

SSI '01
Ans

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RE338CRU: Religion, Philosophy and Social Ethics

Course Information

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Catalog Description


RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL ETHICS
RE 338/SO 338

Designed to give students an interdisciplinary experience in the study of social ethics from the perspectives of theology, religion and philosophy. Students will explore the theory and practice of social ethics and develop the knowledge and skills for philosophical and theological critique of ethical systems and social policy. Fulfills interdisciplinary course requirements.



Course Objectives

The general objective of this course is to examine the impact of world's principal religions, on shaping public policy as it affects relations between individuals in both the domestic and international political arenas. The concept of human rights has gained prominence after the Second World War as the key concept enabling critical thinking in this area. Our first task in this course will be to examine what this concept means and how it is interpreted by the central religious traditions of the world. The concept of human rights is augmented by another ethical concept which is that of Peace. Our second task in this course is to study the relationship between peace and the religious traditions. Many wars in history have been fought in the name of religions, so it is important for us to look at the relationship between religions and the politics of war. Do religions contribute to strife or do they serve the cause of peace?



Specific Objectives

Here are some of the specific learning objectives of this course. A student successfully completing this course is expected to be able to concisely and clearly articulate their well thought out responses to the following issues.

- (1) The relationship between the ideas of human dignity and human rights.
- (2) What rights are and the role of religions as a ground for the belief in rights.
- (3) How did the Bible based religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam interpret the tradition of human rights rooted in a certain tradition of the image of man?
- (4) What is the Marxist criticism of the liberal political tradition and the concept of human rights implicate in that tradition?
- (5) What special problems are introduced into the discussion of the concept of human rights within a religious tradition such as that of the Hindu's?
- (6) What ethical notions within Buddhism can be assempled in defense of a theory of human rights?
- (7) Do confusian values help or hinder the development of a human rights tradition within the Chinese society?
- (8) How to understand religion as a cultural institution that can promote peaceful relations between the peoples of the world?
- (9) How can the claims to absolute truth that many religions make be reconciled with a pluralistic world within which multiple worldviews and lifestyles seem to thrive?
- (10) Can the cause of peace be better served by keeping religion away from politics or by linking them together in some unique manner?



Texts

There are two texts for this course and all the readings in each of these texts will be covered in the course.

1. Leroy S. Rouner, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988)
2. Leroy S. Rouner, RELIGION POLITICS AND PEACE (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000)



Method of Instruction

- (1) The 2001 summer session (2) is a six weeks course. It starts on the July, 2 and ends on August 10.
- (2) A new lesson or lecture will be posted on line at the beginning of every week.
- (3) There will thus be lessons for each week the content of which the student will be expected to master.
- (4) The relevant readings in the books for each of these lectures will also be specified. Where there are no references to a specified reading in the text book the students should learn the contents of the lecture posted on line.
- (5) Every friday there will be posted a test on line which the student should take. Each student can take the test only once. The test is automatically scored. The score is automatically posted to your on line grade book.
- (6) Additionally there may be other homework assignments that may be posted from time to time
- (7) The instructor may also make other assignments mainly in the form of requiring you to write short essays on selected topics from the texts or other suitable sources. The instructions for how to write these essays will be posted with the assignments. The assignments will have deadlines and they should be done on or before that dead line. You should visit the assignment section of the course to note any assignments posted.
- (8) The student should daily check the course site for any new announcements. It is the student's responsibility to keep up with the readings and assignments. Deadlines, where they apply are strictly enforced.
- (9) The instructor will check for e-mails twice everyday and reply any mail that the students may post. When sending e-mails please specify your name, the course you are taking and if possible in addition to your e-mail also give a telephone number in the vent the e-mail system experiences difficulties.



Grading Policy

Grading standards

The following grading standards are specified in the Chaminade catalog 2000-2001, page 42.

A= Outstanding scholarship and an unusual degree of intellectual initiative.

B= Superior work done in a consistent and intellectual manner.

C= Average grade indicating a competent grasp of the subject matter.

D= Inferior work of the lowest passing grade.

F= Failed to grasp the minimum subject matter; no grades given.

I shall take into consideration the level at which you perform in the tests and the various essays you write in determining your final course grade.