WORLD RELIGION (3308-B52) SPRING 2010

Dr. Linnea Pearson, Biscayne Bay Campus: 5-7:45 p.m., Wednesdays

This course will offer an introduction to several of the world’s religions playing out on the global stage today, a personal experience of a “new” religious tradition, and, hopefully, an incentive to learn more about the significance of religion in human civilization at this crucial time in world history. **It will help prepare you to become a “citizen of the world” and a more responsible human being, able to take your part in global discourse.**

Active participation in each class is crucial and will constitute 20% of your final grade. This means the following: 1. coming to class well-motivated and on time for each and every session 2. turning off all “electronic devices” so you can be “wholly present” in the classroom 3. studying the assigned readings 4. being “psyched up” to participate with *simpatico* in class activities and discussions.

Together, we will work to create a caring atmosphere in which we can both share our own thoughts and listen to others' respectfully. This in an integral part of the study of World Religion as I first came to know it based on my early experiences at Harvard Divinity School in the 20th Century.

You will be required to pay a site visit, with others in the class, to a service conducted in a religious tradition other than your own. If your own religion precludes your doing this, you should not take this class. This site visit and an interview with a leader in that religious tradition will constitute your final paper. A list of potential Site Visit locations will be distributed later in the semester.

Brief papers based on the assigned readings will be required periodically to encourage your in-class participation. These are to be inserted into a manila folder with a copy of your photo id and vital contact information printed on the front cover. You will be asked to bring this folder to the second class session and it will stay with the professor. It will constitute the file for all your class work this semester.
Your grade will be determined by your class attendance and participation (20%), a mid-term exam (20%), a final exam (25%), a final paper (25%), and an in-class report on the site visit with your site visit team (10%). Guidelines will be provided for the site-visit, the in-class report and for your final paper.

Your final paper will constitute a report on your site visit, both an objective and subjective evaluation of the experience, and a brief summary of what you’ve learned about the religion you’ve chosen. It is due on day of the Final Exam.


Dr. Pearson will be available for meetings after class and by appointment in Academic I, 301: phone 305 919 5859; email: linneapearson@gmail.com.

The Schedule of Classes below is subject to revision based on class size and composition. All students are advised to develop a support system of two or three other students to provide a back-up system to share notes and assignments in case of classes missed and other emergency situations. Such support systems contribute to the experience of the class as a community of scholars.

Proposed Class Schedule Spring 2010

1-7: Introduction to the Class. What Was Your Earliest Religious Experience?

1-14: The Study of World Religions Today. Text, chapter 1. Short introductory paper on your religious experience to date. Come with a file folder with copy of your picture ID on the front cover and your name printed clearly. This is required for me to hold your papers.

2-2: **East Asian Religions.** Text, chapter 8. “Traditions of Human Civilization”

2-9: **The Tao Te Ching:** choose your favorite 3 passages to reflect on their relevance to your life and to share in class. One-page paper due on The Tao.

2-16: **Hinduism.** Text, chapter 6, 301-335. The Origins of the Religion.

2-23: **Hinduism.** Text, chapter 6, 335-387. The Postcolonial Experience.

3-2: **Mid-Term Review.** Short paper due on the “Ministry” of Mahatma Gandhi.

3-9: **Mid-Term Exam. Also,** Site Visit Information and Small Group Formation.

3-16: **No class. FIU Spring Break.** Begin Site Visit Contacts in the Community.

3-23: **Buddhism.** Text, chapter 7. “Engaged Buddhism” and the Dalai Lama.

3-30: **Siddhartha.** Short paper due describing the principal characters.

4-6: **Class Review.** Finalizing site visit reports & Final Paper Instructions.

4-13: **Site Visit Presentations.** One-page papers due with Site Visit Information.

4-20: **Passover Observed. No class.** An opportunity, also, for final study.

The Final Exam will be multiple choice, short answer, and short essay. You must bring a large Blue Exam Book to class along with your Final Paper.

**For Your Final Paper:** consult the “Appendix” to Many Peoples, Many Faiths for guidelines on “Writing a Term Paper,” “Writing a Religious Visit Paper,” and “Internet Research. Your paper should be at least 12 pages long including footnotes and bibliography. **Warning: Plagiarism=an F! Footnotes are vital!**

**Note:** This brief introduction to World Religions is intended to encourage you to study and experience all religions in greater depth so that you might find a way to offer insight and wisdom to others as the various religions play out on the world stage in the years to come, hopefully, in peace and accord.

Remember, in this 21st century, you are called to be “a citizen of the world.”