“The lamps are many, but the Light is One; look, therefore, to the Light.” Jalal ad-Din Rumi

Professor: Dr. Linnea Pearson—Office hours before/after class/ and by appointment ACI 302

This course serves as an introduction to several of the world’s great religious traditions to prepare FIU students to become “citizens of the world.”

Our first class meeting will be on the day of the 50th anniversary of the now fabled March on Washington, D.C., in 1963, and Dr. King’s historic “I Have a Dream” speech which heralded ideals from the Jewish and Christian religions so intrinsic to the founding of America. And, as this term begins, a terrible war is raging in Serbia resurrecting ancient rivalries between differing religious groups whose competition for territory goes back into antiquity. If you are to be/become a “world citizen,” you must understand this history—of how religion can be a great source of liberation and freedom and connection and also a source of division and antipathy.

We will meet on Wednesday evenings from 5-7:45 p.m. in AC I 226 at FIU/BBC. Our class time together is sacrosanct, an opportunity for us to learn from each other and to engage in the educational process within a supportive and caring community. The classroom interaction is a vital part of this learning experience and thus class attendance is mandatory (except in cases of illness, family emergency, or religious holidays). If you don't wish to engage in such a process, on-line courses are available. If you do wish to engage, you will enjoy the process!

The World’s Religions by my former mentor, Huston Smith, Harper/Collins publisher, 1991, is the required text. Also required: The Tao Te Ching/ Stephen Mitchell translation, and Siddhartha by Herman Hesse—any edition. They are available in paperback & the bookstore.

However, many reading and research assignments will also come from the Internet to keep us all updated on current world events and to supplement the basic texts above.

Basic class requirements: class participation=40% of final grade; this grade includes a one-page typed paper summarizing your learning from each class and other occasional assignments; a brief class presentation on one assigned religion=5%; a midterm exam= 15%, a final exam=20%; and a final 10-page paper, typed/double-spaced, PMLA guidelines, on how your experience in this class this term has abetted your understanding of the importance religion plays in the world today in matters of Social Justice, Global Harmony, Gender Equity, and Ecological Responsibility, 20%. This is part of the “Global Learning” requirement for this class.

Because inter-personal interaction is so vital to this course, lap-tops and cell-phones must be turned off during class time; there will be a break about 6:30 p.m. for cell-phone use.
We will begin and end each class with a “centering” time.

CLASS SCHEDULE FOR WORLD RELIGION 3308-B53—FALL 2013

8-28  **Introduction** to the Study of “Religion” and the Vital Role of Class Interaction

9-4  **Creation Myths** of Varying Religious Traditions—“**What Religion Means to Me**” paper (Rosh Hashanah observance for students from the Jewish tradition)

9-11  **No Class in Observation of 9-11**; opportunity to purchase texts and to do on-line research

9-18  Discussion of **Islam** with a Guest Speaker; Smith, chapters I and VI, and on-line research

9-25  Discussion of **Judaism** with a Cantorial Prayer Leader; Smith, chapter VII and on-line tba.

10-2  Discussion of **Christianity** with Guest Speaker; Smith, VIII; on-line research tba

10-9  Class **Review** and Mid-Term **Exam** (matching, multiple choice, short answer)

10-16  Discussion of **Hinduism and Mahatma Gandhi**; Smith II, **short paper** on Gandhi & his relation to Martin Luther King and Mandela---i.e. the doctrines of non-violence; on-line tba

10-23  **Taoism and Shinto**; Smith V and **short paper** on one verse from **The Tao Te Ching**

10-30  Discussion of **Buddhism**; Smith III and **Siddhartha; short paper** on novel and on-line tba

11-6  **Primal Religions**; Smith IX and assigned topics for on-line research and **presentations**

11-13  **New Age Religions**; Smith X and assigned topics for on-line research and **presentations**

11-20  “**Tying It All Together**” Class Review for Final Exam and Final Papers due on 12-4

11-27  First Day of Hanukah—**No Class**—Time to prepare Final Papers and Study for

12-04  **Final Exam, Final Papers Due and Final Class Celebration of All Religious Traditions!**

**Please note:** We will be exploring “new territory” in this class this term out of a desire to relate responsibly to a particularly crucial moment in world his/her/story. The success of this endeavor is going to require the caring, thoughtful, and alert participation of each student to be “successful.” “Attitude” is very important. If understanding how the great religions of the world are interacting now and have interacted throughout the ages is not of VITAL interest to you, then, perhaps you would be well-advised to take a course with a more “traditional” focus.

Contact: Email: linneapearson@gmail.com or, for emergencies, home office: 305 770 2254.

“Namaste!”