

RE10301 + 02

RELIGIONS AND THE HUMAN COMMUNITY

Fall Day 1998

Description: This is a survey course designed to introduce the student to the major religious traditions and their various ways of creating community, and articulating history, spirituality and philosophy. We will discuss the phenomena of religion and religious expressions and institutions as we explore the meaning and relevance of religion in the modern world. Students will explore in a comparative manner the wisdom traditions in the human community and their articulations of the mystical and transcendence.

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Required texts:

Smith, Huston. *The Illustrated World's Religions: A Guide to our Wisdom Traditions*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.

Other readings may be assigned and will be on reserve in the library.

On completion of this course the student will be able to:

- * discuss the idea of religion and some of the theories for the origin of religion;
- * discuss the use of myth in religion and religious language;
- * discuss the many paths people follow in their response to the experience of transcendence;
- * recognize the basic features of the primal religions;
- * discuss the cultural and philosophical contexts of Jainism, Hinduism, Confucianism and Taoism;
- * discuss in detail the origins and development of ideas and institutions within Buddhism, Christianity, and Judaism;
- * discuss the historical development of Islam; and
- * explore the ethical dimensions of the religious traditions in the world today.



Evaluation:

- 1) Reading Assignments: The reading assignments are noted on the course syllabus and they should be completed prior to the scheduled class. Unannounced quizzes may be given on the assigned readings.
- 2) Class Attendance: Attendance will be taken. Class lectures, small group discussions, video materials and

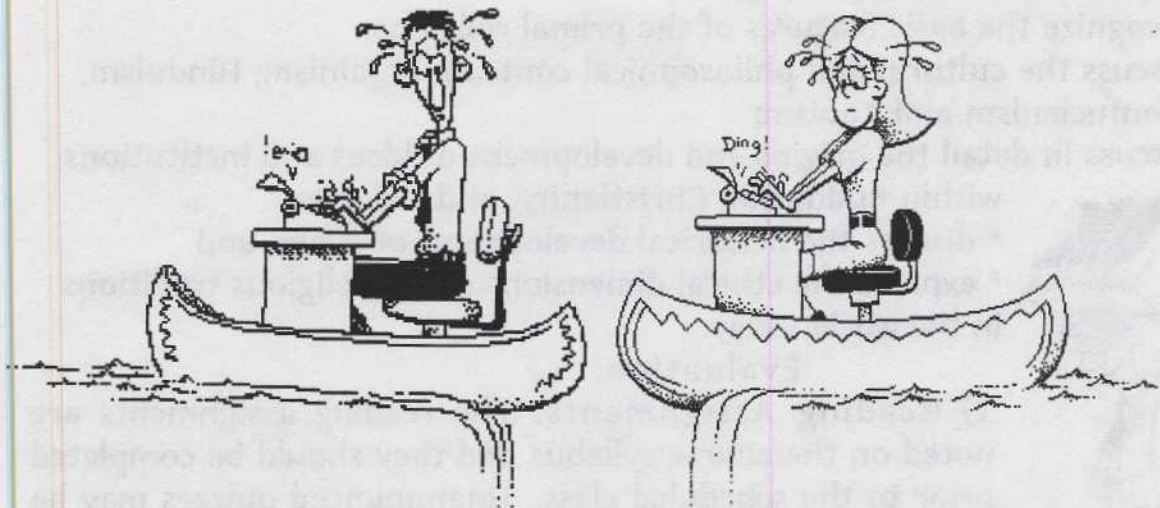
various activities will occur during class time, so your presence is required. You are responsible for insuring that your presence at a class is noted.

If you have more than three unexcused absences, your grade may be lowered by one letter grade. Failure to attend on an assigned presentation day may result in the loss of points for the assignment. Make-ups for presentations and papers may not be possible due to class time restraints.



3) Tests: Tests based on the reading materials will occur as scheduled on the syllabus. In-class reflections may be conducted at the completion of each week. There may be additional announced (or unannounced) quizzes on materials from the readings, lectures, discussions, or videos.

4) Class Project: Students are required to complete a class project: it may be one of the following: write a medium length (6-8 page; double-spaced) research paper. It will have a minimum of 5 sources, which may include the course texts, reference notes, and a bibliography; or contact and make arrangement for a service opportunity (Write up the contact and turn in a copy to me and to Bro. Tom Spring's office before you do the experience; perform the service; and write a reflection on it in light of the class discussions/reflections. What is the relationship between religious experiences, religious communities and acts of service?); or attend the Enneagram workshops and the Monika Hellwig lecture during this semester, write about what you heard, saw, experienced. This will total a 3-5 page reflection. Let me know which option you are committed to by September 15, 1998.



5) Final Exam: The final exam will be based on the production of a course research chart which will contain material about six of the major religions we

November 24: Christianity

film: Bernardin

December 1: Islam

film: Huston Smith, "Islam"

December 3: Islam

December 8: Concluding Reflections

film: Huston Smith, "Wisdom and Personal Journeys"

December 10: Concluding Reflections



will study this semester. The chart is based on readings, films, lectures and individual research. Students may assist one another in the completion of the chart, but must complete an individual chart for submission by December 1, 1998.

Grade Calculation: Attendance: more than three unexcused absences may result in one grade reduction; Participation: 20%; Tests: 40%; Research Paper: 20%; Final Exam: 20%. May be adjusted as the semester progresses.

It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor if any specific special needs or difficulties exist so that appropriate strategies for completion of the work may be mutually developed.



Syllabus Spring Day 1998

RE 103 Religions and the Human Community

Dave Coleman

Office Hours: Henry 206a: TTh 9:40-10:30 and by appointment

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Sept 1: Introduction and Overview:?

Film: *Masks of the Eternal*

Sept 3: What is religion? What is myth

Required Readings: Smith, 8-15

Recommended reading: Cunningham, Lawrence S., et.al., "Toward a Definition of Religion,"

chapter in *The Sacred Quest: An Invitation to the Study of Religion* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1995): 11-26. On Reserve in the Library.

Sept 8: Discussion and reflection

Film: Huston Smith, "Hinduism and Buddhism"

Sept 10: Hinduism

Required readings: Smith, 17-56.

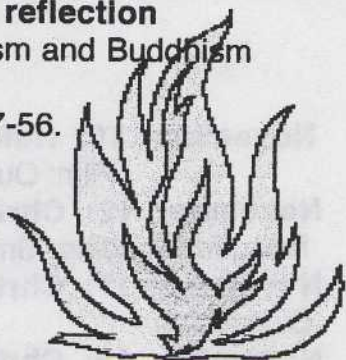
Sept 15: Hinduism

film: *Legacy*

Sept 17: Hinduism

Sept 22: Jainism

Film: *Ahimsa*



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Sept 24: Buddhism
Required reading: Smith, 59-97.

Sept 29: Buddhism
Film: Footprint of the Buddha

October 1: Research on final topics

October 6: Buddhism
Film: Requiem for a Faith

October 8: Chinese/Japanese Traditions

Required reading: Smith, 99-143.

October 13: Chinese Traditions: Taoism and Confucianism

Film: Huston Smith, Chinese Religions

October 15: Chinese Traditions

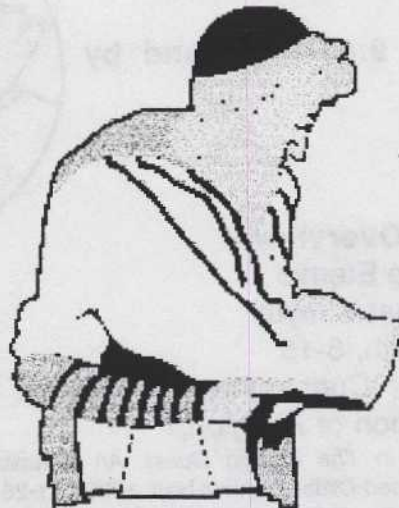
October 20:
Film: Heritage:

October 22:
Required

October 27:
Film:

October 29:
November 3:
Film:

November 5:
Required



Judaism
A People is Born

Judaism
reading Smith, 179-203.

Judaism
Huston Smith, "Judaism and Christianity"

Judaism
Anti-Semitism
The Longest Hatred, Pt. 1

Holocaust
reading: Botwinick, "The Nature of Prejudice and the Historic Roots of Anti-Semitism"

November 10: Holocaust
Film: Out of the Ashes

November 12: Christianity
Required reading: Smith, 205-229.

November 17: Christianity
Discussion

November 19: Christianity

