Major Religions of the World

Richland College
Dallas, TX
Division: Humanities, Fine and Performing Arts
972.238.6250
May 2011 (May 15-June 1, 2012)

Course Information:
PHIL 1304.8489/9008
Credit hours: (3)
Class meets: On-line, eCampus site

Required Texts: Be sure to buy both!

- *Experiencing the World’s Religions (4th or 5th Editions)*, Michael Molloy, McGraw-Hill, 2005. – 5th is available in the Richland Bookstore
- *Holy Bible* (there is an on-line version in External Links)
- *Holy Qur’an* (there is an on-line version in External Links)

Suggested Texts:


Course Description:
This course surveys the major world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In our study, we will emphasize belief system, history and contemporary practice. Students are encouraged to explore religious traditions outside of the major systems presented in the class.

Course Prerequisites:
Developmental Reading 0093 or English as a Second Language (ESOL) 0044 or have met the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) standard in Reading.

Purpose of the Course:
In this course we will undertake a broad examination of certain of the world’s major religious traditions. The course will focus particular attention upon the world-view that serves to shape each tradition, with emphasis placed upon selected primary sacred texts which support their respective religious systems.

While there are far too many active religious traditions in the world today to allow a comprehensive survey of all of them to be undertaken in a single course, we will focus our attention upon seven of the most prominent traditions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
Course Objectives (Things you will take with you from this class if you apply yourself):

1. Identify the major religious traditions of the world and describe some of their predominant characteristics.
2. Identify and grasp certain general phenomena that are common to religions.
3. Familiarize yourself with a specific contemporary religious tradition and describe its identifying characteristics.

Core Curriculum Intellectual Competencies:
REL 1304 satisfies the following Core Curriculum Intellectual Competencies defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board:

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 adapted to purpose, occasion and audience – above 12th grade level.
4. **Listening**: the ability to analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication, possess sufficient literacy skills of writing, reading – above 12th grade level.
5. **Critical Thinking**: the ability to think and analyze at a critical level.

Exemplary Educational Objectives:
REL 1304, as part of the Core Curriculum, satisfies the following Exemplary Educational Objectives set forth by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board:

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 an 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.

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria:

1000 point scale:
- Discussion Board (9 questions): 27% = 270 points
- Online Fieldtrip: 10% = 100 points
- Reading Quizzes: 38% = 380 points
- Worship Center Visit: 25% = 250 points

Grading Scale:
A = 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, F = 59 or below.
See eCampus Grades under Start Here.
1. Discussion Boards
   This is an important part of the class. You will be expected to answer all discussion board questions and then respond with a thoughtful idea about at least one of your classmate’s responses. Remember, the more reflection shown in your answers, the more you incorporate the assigned readings and the more you interact with classmates, the better the grade.

2. Online Fieldtrip
   You will visit an online religious location and write a short report detailing your virtual tour. For more specific questions, please refer to the Online Fieldtrip in the Assignments section of the class site.

3. Reading Quizzes
   There will be brief quizzes on several of your assigned readings. Plus there is a quiz on knowing class policies and one on plagiarism. There will be no make-ups on quizzes. Thus, you are encouraged to complete each quiz by the deadline listed in the course calendar. All of the quizzes will be taken from the assigned readings.

4. Worship Center Visit
   During the semester, you will be required to visit a public Worship Center for one of the faith traditions covered in this course. I will provide you with a list of possible Dallas area suggestions; you may NOT choose your own. You must make your own arrangements for the visit. After your visit, you will be responsible for turning in a typed report of approximately 3-4 pages which gives details of the visit and further information about the religious tradition represented. You will also be required to post a brief summary of your experience for the benefit of the rest of the class. Plagiarism (e.g., copying from a book and/or a website) will result in a 0 for this project, and will seriously affect the your final grade for the course.

Ground Rules and Expectations:
• This class is intended to be interactive. Let us attempt to carry out our discussions in a respectful manner. However, if you ever feel uncomfortable with the online discussions, it will be important for you to communicate and share your concerns with me.
• It's always best to keep me posted. If you have a concern about a deadline, or if you're having problems, please contact me by email and we will work discuss the possibilities.

The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as necessary.
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