**syllabus: RS 150 Intro to World Religions, Fall 2016**

Catalog number: 14547 Classroom: SH390 11am to 1:45 pm

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Office hours: SN 229 6:30 to 7:30 AM and 2 - 3 PM Friday and via Skype by appointment

**Description:** This course takes you on a whirlwind “tour” of the world, stopping to investigate religions of various regions. The introductions will start with a brief history and then take a general look at the beliefs, practices, and texts or images associated with each religion. The goal of this overview is not to simply “know” some facts about each religion, but rather to attempt to view them without personal culturally constructed presumptions. In other words this class will not view these beliefs through a western or Eurocentric religious lens, but rather the student should understand the various practices and philosophies within the context of their origins. This class should help the student recognize “religious” responses to historical processes including politics, culture, economics, and time.

Students will also read primary sacred texts to get a sense of the sacred for followers. Students will be introduced to the images, places, rituals, and symbols that play an important role in defining the sacred around the world

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**:

**CLASS WORK:** attendance, preparation, interpretation, and discussion are an important part of your grade, which also includes following instructions. Participation means speaking in class and you must actively and effectively contribute during class if you want to work toward the full 100 points.

You get ONE unexcused absence, then your grade will be reduced by 1/3 for each subsequent unexcused absence. To be considered for excuse, I have to receive an email from you NO LATER than the day of the absence. No email /no excuse. I make the determination whether it is an acceptable reason or not. It is your responsibility to sign the class roll sheet.

**READING**: All assigned reading below must be read BEFORE class the following week.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

*Many Peoples, Many Faiths,* Robert S. Elwood and Barbara A. McGraw, eds. 10th edition. Additional reading will include excerpts of sacred texts from various religions that will be available online. Students will print these and bring them for class discussion, along with their textbook. Please check Moodle for the "Read everything but..." sheet which will tell you what to skip in the reading.

**QUIZZES:** 7 x 50 points each for 350 points. These can include a variety of short answer, ids, and/or paragraph “essay,” and will be taken directly from the vocabulary, lecture, and reading. Final map quiz 50 points.

POINTS: A 500-465 A- 464-450

B+ 449-435 B 434-415 B- 414-400

C+ 399-385 C 384-365 C- 364-350

D+ 349-335 D 334-315 D- 314-300

THE KEY TO SUCCESS IN THIS CLASS IS TO NEVER BE LATE WITH YOUR QUIZZES! Points add up, no matter how many. ASK QUESTIONS NOW IF THIS IS NOT CLEAR TO YOU.

FINALLY, I only give one extra credit as I’ve noticed that students think it is a substitute for applying themselves to the regular assignments. If you want a certain grade, keep up with the work assigned. There are 2 extra credit options, of which you may pick ONE. These are on Moodle, in the information section at the top of the weekly breakdown and will only be worth up to 20 points depending on how exceptional the quality and information included in the submission are deemed by me. This can only make up for a bad quiz grade, but not replace a quiz. For a legitimate (my discretion) absence, you may arrange with me to make up a missed assignment within 2 weeks of its original due date. I WILL BE ADHERING TO A PASS/FAIL SYSTEM OF GRADING which means if you fail to follow the few instructions for this class you will simply not get the points you missed. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to know what quiz is due when and to get it done. All the rest of your work is simply reading and participating in the classroom.

1. **PLAIGIARISM:** YOU ARE REQUIRED to find CSUN’s Academic Dishonesty policy (just type “academic honesty” in the Search CSUN box and then pick the PDF titled “ACADEMIC DISHONESTY.” The only copying and pasting you will do in this class is sending me an email by midnight Sep 9th of the first paragraph of the PDF which starts, “The maintenance of academic integrity and quality education is the responsibility of each student within this university and the California State University system.” Do not pick the faculty one. YOU WILL LOSE 10 points if you do not turn this in. **NO OUTSIDE SOURCES will be used except when requested by the assignment**, so if I find any copying (and pasting) in your submissions you will get 0 for the assignment without chance for a make-up.

**COURSE SLOs:**

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.

**GE SLOs:**

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.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will:

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;

**WEEKLY DISCUSSION GROUP INSTRUCTIONS:**

**TAKE NOTES from the lectures and reading. ONLY GROUP 9 MAY USE A COMPUTER TO LOOK UP ARTICLES, the rest of the groups will use their reading notes/the book. IF I SEE ANYONE USING THEIR COMPUTER/PHONE OTHER THAN GROUP 9, EVERYONE IN THE GROUP WILL BE DOCKED 10 POINTS APIECE. 9 groups of approximately equal number will work together all semester. Each group will pick a permanent leader. Each week we will take 10 minutes for each group to pool their information from their homework/reading notes together. After the first assigned section from the list below, each leader is responsible for keeping track of each subsequent section. (EG. if a group starts with #4, the following week they will do #5, and the next week #6 and so on. The group with #9 will do #1 the following week.) After 10 minutes prep, each group spokesperson will have 3 minutes to present the group's KEY information. The spokesperson will change each week so that everyone presents.**

**The 9 discussion groups for each religion:**

**1) Place of origin/geography/early culture/diaspora**

**2) Founder (moment of conversion)/Religious professionals (key responsibilities)**

**3) Core beliefs/cultural differentiation**

**4) Texts/stories (example)**

**5) Rituals/Rites**

**6) Holidays/group practices**

**7) Congregational services/individual practices**

**8) Gender**

**9) In the news today (Extended instructions on Moodle)**

**RS 150 Intro to World Religions SCHEDULE (Subject to change as needed)**

**The yellow highlighted name next to group discussion lets you know what religion you will be doing in the group work that week.**

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| WEEK 1  Sep 2 | **LECTURE:** Introduction to the course, subject matter, and go over syllabus.  **IN-CLASS WRITING SAMPLE:** Epic of Gilgamesh  **LECTURE:** Religions of India: start with Hinduism and Harappa culture (2700 BCE) to today.  **READING**: Due before Friday of next week: See "Read everything but..." sheet for what excerpts from Hinduism are assigned. |
| WEEK 2  Sep 9 | **LECTURE:** Religions of India: Hinduism continued.  **DISCUSSION:** Group information session (Hinduism).  **READING:** Due before Friday of next week: Read the listed selections from the book for Jain. |
| WEEK 3  Sep 16 | **LECTURE:** Religions of India: Finish Hinduism, then Jain  **DISCUSSION:** Group information session (Jain).  **DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Sep 18th:** QUIZ #1 HINDUISM  **READING:** Due before Friday of next week: Read the listed selections from the book for Sikh. | |
| WEEK 4  Sep 23 | **LECTURE:** Religions of India: Sikh and start Buddhism  **DISCUSSION:** Group information session (Sikh).  **READING:** Due before Friday of next week: Read the listed selections from the book on Daoism. | |
| WEEK 5  Sep 30 | **LECTURE:** Religions of China: Daoism and Confucianism  **DISCUSSION:** Group information session (Daoism).  **DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Oct 2nd:** QUIZ #2 Jain & Sikhism  **READING:** Due before Friday of next week: Read the listed selections from the book on Confucian thought. | |
| WEEK 6  Oct 7 | **LECTURE:** Religions of China: Buddhism  **DISCUSSION:** Group information session (Confucianism)  **DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Oct 9th:** QUIZ #3 Daoism & Confucianism  **READING:**  Due before Friday of next week: Read the listed selections from the book on Shintoism. | |
| WEEK 7  Oct 14 | **LECTURE:** Religions of Japan: Shinto and Buddhism  **DISCUSSION:**  Group information session (Shintoism).  **READING:** Due before Friday of next week: Read the listed selections from the book on indigenous peoples. | |
| WEEK 8  Oct 21 | **LECTURE:** Indigenous peoples of the South Pacific.  **DISCUSSION:** Group information session (All Buddhisms).  **DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Oct 23**: QUIZ # 4 Buddhism & Shinto (Japan)  **READING:** Due before Friday of next week: Read the listed selections from the book on Judaism. | |
| WEEK 9  Oct 28 | **LECTURE:** Religions of the Middle East and Europe: Judaism  **DISCUSSION:** Group information session (Judaism).  **READING:** Due before Friday of next week: read the listed selections from the book on Xtianity. | |
| WEEK 10  Nov 4 | **LECTURE:** Religions of the Middle East and Europe: Christianity  **DISCUSSION:** Group information session (Christianity).  **DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Nov 6:** QUIZ #5 Judaism and Indigenous peoples  **READING:** Due by Nov 18: Read the listed selections from the book on Islam. | |
| WEEK 11  Nov 11 | **NO CLASS: Veterans' Day observed**  **DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Nov 13:** QUIZ #6 Christianity | |
| WEEK 12  Nov 18 | **LECTURE:** Religions of the Middle East and Europe: Islam  **DISCUSSION:** Group information session (Islam).  **DISCUSSION:** Relations between the big 3.  **DUE BEFORE 11:55 PM Nov 20:** QUIZ #6 Islam  **BRING IN Dec 2:** A news article on any religion today.  ARTICLES: Instructions are on Moodle. | |
| WEEK 13  Nov 25 | **HAPPY THANKSGIVING!** | |
| WEEK 14  Dec 2 | **DISCUSSION:** What are the most critical religious issues today? We will use the articles you brought in.  **REVIEW:** map quiz | |
| WEEK 15  Dec 9 | **DISCUSSION**: In-class map Quiz and last discussion. I will have participation points estimated. Class will held for the full time! Anyone leaving early will lose 10 participation points. | |
| Finals week  Dec 12 -18 | CHECK YOUR EMAILS UNTIL midnight Dec 20th for any from me just in case something is missing or incomplete. I will also send out a general email when the final points are tallied and when grades will be submitted so you can check one last time. | |