**syllabus: RS 150 Intro to World Religions, Spring 2017**

Catalog number: 14551 Classroom: JR118 11am to 1:45 pm

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Office hours: SN 229 6:30 to 7:30 AM and 2 - 3 PM Friday and via Skype by appointment

**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.

You get ONE unexcused absence, then your grade will be reduced by 1/3 for each subsequent unexcused absence. To be considered for excuse, I have to receive an email from you NO LATER than the day of the absence. No email /no excuse. I make the determination whether it is an acceptable reason or not. It is your responsibility to sign the class roll sheet.

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

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

*Many Peoples, Many Faiths,* Robert S. Elwood and Barbara A. McGraw, eds. 10th edition. 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..." sheet which will tell you what to 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, lecture, and reading. Final map quiz 50 points.

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

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. There are 2 extra credit options, of which you may pick ONE. These are on Moodle, in the information section at the top of the weekly breakdown and will only be worth up to 20 points depending on how exceptional the quality and information included in the submission are deemed by me. This can only make up for a bad quiz grade, but not replace a quiz. For a legitimate (my discretion) absence, you may arrange with me to make up a missed assignment within 2 weeks of its original due date. I WILL BE ADHERING TO A PASS/FAIL SYSTEM OF GRADING which means if you fail to follow the few instructions for this class you will simply not get the points you missed. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to know what quiz is due when and to get it done. All the rest of your work is simply reading and participating in the classroom.

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 Feb 9th 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 will be used except when requested by the assignment**, 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;

**WEEKLY DISCUSSION GROUP INSTRUCTIONS REVISED 2016:**

**TAKE NOTES from the lectures and reading. ONLY GROUP 8 MAY USE A COMPUTER TO LOOK UP ARTICLES, the rest of the groups will use their reading notes/the book. IF I SEE ANYONE USING THEIR COMPUTER/PHONE OTHER THAN GROUP 8, EVERYONE IN THE GROUP WILL BE DOCKED 10 PARTICIPATION POINTS APIECE. 9 groups of approximately equal number will work together all semester. Each group will pick a permanent leader. Each week we will take 10 minutes for each group to pool their information from their homework/reading notes together. After the first assigned section from the list below, each leader is responsible for keeping track of each subsequent section and members' attendance AND participation. Leader will mark an "S" next to the designated speaker for the week, the names of the rest of the group present on any given day, AND an "X" next to members who contribute to the presentation. This is only to find out how often and if there is a lot of non-participation in any groups. Some people seem to do better in the small group setting instead of the classroom, so it is important for those people for their participation. AS FOR section number, if a group starts with #4, the following week they will do #5, and the next week #6 and so on. The group with #9 will do #1 the following week. After 10 minutes prep, each group spokesperson will have 3 minutes to present the group's KEY information. The spokesperson will change each week so that everyone presents.**

**The 9 discussion groups for each religion:**

**1) Place of origin/geography/early culture/diaspora**

**2) Founder (moment of conversion)/Religious professionals (key responsibilities)**

**3) Core beliefs/cultural differentiation**

**4) Texts/stories (example)**

**5) Rituals/Rites/Holidays**

**6) Congregational services/individual and/or group practices**

**7) Gender**

**8) In the news today**

**9) 3 non-offensive questions to ask a follower that you'd like to learn more about.**

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

**The yellow highlighted name next to group discussion lets you know what religion you will be doing in the group work that week.**

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| WEEK 1  Jan 27 | **LECTURE:** Introduction to the course, subject matter, and go over syllabus.  **IN-CLASS WRITING SAMPLE:** Epic of Gilgamesh  **LECTURE:** Religions of India: start with Hinduism and Harappa culture (2700 BCE) to today.  **READING**: Due before Friday of next week: See "Reading in Many Peoples, Many Faiths" sheet for what sections from Hinduism are assigned. |
| WEEK 2  Feb 3 | **LECTURE:** Religions of India: Hinduism continued.  **DISCUSSION:** Group information session (Hinduism).  **READING:** Due before Friday of next week: Read the listed selections from the book for Jain AND 2 Jain "Online Readings" |
| WEEK 3  Feb 10 | **LECTURE:** Religions of India: Jain and start Sikh  **DISCUSSION:** Group information session (Jain).  **DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Feb 12th:** QUIZ #1 HINDUISM  **READING:** Due before Friday of next week: Read the listed selections from the book for Sikh AND 1 Sikh "Online Reading" | |
| WEEK 4  Feb 17 | **LECTURE:** Religions of India: Finish Sikh and start Buddhism  **DISCUSSION:** Group information session (Sikh).  **READING:** Due before Friday of next week: read the listed selections from the book for Buddhism. | |
| WEEK 5  Feb 24 | **LECTURE:** Religions of India: finish Buddhism and start  Religions of China: Daoism and Confucianism  **DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Feb 26th:** QUIZ #2 Jain & Sikhism  **READING:** Due before Friday of next week: Read the listed selections from the book on Religion in China (Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism). | |
| WEEK 6  Mar 3 | **LECTURE:** Religions of China: Finish Confucianism and then Chinese Buddhism  **DISCUSSION:** Group information session (Daoism).  **READING:** This is a good time to catch up on the readings from the previous weeks. Make notes of questions you have about the complex philosophical ideas you are learning about and bring them in for class discussion. | |
| WEEK 7  Mar 10 | **LECTURE:** Religions of China: Finish Chinese Buddhism and start Religions of Japan: Shintoism  **DISCUSSION:** Group information session (Confucianism)  **READING:**  Due before Friday of next week: Read the listed selections from the book on Shintoism.  **DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Mar 12th:** QUIZ #3 Daoism & Confucianism | |
| WEEK 8  Mar 17 | **LECTURE:** Religions of Japan: Finish Shinto and Japanese Buddhism  **DISCUSSION:**  Group information session (Shintoism).  **READING:** Due by Saturday April 1st: Read the listed selections from the book on indigenous peoples. | |
| WEEK 9  Mar 20-26 | **Spring Break, ENJOY!** | |
| WEEK 10  Mar 31 | Cesar Chavez Holiday: No class but work still due. If you have questions about the quiz topic, email me no later than 2 days before deadline.  **DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Apr 2nd**: QUIZ # 4 Buddhism & Shinto (Japan)  **READING:** Due before Friday of next week: Read the listed selections from the book on Monotheism. | |
| WEEK 11  Apr 7 | **LECTURE:** Indigenous peoples of the South Pacific.  **DISCUSSION:** Group work on Myths of Indigenous peoples in the South Pacific and Americas. Instructions on Powerpoint.  **READING:** Due before Friday of next week: Read the listed selections from the book on Judaism. | |
| WEEK 12  Apr 14 | **LECTURE:** Religions of the Middle East: Zoroastrianism and start Judaism.  **READING:** Due before Friday of next week: Read the listed selections from the book on Xtianity. | |
| WEEK 13  Apr 21 | **LECTURE:** Religions of the Middle East: Finish Judaism and start  **DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM April 23rd:** QUIZ #5 Judaism  **READING:** Due before Friday of next week: Read the listed selections from the book on Islam. | |
| WEEK 14  Apr 28 | **LECTURE:** Religions of the Middle East: Finish Xtianity and Islam.  **DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM April 30th:** QUIZ #6 Xtianity  **READING:** Due before Friday of next week: Find articles for discussions the next 2 Fridays. Instructions on Moodle. | |
| WEEK 15  May 5 | **DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM May 7th:** QUIZ #7 Islam  **REVIEW:** map quiz | |
| WEEK 16  May 12 | **DISCUSSION**: In-class map Quiz and last discussion. I will have participation points estimated. Class will held for the full time! Anyone leaving early will lose 10 participation points. | |
| Finals week  May 13-19 | CHECK YOUR EMAILS UNTIL midnight May 21st 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 and when grades will be submitted so you can check one last time. | |