The lamps are many, but the Light is One. Look, therefore, to the Light.”
RUMI Persian/Turkish/Sufi Poet—1207-1275 (This quote is the epitome of this course.)

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 contemporary 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 is 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 file folder with a copy of your photo id and vital contact information printed on the front cover. The papers will not be graded. The folder, which you will
prepare and bring to our second class, will stay with the professor. It will constitute a partial record of your class work this semester. Typed papers only.

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. Exams will be multiple choice and will be graded electronically. Your final paper will constitute a report on your site visit, both an objective and subjective evaluation of the experience, and a summary of what you’ve learned this semester about the difference between “exclusivism” and “universalism.”

Note: the Site Visit is a time consuming process from March 7th-April 4th, involving intensive small group collaboration and meetings and visits to places of worship. It will be fun, engaging, and edifying if you are willing/able to put in time and energy and to learn more about others and yourself in relation to others. Please note this on your calendar and plan for it in your head! Smile!

Texts: Living Religions by Mary Pat Fisher, 8th edition, Prentice Hall; Siddhartha by Herman Hesse; The Tao Te Ching, (please get the Stephen Mitchell translation). Also The New American Bible, St. Joseph edition (or your own!).

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 and religious holiday observations. Revisions will be announced at the second class session. Students are advised to develop a support system of 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. I’m not teaching this class “on line” because my observation is that the academic world today provides little opportunity for students to learn from each other and to engage in real human communication in a classroom filled with individuals of varied ethnic and religious origins. And, also, usually in my classes we have fun!
Class Schedule Spring 2012 (may be amended)

1. Introduction to the Class. Universalism or Exclucism? Which do we choose?

2. The Study of World Religions Today. Text, chapter 1. Short introductory paper on your religious experience to date. **Come with your manila file folder with copy of your picture ID** on the front cover and your name printed clearly. **This is required** and will be a written record of your work throughout the semester.


6. Daoism and Confucianism, Text chapter 6, and The Tao Te Ching

7. Shinto, Text chapter 7—Short paper on your favorite verse in the Tao Te Ching

8. Mid-Term Review: Explanation of Site Visit Process and Final Paper Guidelines. Follow the MLA guidelines for form, footnotes, and bibliography. Note also: We will discuss plagiarism—it cannot be tolerated in scholarly work!

9. Mid-Term Exam—Multiple Choice—and Small Group Formation. If you miss this class you will not be able to participate in the Site Visits; very important!


12. Begin Site Visit Presentations in Class—15 minute limit. **Turn in typed list of names of participants and note each one’s contributions to the Site Visit Process at Start of Presentation. Be creative! Have fun! Enjoy each other & the Project!**

13. Site-Visit Presentations Continue. Note: It is important to come to both of these sessions as the Final Exam will be based, in part, on these presentations.

No Class—Final Exam Week April 23-28. Come to Exam with Final Paper in an appropriate folder, a small Blue Exam Book (25 cents at the FIU Bookstore), and both pencil and pen. The Exam will be multiple choice, short answer/short essay.

This brief introduction to World Religions is meant 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 they play out on the World Stage in the years to come. It is meant to help you to become a peace-making Citizen of the World!


7. Mid-Term Review. Short paper due on the “Ministry” of Mahatma Gandhi.
8. **Mid-Term Exam. Also,** Site Visit Information and Small Group Formation.

9. **No class. FIU Spring Break.** Begin Site Visit Contacts in the Community.

10. **Buddhism.** Text, chapter 7. “Engaged Buddhism” and the Dalai Lama.

12. **Siddhartha,** Class Review, Site Visit and Final Paper Review.

13. **Site-Visit Presentations—Site Visit Group Papers Due**

   4-14 **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.”**