WORLD RELIGIONS
REL2300-005 (81624)

Basics

Time: Tu/Thur 10:30-11:45
Location: CB1 0105
Credit Hours: 3

Dr. Ann Gleig
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Office Hours: Tu/Th 1.00-2.00 (or by appointment)
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Course Description

Most of us seldom think deeply and critically about our own religious worlds, much less about the religious worldviews of others, yet we live in societies of increasing religious diversity and relevance. From the transnational growth of religious fundamentalism, to national debates over gay marriage, religious issues and ideologies saturate public life. Religions are anything but irrelevant, be it politically, socially, culturally, or psychologically, yet a recent survey showed only 10% of American teenagers could name all five major world religions. This course will provide a basic “religious literacy,” an overview of the core beliefs and practices of the major world religions. Our explorations will include Indigenous religions, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and Shinto both in their classic and contemporary expressions. We will begin with a consideration of the academic study of religion, and then move into a descriptive overview of the major world religions and how they have responded to the challenges of modernity and postmodernity.

Course Objectives

I. To develop an understanding of the distinctive nature of several major world religious traditions through intellectual inquiry into their beliefs and practices in their specific historical and socio-cultural context.

II. To analyze the challenges faced by religions in the modern and postmodern periods and some characteristic responses of religions to those challenges.

III. To develop a cross-cultural awareness and openness that is a mark of the global citizen and which will enable the student to engage in informed and respectful dialogue with other religious traditions.
IV. To introduce students to some of the main themes and issues involved in the academic study of religion

Course Requirements:

(i) ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (10%)

You will be allowed to miss 2 classes without consequence, however, for each class you miss over that you will lose 2% from your attendance and participation grade. The only exceptions to this are documented long-term medical conditions, which will be discussed individually. Participation grade will include your participation both in the general class and also small group work.

(ii) THREE EXAMS (70% in total)

The course is structured around 3 units and at the end of each unit you will be required to take a multi-choice exam consisting of between 40-60 questions. Unit one is a shorter unit so will carry less weight (20%) Unit two and three exams will be worth (25% each).

(iii) ONE FINAL PAPER: RELIGIOUS SITE VISIT (20%)

For your final paper, you will be required to submit a critical reflection and analysis of a visit to a religious site or event. You will be required to visit a local religious site and observe a religious ceremony or event of your own choice. However, it cannot be a site that you have practiced in previously or part of a tradition that you belong to. If you have any religious objections to visiting another religious site, please come and see me at the start of class so we can make an alternative arrangement for you. Specific instructions and a sample paper will be available on web-course. To give you a brief idea of what it will entail however:

Include: (i) An academically researched description of the history, main beliefs and practices of the religion of the site you chose (ii) A short history of the specific local religious site (iii) a description of your actual visit and; (iv) A consideration of the relationship between the academic study and lived experience of religion (4-5 pages).

Purpose: To deepen your understanding of one major world religion and its local expression, and to reflect on differences and similarities between the lived practice and critical study of religion.

EXTRA CREDIT
There is a possibility of 2% extra credit in this class. You can earn 1% for writing a one- two page review (includes summary and response) of up to 2 of the following 8 documentaries/movies. Specific instructions and guidelines on what to include will be available on wecourse. If I suspect that you haven’t watched the documentary and are writing a review from the Internet, I won’t accept ANY extra credits from you. Each documentary is available either on-line or at the library and must be brought to class as a hard copy on November 18th. As extra credit assignments, it is your responsibility to track down copies in time and hand them in on the due date. You can watch these, of course, anytime before the due date, but for purposes of organization, I won’t accept them until November 18th.

Short Cut to Nirvana: The Kumbhala Mela  
The Life of the Buddha  
For The Bible Tells Me So  
Koran By Heart  
Jonestown  
Kumare  
Religulous  
The Reluctant Fundamentalist

WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE: Monday, October 27, 2014 11:59 PM

Style, Submission, Deadlines

Paper Format: Must be 1.5 spaced, written in a 12inch font, and have a one-inch margin. (Any attempts to use obvious spacing strategies to outdo the required length will be penalized). Each page should be numbered. At the top of page one include the following information: the name of the professor (me), the name of the class, the name of the author (you) and the title of the paper. Papers must be written in MLA, Chicago or APA style (including footnotes and references). For help with writing please make use of the excellent resources at the University Writing Center:

University Writing Center, including its new location in 105 Colbourn Hall: (http://uwc.ucf.edu/syllabustext.php).

Writing Center peer tutors are available to assist your students from first-year to graduate with writing for any UCF course, as well as personal and professional writing. Consultations are available for individuals and small groups, both face-to-face and online. Students may schedule appointments from the UWC website (http://uwc.ucf.edu/).

For ongoing assistance with writing, we encourage you to recommend students for recurring consultations (http://uwc.ucf.edu/referstudents.php).

Also, the UWC offers a variety of helpful writing resources online for faculty, staff, and students (http://uwc.ucf.edu/handouts.php).
**Deadlines:** I follow a strict policy for late assignments. Unless we have discussed and agreed on an alternative arrangement in advance, grades will be dropped by half a letter grade for each day the assignment is late and will not be accepted after 3 days.

**Exam Dates:** Failure to take exams when scheduled will result in zero ("0") credit for the assignment. Conflicts with schedule must be addressed before test dates and an alternative arrangement will be made.

**GRADING:**

Grade Scale: Grades: A = 100-90, (A- = 90-93), B = 89-80, C = 79-70, D = 69-60, F= 60-(0-2: minus. 7-9: plus)

Please see the final page of the syllabi for my grading rubric for papers.

Grade Submission: I will be using the system at UCF that allows me to report your grades to you when you log into your "MyUCF" page. The university follows the national FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) code, which does not allow the communication of grades to a student by email (including embedding them in documents, which means they cannot be placed on a paper emailed to me), or by posting them outside a professor's door. This is a confidentiality issue. Please do not ask me for your grade by email - by law I cannot send it.

**Class Rules of Engagement**

**Cell phones, I-pods etc,** must be turned off before class begins and stored out of sight. Laptops will be allowed in class for class related activities only. If I find anyone using laptops for anything other than this, you won’t be allowed to use your laptop for the rest of the semester. This is designed to help create the best learning environment for you and your peers. Seeing the person next to you checking profiles out on match.com isn’t a motivational tool.

**Leaving class early:** If you need to leave class early, please let me know at the beginning of the class.

**Email format:** When writing an email to your Professor, please begin with (Dear) Dr. X (Gleig). If we have a continuous conversation on email, then you don’t have to address me with every mail but all conversations should begin with the appropriate address. Please also check spelling and grammar on emails. This is a habit that I really want to encourage you to cultivate as in some of the larger UCF classes in which your Professor might never get the chance to know you personally, your emails are your sole representations. Please think about what an unaddressed, misspelt, text-style message conveys about you as a student, and how this might affect you when it comes to negotiating absences, handing in assignments late, and border grades.
It’s on the Syllabus! Please check the syllabus before writing to ask me a question, as in 99% of questions, the information is on here and my reply will only be, (Dear X), “It’s on the syllabus!” (Please see page 10 for more details)

**Punctuality:** If you come to class later than 10 minutes, after the attendance sheet has circulated, it will count as one of your three allotted absences.

**UCF Academic Integrity Code**

All written assignments require strict adherence to the honor code and must include the following “I (print name) hereby certify that I have adhered to the UCF academic integrity code (signature).” I have a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism, which I consider an essentially cowardly and uncreative activity that undermines education, character and community:

UCF is committed to promoting a culture of academic integrity where faculty and students work together to meet our personal, professional, and social responsibilities. A degree from UCF is only valuable to the extent it reflects valid assessments of student learning. Misrepresenting your learning on texts, projects, reports, or papers invalidates your grades and tarnishes the credibility of UCF. While collaboration is encouraged in the learning and studying process, you should assume all tests, quizzes, etc. require your individual effort unless explicitly directed otherwise. Unauthorized collaboration, whether voluntary or not, is cheating. Unauthorized use of materials during a test, quiz or other assessment is cheating. Regarding papers and projects, one of the core fluencies that students need to demonstrate is the ability to discern information that is common to the public from the intellectual property of individuals. Use of protected ideas, processes or language without attribution or proper citation is plagiarism.

**Disability:** Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course must contact Disability Support Services.

**FINANCIAL AID:** Please note that there is a new policy regarding financial aid. UCF must report attendance or non-attendance after the first week of class. If you have not attended class for both August 19th and 21st, as determined by my attendance sheet, I have to mark you as absent. This is in addition to a later date of class attendance records.

**REQUIRED READING**

Mary Pat Fisher *Living Religions* (9th Edition)

There are some addition Internet links provided for reading. Please be sure to do ALL of the readings as the exams will draw both from the readings and my power-point lectures.

**CLASS SCHEDULE:** (Tentative: We are covering a lot of material and it may “spill-over”).
UNIT ONE: THE ACADEMIC STUDY OF RELIGION, INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS AND THE ISSUE OF CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

AUGUST
T 19th Introduction: to the course: content, approach, syllabus, and expectations
Reading: the syllabus, interviews & quiz.

Th 21st The Academic Study of Religion: Themes & Issues
LR 1-19

T 26th The Academic Study of Religion: Themes & Issues
LR: 20-30

Th 28th Indigenous Religions
LR: 33-60

SEPTEMBER

2nd Indigenous Religion and Cultural Appropriation
LR: 60-69

4th FIRST EXAM: Unit One

UNIT TWO: RELIGIONS OF ASIA

9th Hinduism
--Vedas and the Renunciative Culture
LR: 71-77
The Chandogya Upanishad chapter six “Thou Art That”
http://www.easwaran.org/the-chandogya-upanishad-you-are-that.html

11th Hinduism
Monotheism and Monism: Devotion and Philosophy
-LR: 77-95

16th Hinduism
The Hindu Way of Life
LR: 95-111

18th Documentary: Naked in Ashes
LR: 111-120
And, “Is Downward Dog the Way to Hell?”
http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/3616/
23rd **Buddhism**  
-- *The Life of the Buddha*  
LR 137-145

25th **Buddhism**  
- *Theravada Buddhism*  
-LR 145-157

30th **Buddhism**  
- *Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism*  
-LR 157-175

**OCTOBER**

2ND **Chinese Religions: Confucianism & Daoism**  
LR

7TH **Japanese Religion: Shinto**  
LR: Chapter 7

9TH **UNIT TWO EXAM REVIEW CLASS**

14TH **UNIT TWO EXAM: RELIGIONS OF ASIA**

**UNIT THREE: MONOTHEISTIC TRADITIONS**

16th **Judaism**  
LR: 246-265

21st **Judaism**  
LR: 265-269 and 278-291

23rd **Judaism**  
LR: 269-277 and 291-299

**WITHDRAWAL** Monday, October 27, 2014 11:59 PM

28th **Christianity**  
*The Life and Teachings of Jesus and the Early Church*  
LR: 302-327

30th **Christianity**  
*From the Medieval to the Modern*  
LR: 327-355
NOVEMBER

4th Christianity
*Modern and Postmodern*
*LR 355-374*

6th Islam
*LR 377-394*

11th Islam
*LR: 395-413*

13th Islam
*LR: 413-432*

18th SIKHISM
*LR:*

20th Exam Review Class at Home (Away at American Academy of Religion)

21st Exam Review Class at Home: (Away at American Academy of Religion)

TH 27TH THANKSGIVING

EXAM Period 3RD-9TH: Module 3 Exam: The Monotheistic Traditions.

FINAL PAPER MUST BE BROUGHT AS A HANDCOPY

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Grading Rubric
Dr. Ann Gleig

**Competent/Credible/Complete:**

If you meet these first three standards, you are writing competently and will earn a grade of "C" (70-79).

1. Unity
   
   Contains a center of gravity, a unifying and controlling purpose, a thesis or claim, which is maintained throughout the paper. In particular, the essay clearly responds to the prompt and drives
toward a specific point about the topic. 
Organizes writing around a thesis or according to the organizational requirements of the particular assignment (e.g., summary, narrative, argument, analysis, description, etc.)

2. Evidence/Development
- Develops appropriate, logical, and relevant supporting detail and/or evidence.
- Includes more specific, concrete evidence (or details) than opinion or abstract, general commentary.

3. Presentation and Design
- Follows Hacker guidelines for standard English grammar, punctuation, usage, and documentation.
- Meets assignment requirements for length and/or format.

**Skillful/Persuasive:**

If you meet all of the competency standards above and, in addition, achieve coherence and exhibit audience awareness, you are writing skillfully and you will earn a grade of "B" (80-89).

4. Coherence
- Uses words and sentences, rhythm and phrasing, variations and transitions, concreteness and specificity to reveal and emphasize the relationship between evidence and thesis.
- Explains how, why, or in what way evidence/detail supports point/claim/thesis/topic/ideas.
- Incorporates evidence from outside sources smoothly, appropriately, and responsibly.

5. Audience Awareness
- Demonstrates a sense that the writer knows what s/he's doing and is addressing real people.
- Reflects a respect for values that influence ethos (e.g., common ground, trustworthiness, careful research).

**Distinctive:**

If you meet all of the competency standards, achieve coherence and exhibit audience awareness, and, in addition, demonstrate a mastery of one or more features of superior writing, you are writing distinctively and you will earn a grade of "A" (90-100).

6. Distinction
- Your writing stands out because of one or more of the following characteristics: complexity, originality, seamless coherence, extraordinary control, sophistication in thought, recognizable voice, compelling purpose, imagination, insight, thoroughness, and/or depth.

**Ineffective:**

If your paper does not meet competency standards, either because you have minor problems in all three competence areas (1-3 above) or major problems in one or two competence areas, you will earn a grade of "D" (60-69) or "F" (<60).
KEEP CALM
AND
READ YOUR Syllabus