COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course provides an introduction to significant forms of religion around the world, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Through a combination of lectures, class discussions, writing exercises, films, slides, and readings of sacred texts, we will develop a better understanding of and appreciation for the diverse religious traditions of the world. As we study these traditions, we will also have an opportunity to reflect critically upon some thematic connections that tie various traditions together at the same time that they illustrate their differences.

Student Learning Objectives for World Religions 150:
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.

General Education Student Learning Outcomes: Comparative Cultural Studies/ Gender, Race, Class, Ethnicity Studies and Foreign Languages.
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.

GE Student Learning Outcomes:
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.

RS150 is a GE Paths (Global Studies /Comparative Cultural Studies) Students enrolled in the GE Paths program explore a special theme or major question from a multidisciplinary perspective in the context of their general education requirements. If you are interested in this program you can find additional information and sign up through the website: www.csun.edu/gepaths or you can contact them directly at gepaths@csun.edu.

Student Learning Outcomes from Global Studies Path Courses:
Two or more of the learning outcomes listed below are addressed in each Global Studies Path course:
1. Students will be able to define globalization and key concepts related to globalizing trends.
2. Students will be able to recognize a variety of globalized political, economic, socio-cultural, and aesthetic forms.
3. Students will be able to discuss the political, economic, socio-cultural and/or historical underpinnings of globalization
4. Students will be able to analyze the diverse consequences of globalization including its impacts on various social formations (e.g. identity, culture, art, communities, media, markets, nation-states, among other examples) and/or the environment.
5. Students will be able to demonstrate how globalization affects and is affected by one’s own life.

Academic Integrity: Academic honesty is a core value at CSUN. As such, students are expected to perform their own work. When practiced, academic honesty ensures that all students are fairly graded. Cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices undermine the educational process and will not be tolerated. Cheaters and all who assist them will be subject to disciplinary action with could result in suspension, expulsion, or other disciplinary actions.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:
1. Participation/Assignments (20 pts.): Students are expected to attend class regularly and contribute to discussions by submitting their responses to the professor’s prompt, which can be found in the “Assignments” link on moodle (login to moodle.csun.edu, using your csun login ID and password). Submit your response in one solid paragraph (~150 words, excluding quotes); late submissions will incur a penalty (1 point per day late or fraction thereof) and posts more than five (5) days late will not be accepted. There will be a total of three (3) short individual assignments, each worth 5 pts. Assignments will be graded based on good reflection of readings, evidence of critical thinking, and use of appropriate religious terms.

Also, there will be one graded team assignment on one of the religious traditions. Teams will be formed at the end of week one and each team (5-6 members) will be assigned to do a brief PowerPoint presentation (6-8 slides, ~15 mins.) on one of the religious traditions during the week that religious tradition is covered in class. This presentation should only discuss current events/practices associated with the religion in America and/or World today, and talk about some of its artistic representations (e.g., symbols, art, architecture, etc.). The team presentation is worth five (5) points and is applied towards the participation portion of your grade. Team Presentations will be given during the last week of corresponding religious tradition covered. Only those members who participate will receive points for the team presentation. PowerPoint slides with names of those who participated must be submitted in moodle on the day of the presentation. Creative presentations are encouraged.

2. Site Visitation Assignment (15 pts.): Students will attend a worship service of a religious group other than their own tradition and write a report (4 full pages, 12-pt font, double-spaced; worth 12 pts) that describes and analyzes the site/ritual observed; specific guidelines is posted on moodle. Students will give a short oral presentation of their visit (3 pts; no presentation = no points.) during the last week of classes; group presentation will be permitted, as long as each student contributes.
3. Quizzes (5 pts. each, 20 pts.). There will be a short quiz after concluding each religious tradition. Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class. Students arriving late more than five minutes will not be allowed to take the quiz. Five(5) quizzes will be given in total; the best four will be counted towards the final grade.

3. Exams (45 pts.): a midterm exam (on Eastern Religions) consisting of fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice and true/false questions, identification of terms, interpretation of an excerpt from a sacred text, and short essay questions (25 pts.); a second exam (on Western Religions; 20 pts.), which has 40 multiple choice questions, covering Western Religions only. A one-week "grace period" with a five(5) points deduction for an unexcused absence will be allowed for the midterm exam only (emergency situations will be taken into consideration).

4. Extra Credit (Optional; up to 4 pts.): Visit a local museum (LACMA, Getty Center, Norton Simon, etc.) and write an essay (2 full pages, 12 pt font, double-spaced) analyzing the religious motifs found in two (2) religious art pieces (paintings, sculptures, etc.) - must relate to course content in the essay. Note: you must attach the entrance ticket (or a photo of the ticket) to your paper as proof of attendance to receive full credit. Due on or before the last day of class, not accepted after.

Important*** You will be required to submit all assignments via moodle. Be sure to submit your files using Microsoft Word .doc or .docx attachments (Note: I cannot open .wps or other obscure versions; you may also simply type in your text). I will give you one warning if you submit your file incorrectly; if it happens again, you will be assessed a penalty point for not following directions. It is important for you to monitor your grades; your assignments will be graded usually within a week. If in case you receive a "0" for an assignment you submitted, that means I was not able to open your file, so you must resubmit that assignment to my email, klee@csun.edu by the date set by me, or you will not receive any points for the assignment.

Grading % (out of 100 total points): 94-100 A, 90-93 A-, 87-89 B+, 84-86 B, 80-83 B-, 77-79 C+, 74-76 C, 70-73 C-, 60-69 D, <60 F.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

SCHEDULE:

EASTERN RELIGIONS

HINDUISM
Week 2 Indus Valley Civilization and Vedic Religion. Read Smith, Chapter on Hinduism. The Upanishads. "Varanasi" (VIDEO)


BUDDHISM
Week 4 Life of Buddha. Read Smith, Chapter on Buddhism. Dharma: The Four Noble Truths. QUIZ #1 (on Hinduism)
“Little Buddha” (VIDEO).
Week 7       The Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism. “Kundun” (VIDEO). QUIZ #2  
(on Buddhism).

CONFUCIANISM
Week 8       Life of Confucius and His Teachings. Read Smith, Chapter on  
ASSIGNMENT #3

TAOISM/SHINTO
Week 9       Lao-tzu’s Tao-te ching. Read Smith, Chapter on Taoism. Read Genzo  
Yamamoto’s web-article on “Shinto,” from Gale Virtual Reference Library (GVRL),  
which can be accessed via CSUN Library website under “Find Resources” then  
“Database A-Z.” Shinto: Way of the Gods” (VIDEO); Novak, Chapter 4. QUIZ #3 (on  
Confucianism)

Week 10      Review 
MIDTERM EXAM

WESTERN RELIGIONS

JUDAISM
Week 11      Origins of Judaism. Read Smith, Chapter on Judaism.  

CHRISTIANITY
Week 12      Life of Jesus Christ and the Gospels. Read Smith, Chapter on  
QUIZ #4 (on Judaism)

ISLAM
Week 13      Life of Muhammad and the Muslim Community. Read Smith, Chapter  
on Christianity.  “The Five Pillars” (VIDEO). Novak, Chapter 7. QUIZ #5 (on  
Christianity)

SITE VISITATIONS
Week 14      Student Presentations on Site Visitations
Week 15      Review 
SECOND EXAM. Extra Credit due
Week 16      Site Visitation Assignment due