

SSI '02

RE 103: Religions and the Human Community *Summer 2002*

Description: This is a survey course designed to introduce the student to the major religious traditions and their various ways of creating community. Students will explore the history, spirituality and philosophy arising from these traditions and study the phenomena of religion, religious language and institutions. We will explore the meaning and relevance of religion in the modern world.

Required texts:

Molloy, Michael. *Experiencing the World's Religions: Tradition, Challenge, and Change*.

Smith, Huston. *Why Religion Matters: The Fate of the Human Spirit in an Age of Disbelief*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.

Trussell, Richard Curran. *Study Guide to Accompany Molloy's Experiencing the World's Religions*.

CD-ROM Study Tool

Recommended Text:

Smith, Huston. *The Illustrated World's Religions: A Guide to our Wisdom Traditions*.

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

- ❖ Discuss the experiences that we call the "sacred," the concept of religion and some theories for the origin of religion;
- ❖ Discuss the use of myth in religion and religious language;
- ❖ Discuss why many traditions developed in response to the experience that is the transcendent;
- ❖ Discuss the basic characteristics of the world's religions;
- ❖ Discuss why religion matters in today's world;
- ❖ Compare, contrast, and discuss the stories, rituals, beliefs and ethics of at least five major religious traditions;
- ❖ Discuss the philosophical and cultural contexts of Hinduism, Jainism, Confucianism and Taoism;
- ❖ Write a detailed essay on the origins and development of the concepts and institutions within Buddhism, Christianity and Judaism;
- ❖ Discuss the Four Noble Truths and the development of Mahayana and Theravada teachings in Buddhism;
- ❖ Discuss the relationship between the teachings of Jesus and Jewish teachings in his day;
- ❖ Discuss the relationship between Christianity and Judaism and its impact on our understanding of the Holocaust;

- **If you have more than three unexcused absences, your grade may be lowered by one or more letter grade. You are responsible for communicating any special circumstances to your teacher that may prevent you from attending class.**
- ❖ **Tests:** There will be two tests based on the lectures and reading materials. The tests are not cumulative and they will be based on the two areas of study for the course: Eastern Religions and the Religions in the Abrahamic tradition. Students are required to turn the electronic results of the CD-ROM tests for each chapter. This includes all of tests offered on the CD-ROM.
- ❖ **Book Essay:** Students are required to complete a reflective essay based on Huston Smith's *Why Religion Matters*. This is due on **June 27, 2002**
 - ❖ Based on your reading of Huston Smith's *Why Religion Matters*, you will write a minimum four page reflection essay on the content of the text, the principles of Marianist education tradition, and religion within a diverse, multi-cultural community.
 - ❖ The reflection includes a detailed journal of the experience of reading *Why Religion Matters*, and your personal relationship to the ideas and experiences Smith discusses in the text.
 - ❖ Paper is typewritten, double-spaced, written in a style consistent with the *Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers*.
 - ❖ Your reflection must include your insights into the impact of diversity on the study and meaning of religion in our contemporary world.
- ❖ **Creative Portfolio:** Students are required to complete a class project. The creative portfolio is due **June 24, 2002**.
 - The creative portfolio is an opportunity for you to use your other affective and creative capacities to reflect on the meaning of religion and religious experience in your life. You may use pictures, images, drawings, poetry, music, art work, paintings, and other imaginative/creative works, including video/multimedia presentations.
 - **You must prepare 20 entries.** Each entry (a collage or poetry/accompanying pictures count as one entry) must have a short paragraph that gives the day the work was done and entered, and your understanding of the significance of the entry for your study of the world's religions. You can not use any of the papers that you write for other assignments in the class.

Grade Calculation:

Attendance: more than three unexcused absences may result in one grade reduction. Excessive absences may result in failure of the course.

Tests:	40%	400 points total; 200 points per test
Electronic Quizzes:	10%	100 points
Creative Portfolio:	20%	200 points
Book Essay:	20%	200 points
Participation:	10%	100 points
(may include in homework, class writing, and discussions)		

- ❖ Discuss the basic ethical positions of the major religious traditions and articulate the sameness and differences that arise in the study of ethics across cultures and religious traditions; and
- ❖ Discuss the basic teachings and history of Islam.

ORGANIZATIONAL THEMES: MARIANIST EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND DIVERSITY

Organizational themes refer to underlying structural links that contribute to the choice of content, the pedagogy selected for participation of the teacher/learner and student/teacher in bringing the content to life, and fulfillment of the course objectives within a broader frame of education and building community.

1. The first set of organizational themes around which the course is constructed is drawn from the "Characteristics of Marianist Universities."
 - ❖ Educate for formation in faith;
 - ❖ Provide an integral quality education;
 - ❖ Educate for family spirit;
 - ❖ Educate for service, justice and peace; and
 - ❖ Educate for adaptation and change.
2. The second major organizational theme is diversity and the complex issues that arise when we look at religions as cultural institutions and artifacts. Diversity themes are developed in relation to the content of the course as well as the in relation to the student/learners who are participants in the course.

Two explicit outcomes arise from these organizational themes:

1. The students will incorporate into their essays and class project an awareness of the Marianist educational characteristics and how they impact on their reading of the sources and themes for the course and their own personal philosophy and practice in regard to religion and religious communities.
2. Students will develop an awareness and deeper appreciation for the diversity of theories and experiences that are at the origins of religious communities and traditions, and discuss the impact of ethnic and religious diversity on the study of religion during this course.

Evaluation:

- ❖ **Readings:** In order to participate each student/learner must be prepared to discuss the reading in advance of the class. Readings are assigned in the class syllabus.
- ❖ **Class attendance:** Attendance will be taken. Class lectures, small group discussions, video materials and various other activities will occur during class time so your presence is required. There is also a federal law requirement that we take attendance for those who have accepted federal money for education, so we count everybody.
 - You are responsible for insuring that your presence at a class is noted, particularly if you are late.

Your grade is calculated using the following scale:
A: 93-100%; B: 83-92%; C: 73-82%; D: 63-72%; F: 0-62%

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

**Summer 2002
Religions and the Human Community**

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Week One:

May 20: Introduction and overview:

The definition of religion and myth and oral religions

Read: Huston Smith, 1-22

May 21: Film: Huston Smith: My personal philosophy of religion ...

Assignment: Write a two page essay that begins with your reaction to the content of this film and ends with your definition and philosophy of religion.

Due May 22

Read: Huston Smith, 23-102

May 22 – 23: Hinduism

Molloy, 59-103

Recommended reading: Smith, 17-56

May 24: Buddhism

Molloy, 105-166

Electronic Quizzes: Chapters 1 and 3 are due.

Week Two:

May 28: Buddhism

May 29: Buddhism Review: Field Trip to Temple

May 30: Jainism

Molloy, 167-179

May 31: Sikhism

Molloy, 180-190

Electronic Quizzes: Chapters 4 and 5 are due.

Week Three:

- June 3: Taoism
Molloy, 191-209
June 4: Confucianism
Molloy, 209-236
June 5: Shinto
Molloy, 237-263

- June 6: Eastern Religions (Review)
June 7: Eastern Religions (Review)

Electronic Quizzes: Chapters 6 and 7 are due.

Week Four:

- June 10: Midterm Exam
June 11: Kamehameha Day
Smith, 103-144
June 12: Judaism
Molloy, 265-298
June 13: Judaism Film: Smith, Judaism
Molloy, 299-320
June 14: Judaism and the Holocaust
Film: Out of the Ashes
Smith, 145-186

Electronic Quizzes: Chapter 8 is due.

Week Five:

- June 17: Christianity Film: From Jesus to the Christ (Gospels) Molloy, 321-354
June 18: Christianity and the Creed Film: Smith, Christianity
June 19: Christian Practice Molloy 378-395
June 20: Christianity and Judaism: Anti-Semitism
Film: The Longest Hatred Smith, 187-212
Assignment: Discuss the relationship between the anti-Jewish polemic in
Christian thinking and anti-Semitism as a modern political ideology. Due
June 24.

- June 21: Islam Molloy, 400-427

Electronic Quizzes: Chapter 9 is due.

Week Six:

- June 24: Islam Molloy, 427-453
Film: Huston Smith, Islam
June 25: "The Big Picture" *PORTFOLIO* Smith, 213-233
Molloy, 491-524
June 26: "Spiritual Personality Types" and "Spirit" Smith, 234-277
June 27: Review

Electronic Quizzes: Chapters 10 and 12 are due.

- June 28: Final Exam