**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE**

**WORLD RELIGIONS (RS 150)**

 (Class Number: 13667)

**FALL 2015**

**Instructor:** Mustafa Ruzgar, Ph.D.

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**Class hours & Classroom:** TuTh 9:30 am—10:45 am & SH 120

**Office hours & Place:** TuTh 12:30—1:30 & 3:30—4:00 pm @ SN 234 or by appointment

**Course Description:**

This course will introduce students to some of the major religious traditions of the world. We will start with a discussion of religion in general by focusing on some basic concepts pertaining to the study of religion. After addressing issues of definition, function, and origin of religion, as well as science-religion relationship, we will analyze the following religions in detail: Indigenous Sacred Ways, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

We will pay particular attention to the history of each religion, its worldview, scriptures, rituals, ethics, art, and community. When appropriate, there will be an additional theme to be emphasized for each religion, for example, gender issues in Islam and environmental issues in Indigenous Sacred Ways.

By the end of the semester, students will be able to demonstrate efficiency in all of RS 150 SLO’s and the majority of GE SLO’s outlined below.

**RS 150 SLO’s**

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 SLO’s**

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.

**Required Texts:**

-- *Living Religions* (9th Edition) by Mary Pat Fisher (Pearson). ISBN: 978-0-205-95640-1 (From here on, referred as Fisher).

--There will be some additional material to be distributed in the classroom.

**Course Requirements and Assignments:**

**1-Attendance and Participation:** Students are expected to come to class having read the assigned material and ready to participate in class discussions. **Regular attendance and effective participation** will yield 100 points. Attending all the class sessions does not mean that you will get 100 points unless you **actively and effectively** participate in class discussions.

**2- Six Quizzes:** There are going to be six quizzes on the specified dates (Please refer to the schedule). All the quizzes will consist of multiple-choice questions and will be strictly from your reading assignments for the week you are given the quiz. Your lowest graded two quizzes will be dropped off and the rest (remaining four) will count towards your final grade. There will be **absolutely no make-ups** for the quizzes.

**3-Site Visit or Interview**: Visit a religious temple (which belongs to a different religion than yours) or interview a person (from a different religion) about his/her religion. Guidelines will be provided for each assignment. **No electronic submissions will be accepted**.

**4- Midterm Examination:** The midterm examination will include short essays, definitions, true or false questions, and multiple-choice questions from the topics discussed prior to the exam.

**5- Final Examination:** Thefinal examination will include short essays, definitions, true or false questions, and multiple-choice questions and will be **cumulative**.

**6-Reflection Paper**:Write a reflection paperfocusing only on one religion (different than yours). Your reflection paper should be **five to six pages**, typed, double-spaced, and with an organized body. Address what you knew about this particular religion before coming to this class and point out how this class changed, improved, or obliterated your previous perception. You **must not** use any sources except for your textbook, lecture notes, and class discussions for this assignment. **No electronic submissions will be accepted**.

**Grading & Rubrics:**

Attendance and Participation: 100 points

Quizzes: 100 points (25 points for each quiz)

Site Visit or Interview: 100 points

Midterm Examination: 200 points

Final Examination: 300 points

Reflection Paper: 200 points

**Grading Scale:**

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| --- | --- |
| Percentage | Grade |
| 1000 - 960 points | A |
| 959 - 900 points |  A- |
| 899 - 870 points |  B+ |
| 869 - 830 points | B |
| 829 - 800 points | B- |
| 799 - 770 points |  C+ |
| 769 - 730 points | C |
| 729 - 700 points | C- |
| 699 - 670 points |  D+ |
| 669 - 630 points | D |
| 629 - 600 points |  D- |
|  599 points or below | F |

**Policy on Assignment Due Dates:**

All the assignments must be submitted on specified the due dates. No electronic submissions will be accepted. No computer excuses for late submission will be accepted.

**Special Needs:**

If you have any special needs, please see me after the class to discuss your options.

**Test and Exam Policy:**

Make-ups will be granted for the midterm and final exams only in the case of severe emergencies, which include severe illness requiring doctor’s visit or hospitalization, death in the family, and college-excused events (which must be approved ahead of time). All emergencies must be documented in writing.

**Policy on Academic Dishonesty:**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any form of cheating or plagiarizing will result in a failing grade for the course and be reported to the university for appropriate disciplinary action.

**Provisions for Possible Syllabus Addenda or Revisions:** There may be some changes in the syllabus. Students are required to comply with any changes made by the instructor.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

Week 1 (August 25, 27)

Introduction; Getting to know each other

Week 2 (September 1, 3)

Religious Responses

Readings: Fisher: Chapter 1

Week 3 (September 8, 10)

Religious Responses Continued

Week 4 (September 15, 17)**—Quiz #1, September** **15**

Indigenous Sacred Ways

Readings: Fisher: Chapter 2

Week 5 (September 22, 24)

Indigenous Sacred Ways Continued

Week 6 (September 29, October 1)**—Quiz #2, September** **29**

Hinduism

Readings: Fisher: Chapter 3

Week 7 (October 6, 8)

Hinduism Continued

Week 8 (October 13, 15)**—Quiz #3, October** **13**

Buddhism

Readings: Fisher: Chapter 5

Week 9 (October 20, 22)**—MIDTERM EXAMINATION ON OCTOBER 22**

Buddhism Continued

Week 10 (October 27, 29)**—Quiz #4, October** **27**

Judaism

Readings: Fisher: Chapter 8

Week 11 (November 3, 5)

Judaism Continued

Week 12 (November 10, 12)**—Quiz #5, November** **10**

Christianity

Readings: Fisher: Chapter 9

Week 13 (November 17, 19)**—SITE VISIT/INTERVIEW PAPER DUE ON NOVEMBER 19**

Christianity Continued

Week 14 (November 24)**—Quiz #6, November 24**

Islam

Readings: Fisher: Chapter 10

Week 15 (December 1, 3)

Islam Continued

Week 16 (December 8)***—*REFLECTION PAPER DUE ON DECEMBER 8**

Islam Continued & General Review