

Studies in World Religions

Course Syllabus- Spring 2019

REL: 3308 U08 1188

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Office/Hours: Through Appointment Only

Course Description

Studies in World Religions is a survey course in which the student begins to discover the philosophy, origins, history, etc., of numerous religions. These religions vary depending on semester however, the class will cover Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Shintoism, Christianity, etc.

Course Objective

Students will be able to:

- Explain the basic history, development, and belief system of various religious traditions
- Recognize religious themes and concepts found in other cultures
 - Compare and contrast these different themes and concepts among different cultures
- Identify the meaning behind religious concepts and symbols
- Evaluate their own religious views in regard to other cultures and paradigms of religious thought
- Apply critical thinking to various topics in the fields of religious studies.

Disclaimer

It is important to state that this class teaches religion in the academic perspective. The class may discuss topics that are controversial because religion always has perspectives on all parts of human life and experience.

Required Text

Hopfe M. Lewis Religions of the World (11th or 12th edition)

ISBN-10: 0-205-15860-9

ISBN-13: 978-0-205-15860-7

Grade Components

- 15% Sacred Readings and Discussions
- 15% Quizzes
- 20% Site Visit Essay (5-6 pg.)
- 25% Mid-Term (Multiple Choice)
- 25% Final Exam (Multiple Choice)

Sacred Readings/Discussions and Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken every class; also. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get the class notes from somebody. Participation in class discussion is fundamental, also, there will be some smaller assignments given where you will read and excerpt of a religion that is being discussed (FUN STUFF). Afterwards, you will engage in an online discussion using Canvas!

Reading Policy

It is expected of each student to read the assigned chapters prior to class discussion.

Quizzes

There will be a total of 4-6 Quizzes which roughly will be every other week. The majority of the quizzes will include the key terms of the chapters as well as religious concepts. This is to ensure that the student is reading the text and following the lectures as well. The Quizzes will be taken online and they are timed.

Site Visit and Essay

****Students May Not Submit Work from A Previous Semester Or From Another Class For This Assignment Or Any Other Assignment In This Course. It Will Be Flagged For Plagiarism. Please submit it to me by email.**

- Format: MLA Format Required
- Content: Field research and supplementary research
- Length: 1800-2000 Words (5 pgs.), Not Including Your Works Cited Page
- Double – Spaced, 12-Pt Font, Arial Or Times New Roman Font
- Sources: 3 Academic Sources Minimum
- Works Cited Page required

At the top of your paper, please include the name of the place you visited, the date you visited, and the names of any people you may have interviewed. Also include the particular sect of the religion. [If you visited a Muslim mosque, was it Sunni or Shi'ite? If you visited a Jewish synagogue, was it Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform? If you visited a Buddhist temple, was it Theravadin or a Mahayana sect?] You may want to ask this when you call to find out if you visit is acceptable. Full details below:

For the Site Visit, the student must perform field research by attending a religious service outside of their own religious tradition. For this assignment, I'd like you to immerse yourself in something unfamiliar (example: Christians should perform field research on a non-Christian religion, like Buddhism, Hinduism etc.)

Your research should ideally progress in three stages:

1. **Preliminary Research.** Before going to the service, it is a good idea to do some preliminary research on the religious tradition. For example, if you're attending a Hindu ceremony, you will want to read the textbook chapter and watch the PowerPoint presentation on Hinduism. Additionally, I strongly recommend that you call the site you'll be visiting and let them know you're coming to do research for a class project. Ask them if there's any dress code requirements, or anything else you should keep in mind. You may also want to ask if they will allow you to take notes during the service. (Some Jewish denominations, for example, do not allow writing on Shabbat {Saturday}.)
2. **Field Research.** Attend the service and observe closely. You may want to take notes. Some students have found it helpful to attend services in groups, and you're welcome to do this.
3. **Supplementary research.** After your visit, you'll need to do research on things that may have been unfamiliar to you. If you go to a Jewish service and you see the men wearing kippahs (or yarmulkes), you don't want to write in your essay, "There were these men and they were wearing these funny hats but I don't know why." This is where your additional research comes in. Find out what the hats are called, and find out why they're worn. If you go to a Muslim mosque and you see the worshippers washing their hands and feet, you don't want to write in your essay, "Everyone was washing their hands and feet but I don't know why they did that and it was pretty weird." Research the practice and find out why it's done.

Finally, after completing these three stages, write a detailed and insightful essay. You should demonstrate a general understanding of the religious tradition, but make most of your essay about your visit. Use your research to explain your experience. **What did you see around you? What did the place of worship look like? Did you see any religious art or religious symbols there? How were people dressed? What rituals were performed? Finally, include your personal reaction to the service. How did you respond? Did you enjoy the visit or did you feel uncomfortable? Was your opinion on the religion changed at all?**

Midterm and Final

The Midterm and Final is a multiple choice test.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, or attempting to pass off another's work as your own, falls into three different categories:

1. A written work that is entirely stolen from another source;
2. Using quotations from another source without properly citing them; and
3. Paraphrasing from another source without proper citations.

Students are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. Offenders will receive a 0 for the plagiarized assignment

Late Policy

Late paper will not be accepted unless there is prior notice to the inability of completing the assignment on time.

Course Calendar (Note)- It is subject to change but you can view the course **calendar on** canvas.