CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHRIDGE

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

RS150-01: World Religions

Fall 2016

Mon/Wed 9:30-10:45 AM

Sequoia Hall 101

Dr. James D. Findlay, Instructor

Office: Santa Susanna 419

Office Hours: MW 12:30-2:00 PM; or by appointment.

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**Freshman Connection**

The Freshman Connection aims to link subject matter, faculty, and students; to use involving pedagogies (experiential learning, hands-on activities, peer reviews, discussions, group and pair work, interactive exercises, etc.); and to foster students’ development of social and academic relationships as members of the university community.

**Our Cohort: Humanities Learning Community**

RS150 (#13774), MW 9:30-10:45 AM in Sequoia Hall 101 with Prof. James D. Findlay

UNIV 100 (#19038), MW 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM in Sagebrush Hall 108 with Prof. Nyla Dalferes

UNIV 100 (#19040), MW 12:30-1:45 PM in Sagebrush Hall 108 with Prof. Jeff Sosner

**RS150 Course Description**: Study of selected major world religions, with emphasis on tribal religions and the historic international faiths of Asia and the Near East. Investigates rituals, ethics, institutional structures and the cultural ethos of religions, as well as their myths, doctrines and sacred texts. (Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies.)

**Student Learning Objectives for World Religions 150:**

1. Think empathetically and critically about conflicting religious claims.

2. Acquire knowledge of the history and culture of more than one major religious tradition.

3. Become familiar with the broad outlines of several world religions that continue to shape major civilizations and which have important influences on the culture of Southern California.

4. Grasp the phenomenological approach (as exemplified in the textbook) to the study of religion and culture through the study of clear descriptions and sympathetic insights into the religion of others.

5. Become a more proficient and critical reader through careful study and discussion of a masterfully written survey of selected world religions.

**General Education Student Learning Outcomes: Comparative Cultural Studies/ Gender, Race, Class, Ethnicity Studies and Foreign Languages.**

Goal: Students will understand the diversity and multiplicity of cultural forces that shape the world through the study of cultures, gender, sexuality, race, religion, class, ethnicities and languages with special focus on the contributions, differences, and global perspectives of diverse cultures and societies.

**GE Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Describe and compare different cultures;

2. Explain how various cultures contribute to the development of our multicultural world;

3. Describe and explain how race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, sexuality and other markers of social identity impact life experiences and social relations;

4. Analyze and explain the deleterious impact and the privileges sustained by racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, classism, homophobia, religious intolerance or stereotyping on all sectors of society.

**READINGS**:

Required Textbook: *Many People, Many Faiths: Women and Men in the World Religions: Tenth Edition*. Robert S. Ellwood and Barbara A. McGraw. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2013. Other required readings will be available through Oviatt Library Reserves, either as a printed copy at the Reserve Desk (4th Floor) or through ERes. The ERes password for this class is **4218**. Instructions for accessing ERes readings are available on our Course Moodle page (available at moodle.csun.edu).

**Course Requirements**:

Regular attendance at all class sessions noted on syllabus. Unexcused absences will be noted, and will affect each offender’s final grade.

Respectful behavior towards all other participants in process of class discussions and activities. **This includes placing all cellphones in the OFF position, and removal of earpieces or headphones, before entry into the classroom space. FAILURE TO ABIDE BY THIS REQUIREMENT WILL SERIOUSLY AFFECT STUDENT’S GRADE.**

Careful reading of all assigned materials by the date indicated on the syllabus, as well as productive participation in class discussions, group analysis, and other in-class activities.

**BEFORE** each class session, students must log onto our class Moodle page (access at moodle.csun.edu), and post on the Discussion Forum for that date, responding to the assigned readings. Students must post their own response AND a response to the post of AT LEAST ONE other person in the class **AT LEAST ONE HOUR BEFORE** the class session.

In addition, students will keep a journal (further explanation below), and will use it to write **five (5) short essays** during the semester. The due dates for each of these assignments are listed in the course schedule. Each essay should be 2-4 pages, double-spaced.

There will be a Mid-Term Exam, which will take place on Wed. Oct. 19, in class, and a Final Exam, Wed Dec. 14, 8:00-10:00 AM, Sequoia Hall 101.

Finally, students will submit a Major Project, 10-15 pages in length, typed, double-spaced. This project will be either (1) a description of and a reflection on a visit to worship community from a religious tradition other than one’s own OR (2) a research project on a subject related to religious traditions or themes covered by the course. If the research project is chosen, proper footnotes and bibliography are required, using MLA or Chicago Style format. Subject and method for this assignment MUST be chosen in consultation with Instructor. Due Wed. Nov. 23.

Unless an agreement has been made with Instructor previous to any due date, NO LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED, and will receive a grade of “F”.

**Grading:**

Short Essays 25% (5% each)

Moodle Posts 10%

Class Participation 10%

Mid-Term Exam 15%

Final Exam 20%

Site Visit/Research Project 20%

92-100 = A 78-79 = C+

90-91 = A- 72-77 = C

88-89 = B+ 70-71 = C-

82-88 = B 60-69 = D

80-81 = B- Below 60 = F

**Course Schedule and Plan**

Mon Aug. 29: Introductions, Syllabus

Wed Aug. 31: Defining Religion. READING: Ellwood 1-5

Mon. Sept. 5: NO CLASS, Labor Day Holiday

Wed. Sept. 7: Methods in the Study of Religion. READING: Ellwood, 5-22

Mon. Sept. 12: Indigenous Religion I. READINGS: Ellwood, 23-46. ERes: “Lakota Belief and Ritual,” 216-226, 240-241, 118-127.

Wed. Sept. 14: Indigenous Religion II. READING: David Carrasco, “Aztec Religion” from *Encyclopedia of Religion*.

Mon. Sept. 19: Hinduism I. READING: Ellwood, 47-86. ERes: From the Rig-Veda: Book 1, Hymn 1: Agni. Pausya and Polomon, from the Mahabharata. Ganesh Narratives from the Sivapurana. **First Short Paper Due**

Wed. Sept. 21: Hinduism II. READINGS: Ellwood, 87-99. ERes: K.K. Young, “Hinduism” from “Women in World Religions.”

Mon. Sept. 26: Hinduism III. Sights and Sounds.

Wed. Sept. 28: Buddhism I. READING: 113-142. R. Thurman, ed., “The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti.”

Mon. Oct. 3: Buddhism II. READINGS: Ellwood, 142-156. ERes: N. Schuster Barnes, “Buddhism” from “Women in World Religions.” **Second Short Paper Due.**

Wed. Oct. 5: Buddhism III. Sights and Sounds.

Mon. Oct. 10: China I. READINGS: Ellwood, 162-178, 198-201. ERes: Kung Fu-Tzu, Selections from *Analects*. T. Kelleher, “Confucianism” from “Women in World Religions.”

Wed. Oct. 12: China II. READINGS: Ellwood, 179-187, 201-203. ERes, Selections from *Tao Te Ching*. B.E Reed, “Taoism” from “Women in World Religions.”

Mon. Oct. 17: China III. Sights and Sounds.

Wed. Oct. 19: MID-TERM EXAM.

Mon. Oct. 24: Monotheism and Zoroastrianism. READINGS: Ellwood, 229-238. M. Boyce, Zoroastrianism.

Wed. Oct. 26: Judaism I. READINGS: Ellwood, 240-263. ERes: F. Rosenzweig, Selections from *The Star of Redemption*. J. Neusner, Invitation to the Talmud. **Third Short Paper Due.**

Mon. Oct. 31: Judaism II. READINGS: Ellwood, 263-268. ERes: D. Carmody, “Judaism,” from “Women in World Religions.”

Wed. Nov. 2: Judaism III. Sights and Sounds.

Mon. Nov. 7: Islam I. READINGS: Ellwood, 344-374. ERes: Selections from the Qu’ran. Hadith Texts on Various Subjects.

Wed. Nov. 9: Islam II. READINGS: Ellwood, 374-382. Tariq Ramadan, “One Muslim Presence, One Vision.” Selections from Tariq Ramadan’s Website: English. R.T. Harris, “On Islamic Nonviolence”

Mon. Nov. 14: Islam III. READINGS: 382-392. ERes: R. Hasan, “Challenging the Stereotypes of Fundamentalism: An Islamic Feminist Perspective.” Selections from “Women’s Mosque of America.”

Wed. Nov. 16: Islam IV. Sights and Sounds. **Fourth Short Paper Due**

Mon. Nov. 21: Sikhism. READING: Ellwood, 102-105. N-G Kaur Singh, “Sikhism,” from *Encyclopedia of Religion*.

Wed. Nov. 23: Christianity I. READINGS: Ellwood, 273-323. **Site Visit/Project DUE.**

Mon. Nov. 28: Christianity II. READINGS: ERes: Pope Urban II, “Speech at Clermont,” “Readings on Christianity I;” “Church in the Modern World,” Pope Paul VI; “The Freedom of a Christian,” Martin Luther; “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” M. L. King

Wed. Nov. 30: Christianity III. Christianity and Gender. READINGS: Ellwood, 324-337.

Mon. Dec. 5: Contemporary Religious Landscape. READINGS: Ellwood, 397-413. ERes: Readings on Post-Modernism. C. Kang, “Wole Soyinka on Religion.” C. Stockwell, “Fundamentalisms and the Shalom of God: An Analysis of Contemporary Expressions.” C.L. Grossman, “Christians Lose Ground, ‘Nones’ Soar in New Portrait of US Religion.”

Wed. Dec. 7: Summary and Conclusions.

**Fifth Short Paper Due**

FINAL EXAM – Wed. Dec. 14, 8:00-10:00 AM, Sequoia Hall 101

**Journal Writing and Preparation of Short Paper Assignments**

For this course, you must keep a “learning journal.” This exercise is intended to 1) improve your ease and skill in writing; 2) help you to better understand and recall information from readings and class sessions; and 3) assist you in clearly articulating ideas that you develop during the course. **How you keep this journal is your own choice**. Students may use a spiral-bound notebook, a loose-leaf binder divided into sections, or an electronic journal kept on a disk or other computer drive. Whatever means you use for the journal, it is meant to be your own personal record of your learning and thinking during this course. **You are the only person who will ever read the entirety of your journal**. **HOWEVER, the Instructor may ask any student to submit their journal during the semester for review. This is not required of ALL students, but may be required of ANY STUDENT AT ANY TIME during the semester.**

In addition to recording information from your notes taken during class time, you should write in your journal after you have done the reading for a particular session. Each week you should write ***at least* 2-3 pages** in your journal. Some topics you may choose to address as you write are:

1. What were the important points of this reading (or class session)?

2. Do you agree or disagree with those points or ideas? Why?

3. What questions do you have about the reading (or class session)?

4. How does the reading/class session relate to your own experience(s) and/or ideas, or to other reading and research that you have done beyond this class?

Each time that a short paper is due, you should select from your journal the entry (or entries) that you consider to be the most important to you since the previous paper, reflect on it, and compose a formal written essay based on that reflection. This essay should NOT be a summary of your notes, NOR a recapitulation of Instructor presentations, class discussions, or reading materials. Rather, it MUST be a thoughtful reflection on what you have learned and an exploration of issues that the class has raised for you. Each assignment should be 2-4 pages in length (as noted above). These papers will be graded on spelling, punctuation, grammar, coherence and clarity of written expression, and style, as well as content.

It is recommended that students utilize the CSUN Writing Centers in the preparation and editing of all written assignments. Instructor may require students to use the Centers for any written work, especially if a student’s writing needs to be strengthened. The LRC Writing Center is located in the Oviatt Library, Third Floor, East Wing, and can be reached by telephone at **(818)-677-2033** or e-mail at **lrc@csun.edu**. The website is http://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/learning-resource-center/writing-center. The Pan African Studies Writing Center is in Sierra Hall 273; phone number for appointments is **818-677-2084**. The Chicano Studies Writing Center is in Jerome Richfield Hall Room 142; phone number is **818-677-7881**.

As noted above, unless arrangements are made with Instructor previous to the due date of any assignment, **NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED, and will always receive a grade of “F.”**