Instructor: Mr. Daniel Alvarez                      Class Hours: MWF
Office Hours: TBA                                   Class Room: Academic Health Center  3-110
DM 458A or by Appointment                       Spring 2011

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
Examines the origins, teachings, and practices of selected world religions. The specific religions selected for examination may vary from semester to semester.

TEXTBOOKS

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES
1. To provide the student with the "raw materials" for the study of religion by immersing the student in the beliefs, doctrines, rituals, symbols, and (select) scriptures of some of the major world religions.

2. To facilitate the informed cross-cultural comparison and evaluation of ways of being religious by focused study of select world religions.

3. To widen, enhance and enrich the intellectual and spiritual horizons of the student by exposure to the spiritual beauty, vitality, coherence, plausibility and richness of non-Christian, non-Western approaches to the transcendent or ultimate reality.

4. To challenge the student to enter sympathetically into the worldview of the religious traditions selected for study.

5. To provide the context for dialogue and discussion that will enable the student to live in an enormously complex, interdependent, and religiously plural world with patience, understanding, and appreciation for that which is different, and in some cases irreconcilably different, from his or her own "worldview."

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES
Mid-Term Exam, on Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism: 50 questions, .5 pts. each (25 pts.)
Final Exam, on Judaism, Christianity and Islam: 100 questions, .5 points each (50 pts.)
Quiz #1: 20 questions, .5 pts. each (10 pts.)
Quiz #2: 20 questions, .5 pts. each (10 pts.)
5 pts. awarded to every student for completing the course.

The exams are objective (true/false, multiple choice), and the questions will be drawn from the required
reading, lectures, and videos. Given this fact, it is important that the student make an effort to attend every class. Also, please remember to bring #2 pencils with you on the day of the quizzes and exams. The answers will be recorded on scantron sheets to expedite test results.

The mid term exam will consist of forty (40) questions; the final exam will consist of one hundred (100) questions. The quizzes will be twenty (20) questions each. The final exam will not be comprehensive; it will cover only the material after the midterm exam (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam).

Quizzes will be given promptly at the beginning of the classes on the scheduled dates. If a student arrives late, he/she is responsible for completing the quiz within the class period. No exceptions will be made. Furthermore, there will be no make up quizzes.

A 94-100   C 73-77
A- 90-93    C- 70-72
B+ 88-89    D+ 68-69
B 83-87     D 63-67
B- 80-82    D- 60-62
C+ 78-79    F 0-59

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1

Introduction: Syllabus, Requirements, Textbooks, Overview of course
The Study of Religion since the 19th century: History vs. Dogma (I)

The Study of Religion since the 19th century: History vs. Dogma (II)

NOTE: All future readings will be accessible through Blackboard [http://online.fiu.edu/login.html]
To log in: Username: PantherID
Password: Birthdate in the following form MMDDYYYY
If you have problems logging in to Blackboard contact UTS 305-348-2284
DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO FIND OUT IF YOU ARE REGISTERED ON BLACKBOARD

Week 2

Film: Pre-Aryan Civilization of the Indus Valley
Hinduism: Pre-Classical or Vedic Religion
Required Reading: Hopfe, et al., chapter 4, 71-81; Edgerton, 111-119.

Week 3

Hinduism: The Upanishads
Required Reading: Hopfe, 81-89; Edgerton, 120-131; 164-178.

Hinduism: Bhagavad Gita: Karma, Jñana, Bhakti
Required Reading: Hopfe, 89-107; Bhagavad Gita, 3-91.

Week 4

Film: "330 Million Gods"

Theravada Buddhism: The Four Noble Truths, Nirvana, Anatta
Required Reading: Hopfe, 127-136; 152-153 ("The Noble Eight-Fold Path").

Week 5

Film: "Footprint of the Buddha"

Film: “Siddhartha,” based on the novel by Herman Hesse.
(To be able to watch the entire film the class is asked to arrive promptly at 10:55 a.m. or before and leave at 12:30 p.m.)

Quiz #1, on Hinduism and Theravada Buddhism due

Week 6

Mahayana Buddhism
Required Reading: Hopfe, 136-148; 153-154 ("The Infinite Compassion of the Bodhisattva").
Recommended: Film: “Little Buddha.”

Film: "Land of the Disappearing Buddha" (on Pure Land and Zen Buddhism).

Week 7

Chinese Religions: Taoism
Required Reading: Hopfe, 169-183; 195-197 (selection from the Tao Te Ching).

Chinese Religions: Confucianism
Required Reading: Hopfe, 183-194; 197-200 (selection from the Analects of Confucius).

Week 8

Mid-Term Exam (on Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism) due

Israel: The pre-history of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
Required Reading: Hopfe, 241-251; 274-276 (Deuteronomy 5, 6: “The 10
Week 9

Prophecy in tension with Kingship and Priesthood

*Required Reading*  Hosea, Amos, Micah (whole books); Jeremiah 7, Deuteronomy 20, Isaiah 56, 58, 60, and 61.

Judaism: The Emergence of Rabbinic Judaism

*Required Reading*  Hopfe, 250-273.

Week 10

Judaism: Kabbalah, Pietism, Emancipation, Holocaust

Christianity in the First Century: The Historical Jesus

*Required Reading*  Hopfe, 280-304; 318-326; Matthew 5-7 (in Hopfe), 25:31-46; Luke 4:1-30; Galatians 1, 2; II Corinthians 11-13; Acts 15.

Week 11

Jewish, Greek, Gnostic Christianities: Early Catholicism

From Early Catholicism to the Emergence of the Catholic Tradition

Week 12

The Emergence of the Protestant Tradition: 16th – 20th Centuries

*Required Reading*  Hopfe, 304-320.

Islam: The Prophet and the Faith of Islam

*Required Reading*  Hopfe, 333-349; 362-370 (selection from the Qur'an).

Week 13

Film: "There is no God but God"

**Quiz #2, on Judaism and Christianity due**

Islam: Development of Law, Sufism, 18th & 19th Century Reform Movements, Islamic Fundamentalism (from Ibn Hanbal to Muhammad Al'Wahhab)

*Required Reading*  Hopfe, 350-361.

Week 14

Islam in the 19th and 20th Century: Arab Nationalism vs. Islamic Fundamentalism

Wither Islam?

Week 15

Film: “The Message” (Part I)

Film: “The Message” (Part II)