>DISCUSSION: Handouts</p> <p>READING: Due before Friday of next week: Oxtoby1 Ch 2/Oxtoby2 Ch 3</p>
<p>WEEK 9 Oct 24</p>	<p>LECTURE: Religions of the Middle East and Europe (Judaism)</p> <p>DISCUSSION: The first born, can Jews in Jerusalem ever have peace?</p> <p>READING: Due before Friday of next week: Oxtoby1 Ch 3/Oxtoby2 Ch 4</p>
<p>WEEK 10 Oct 31</p>	<p>LECTURE: Religions of the Middle East and Europe (Christianity)</p> <p>DISCUSSION: The middle child, will the Christianities continue to splinter?</p> <p>DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Oct 26 (or Nov 2): QUIZ #5 Judaism and Indigenous peoples</p> <p>READING: Due before Friday of next week: Oxtoby1 Ch 4/Oxtoby2 Ch 5</p>
<p>WEEK 11 Nov 7</p>	<p>LECTURE: Religions of the Middle East and Europe (Islam)</p> <p>DISCUSSION: The last sibling, responses to modernity</p> <p>DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Nov 9: QUIZ #6 Christianity</p>

WEEK 12 Nov 14	DISCUSSION: Relations between the big 3. DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM NOV 16: QUIZ #7 Islam
WEEK 13 Nov 21	DISCUSSION: What are the most critical religious issues today? Map quiz questions?
WEEK 14 Nov 29	HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!!
WEEK 15 Dec 5	In-class map Quiz and last discussion. Class will held for the full time.
	CHECK YOUR EMAILS UNTIL midnight Dec 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.