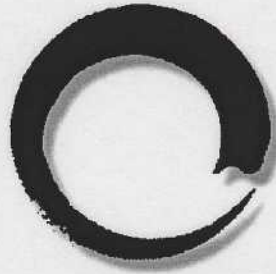


FE '00  
ms**CHAMINADE UNIVERSITY****Religion 38090 - Religion and the Meaning of Existence (3)****Fall Accelerated Undergraduate Session  
October 2 – December 15, 2000****Robert Mitchell  
Instructor****Prerequisite:** English 102  
**E-mail:** [RE38090@aol.com](mailto:RE38090@aol.com)**Web Page:** <http://www.iqthost.com/rmitchell>  
**Web Board:** [acad.chaminide.edu:8080/~10](http://acad.chaminide.edu:8080/~10)**SYLLABUS**

**Course Description:** An examination of the ways in which various religious traditions answer the question, "What is the meaning of existence?" Students will gain an understanding of multiple, varied, and complex ways in which the world's religious traditions approach the question of human existence; explore the responses of these traditions to fundamental existential concerns including the purpose of existence, the nature of self, the meaning of human suffering, and the nature of death; and examine how religious concepts of meaning influence cultural views regarding human existence and purpose. Key existential problems will be explored within the context of four principal relationships: divinity to human; divinity to nature; humans to nature; and human to human.

**Course Objectives:** Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Describe the ways in which the world's major religious traditions approach the question of meaning in human existence.
- Discuss similarities and differences in the ways in which specific religious traditions understand the meaning of human existence;
- Define key terms and concepts related to the discussion of religious meaning;
- Discuss the influences and contributions of religious views of meaning upon human culture and society;
- Discuss the teachings of various religious traditions regarding key existential concerns including human purpose and the nature of self, suffering and death,
- Discuss religious views of knowledge and nature;



- Discuss issues related to the nature of religious experience, and;
- Discuss contemporary problems related to religious views of meaning and existence.

**Class Format and Activities:** This course is offered online utilizing e-mail, web page, web board, and internet technologies and resources. Students are required to have access to a computer that is connected to the internet prior to registration. Students are also expected to be familiar with basic internet technology including sending and receiving e-mail and attachments, web board postings, navigating the World Wide Web, performing informational searches on the internet, and transmitting and downloading files. Regular weekly e-mail communication with the instructor and the submission/completion of all required assignments is important to the successful completion of the course. Collaborative electronic communication between classmates concerning course content is encouraged.

There are two required in-person meetings; an orientation meeting held at the beginning of the term and a final meeting, at which a final examination will be administered, at the conclusion of the term. Orientation and final meetings are held on the Chaminade University of Honolulu campus at hours designated in advance.

Specific weekly course assignments, as described in the course schedule, are to be completed by the student. Weekly course assignments typically include: (1) a reading assignment, (2) a response to a web board discussion question, and (3) the submission of a one-page reaction paper on an essay selected by the student from options appearing on the course schedule. In addition, students are required to take one mid-term examination, prepare and submit one written Research Paper on a topic preapproved by the instructor, and take one comprehensive final examination.

Students may also be required to submit additional written assignments and/or quizzes from time to time as determined and directed by the instructor. Written assignments are due to the instructor via e-mail by the due dates stated in the Course Schedule.

**Course Schedule:** A listing of weekly assignments appears in the Course Schedule. Students are encouraged to contact the instructor directly with any questions, or for clarification of assigned tasks, prior to due dates. No late submissions will be accepted.

**Required Text:**

Monk, Robert C, et al. "Exploring Religious Meaning." Fourth Edition. New York: Prentice Hall, 1994.

**Reading Assignments:** In order for students to participate effectively in Web Board discussions, prepare for examinations, and prepare written assignments, it is expected that each student complete assigned readings during the time period indicated on the Course Schedule.

**Recommended Resource(s):** It is recommended that students refer to the following resource for clarifications needed regarding terms and concepts presented in the text or course materials:

Crim, Keith, Gen Ed. "The Perennial Dictionary of World Religions." San Francisco: Harper and Rowe, 1989.



**Study Guide:** The instructor will provide students with a Study Guide covering course materials. Since the Midterm and Final Examinations will be drawn from items appearing in the Study Guide, students are responsible for all items appearing in the Study Guide.

**Course Web Page:** Course materials and access to the Web Board are available through the Religion 38090 Web Page located at: <http://www.iqthost.com/rmitchell/RE38090> Students are required to read and assume responsibility for all course materials, requirements, assignment schedules/deadlines, and resources published on the Course Web Page. Contact the instructor immediately if there are any aspects of the Syllabus or other course documents that require explanation or further clarification.

**Web Board Participation:** Web Board-based class discussions are utilized as a means of stimulating and encouraging thoughtful reflection concerning the topics, themes and subject matter covered in the course. Regular weekly participation in web board discussions is required. In the event that technical difficulties arise disrupt access or utilization of the web board system, the instructor may elect to utilize e-mail to conduct discussions and maintain dialogue.

**E-Mail Communications:** Students are to sign and provide course identification on all messages, assignments and other communications directed to the instructor. Students are encouraged to maintain the same e-mail address throughout the term. Notify the instructor promptly should a change in e-mail address be necessary.

**Technical Assistance:** In the event that technical questions or difficulties arise, students are encouraged to contact the Chaminade Computer Lab for assistance. The Computer Lab may be reached by telephone at 735-4819.

**Reflection and Course Paper Requirements:** The instructor will provide a written description of the Reflection and Course Paper requirements for the course. Reflection and Course Papers are due to the instructor via e-mail, facsimile, or regular mail on the date indicated in the Course Schedule. Reflection papers are expected to be no longer than one full page in length, and Course Papers should be double-spaced, between five and eight pages in length, written in the first-person singular voice, and with all references cited properly. For information concerning proper formats and citations, consult the "MLA Handbook."\* Please see the "Reflection and Course Paper Requirements" web page for further details and instructions.

\* The MLA Handbook is available for reference use in the Sullivan Library, and is for sale through the Chaminade University Bookstore. In addition, the Purdue Online Writing Lab is an excellent online writing resource, including MLA handouts and an internet link to the MLA web site. This site may be reached through the internet at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>

**Examinations:** There are two examinations administered during the course; one mid-Term examination and one final examination. The mid-term examination will be transmitted for completion by each student via e-mail and the final examination must be attended and completed by each student in person on the date and time assigned in the Course Schedule. No make-up examinations will be allowed for the final examination.

**Grading:** Excellence in this course requires not only academic mastery of course content,



but also personal reflection upon the relevance of issues regarding religious meaning to the human community. Minimum satisfactory performance entails the successful completion of the following: (1) weekly discussion group postings concerning topics provided by the instructor (pass/fail); (2) one mid-term examination; (3) the submission of one written paper on an approved research subject of five to eight pages in length; and (4) one comprehensive final examination. The weight of the various elements comprising the overall course grade is summarized as follows:

Web Board Postings and Reaction Papers	15% (Pass/Fail)
Mid-Term Examination	15%
Research Paper	30%
Final Comprehensive Examination	40%
Total	100%

Grades will be calculated as follows:

90 - 100	A
80 - 89	B
70 - 79	C
60 - 69	D
0 - 59	F

All grades will reflect the standards set forth in Chaminade's 1998-99 General Catalog. As indicated in the catalog, an "A" signifies outstanding scholarship and unusual intellectual initiative; a "B" signifies superior work; a "C" signifies a competent grasp of the subject matter; a "D" signifies inferior work; and an "F" indicates failure to grasp the minimum subject matter. Since the final examination comprises 40% of the course grade, it is not possible to earn a letter grade higher than a "D" if the final examination is failed or missed.

**Expectations:** Religion 35590 is a writing-intensive, upper division course taught during an accelerated evening session. Consequently, the course necessitates an extensive amount of independent reading, research, writing, discussion and critical reflection on behalf of each student in order to satisfactorily complete course requirements.

**Regular Participation:** With the possible exception of documented emergencies, there will be no extensions given on assignment due dates or the final examination without the prior approval of the instructor. Students who fail to submit assignments or comply with other requirements are advised to withdraw from the course in order to avoid a final course grade of "F". Grades of "Incomplete" will only be given in cases of documented extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control.

**Deadlines:** Students are expected assume responsibility for knowing, observing and meeting assignment deadlines as described in the course schedule. Late or make-up assignments will not be accepted by the instructor, except under extraordinary documented circumstances, such as military deployment or serious illness. It is the students' responsibility to provide the instructor with verifiable documentation for any extraordinary circumstances that prevent the submission of assignments on time, and to present a plan to complete missed deadlines and/or assignments missed to the instructor for approval.

**Proctored Final Examinations:** In extraordinary circumstances, final examinations may be administered by an approved proctor. Arrangements for proctored examinations must be made in advance with the Chaminade University Evening Programs Office. The Evening Programs Office may be reached at 735-4755.

**Incomplete Grades:** As indicated earlier in this Syllabus, Incomplete grades will not be issued except in extraordinary circumstances and in no event unless the majority of work has been completed to the satisfaction of the instructor.

**Mutual Consideration and Respect:** As subjects examined during this course may touch upon topics, beliefs, and/or issues considered sensitive by some students, it is imperative that all students demonstrate courtesy and respect concerning the views, opinions, and beliefs of others.

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