Course Syllabus

Course Description:
PHIL 2321 (3 Credit Hours)
Philosophy of Religion
This is a Texas Common course Number. This is a DCCCD Core Curriculum Course.
Prerequisite: Developmental Reading 0093 or English as a Second Language (ESOL) 0044 or have met the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) standard in reading.
Course Description: Critical investigations of major religious ideas and experiences. Semester topics may include: the nature of religion, the existence of God, world religions, mysticism, sexuality and religion, the interpretation of death or other issues. (3 Lec.)

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)
PHIL 2321 meets the following general Core Curriculum Intellectual Competencies at Brookhaven College. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to demonstrate competence in the academic study of philosophy by being able to do the following:
1. Demonstrate knowledge of a major religious idea or experience by writing an essay explaining the nature of the idea or experience.
2. Articulate and informed personal reaction to a major religious idea or experience by writing an essay explaining reasons for that reaction.
3. Apply critical thinking skills by writing an essay assessing the value of the theological, moral, and ethical tenets of religion involved in a major idea or experience.

Course Approach and Objectives:
The topic of this philosophy of religion course is “Religion and Global Terrorism.” It explores the rise of global terrorism under the very peculiar aegis of religion, paying specific attention to extreme violence among adherents of the three Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Students will explore relevant case studies and develop opinions regarding the nature of and possible causes of extreme religious violence. Students then will utilize their knowledge to write an essay answering the following questions: Why do intelligent and otherwise pious individuals commit acts of terror in the name of religion? How ought we to approach religious terrorism in hopes of resolving its impact and global influence?

Course Textbooks:
Required
ISBN: 978-0-520-24011-7

*Extra-credit Reading (Choose One)*


**Recommended Supplies:**
In addition to the course textbook, a folder should be purchased (if you haven’t purchased one already) in which to organize supplemental reading material.

**Course Policies:**
No credit will be given on assignments handed in after due dates.
Quizzes missed due to absence may be made up only by arrangement with the instructor.
YOU must initiate this arrangement; I will not approach you, as this is a waste of my time.
No food and/or drinks (with the exception of water) are allowed in the classroom.
Cell phone use is not permitted in the classroom under any circumstances.
For theses and all other matters relating to my expectations of student conduct, I refer you to the student handbook and the Upper School code of honor.

**Additional Notes:**
It is imperative that assigned readings be completed on schedule, as class sessions will involve relevant quizzes and group discussions in addition to lectures provided by the instructor.
Class activities will typically comprise the following: (1) lectures; (2) discussions about the reading; (3) quizzes over assigned reading; (4) one break if needed (five minutes).

**Course Credit:**
*Parish Episcopal School* (1/3)
*Brookhaven College* (3 credit hours)

**Grade Type:**
*Parish Episcopal School*

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*Brookhaven College*

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Skills and Other Emphases:
Reading, critical thinking, cultural awareness, and effective writing skills are emphasized and developed in this course. Upper School core curriculum relevancy also is emphasized.

Student Assessment:
Final averages are based on multiple-choice quizzes over assigned reading, three response papers, and a current events project.

Specifics
Response Papers: Two of the three response papers will comprise brief, informal essays explaining the student’s reaction to and assessment of various *films we will view in class. The final paper will comprise a formal trimester essay addressing the questions stated in the Course Objectives and Methodology.

Course Current Events Project: Each student is required to complete a current events project addressing the topic of the State of Israel’s recent and repeated claim that Jerusalem represents its “complete and united” capital. The project may comprise either a written essay or Power Point presentation answering two related questions: Why all the fuss over Jerusalem and how ought the United States approach Israel in its claim? Further specifics will be provided in class. **Due date: Thursday, November 1.**

*Films: Jesus Camp; Israel’s Next War (PBS Frontline); Paradise Now.*

Averages are calculated according to the following percentages: Reading quizzes = 40%; Response papers = 50%; Current Events Project = 10%.

Note on Response Paper and Essay Formats:
Response papers are to be 2 to 4 double-spaced pages in length. All margins must be one inch (top, bottom, right, left), and the font must 12 point Times New Roman or Garamond (because I like these). *THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THESE GUIDELINES. Deviations will result in automatic point deduction. Remember the first two rules of college success: First, find out what the instructor wants. Second, provide it.*

Contact Information:
Office 4029: 972.239.8011, Ext. 2370
E-mail: schepey@parishepiscopal.org; schepey@dcccd.edu
I will be available to meet with students before and after class or by appointment.

Course Outline:
I. Introduction to Contemporary Religious Issues (Dual Credit): Religion and Global Terrorism
II. Introduction to Terror in the Mind of God, Beyond Fundamentalism, Crisis of Islam, and The Tenth Parallel.
III. Overview of World Religions, Globalization, and the Resurgence of Public Religion
IV. Terror and God, Juergensmeyer, pp. 3-10
V. Terror and God, Juergensmeyer, pp. 10-15
VI. Introducing the Revd. Michael Bray, Juergensmeyer, pp. 19-24
VII. Film Review and Discussion: Jesus Camp
VIII. Violence in Oklahoma City, Juergensmeyer, pp. 30-36
IX. Troubles in Northern Ireland, Juergensmeyer, pp. 36-43
X. The State of Israel, God, and the Promise of Land, Aslan, pp. 34-51
XI. Yoel Lerner, Yigal Amir, and the Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, Juergensmeyer, pp. 45-50
XII. Film Review and Discussion: Israel's Next War (PBS Frontline)
XIII. Baruch Goldstein and the Catastrophic Messianism of Rabbi Kahane, Juergensmeyer, pp. 50-60
XIV. Current Events Project: Handouts will be provided in Class
XV. Bombing at the World Trade Center, Juergensmeyer, pp. 61-70
XVI. Hamas and Palestinian Liberation, Juergensmeyer, pp. 70-80
XVII. Radical Jihad, Juergensmeyer, pp. 80-84
XVIII. Film Review and Discussion: Paradise Now
IX. Final Thoughts: Review and Assessment

Other Related Topics (Time Permitting):
XX. Perceptions and Misperceptions of Islam
XXI. European Colonization and Orientalism
XXII. Islam and Islamism
XXIII. Eliza Griswold on the Tenth Parallel.

*Extra-credit Assignment: (Up to 2 points added to final average) Answer questions pertaining to the Recommended Reading. Honor Bound – (Questions for Crisis of Islam are currently available online in Essential Course Documents; questions for The Tenth Parallel will be made available in due course.)

Additional Information (Brookhaven College):
Phil 2321 addresses the following Exemplary Educational Objectives and Core Curriculum Intellectual Competencies as set forth by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board:

Exemplary Educational Objectives in Religion
1. To demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.
2. To understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context.
3. To respond critically to works in the arts and humanities.
4. To articulate and informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities.
5. To demonstrate knowledge of the influence of literature, philosophy, and/or the arts on intercultural experiences.

Core Curriculum Intellectual Competencies
1. Reading - the ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials - books, documents, and articles - above 12th grade level.
2. Writing - the ability to produce clear, correct and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion and audience - above 12th grade level.
3. Speaking - the ability to communicate orally in clear, coherent, and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience - above 12th grade level.
4. Listening - analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication, possess
sufficient literacy skills of writing, reading - above 12th grade level.
5. Critical Thinking - think and analyze at a critical level.