

RE103 - 01: Religions and the Human Community
CHAMINADE UNIVERSITY OF HONOLULU
Spring Day 2002

TIME: 8-9:20 a.m., Tues./Thurs.
INSTRUCTOR: Regina Pfeiffer
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E-MAIL: rpfeiffe@chaminade.edu
OFFICE HOURS: M/W 9 a.m. – noon, T/Th 9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., F 9-11 a.m. and by appointment
OFFICE: Kieffer Hall Room 3

COURSE

TEXTBOOK: Molloy, Michael. *Experiencing the World's Religions: Tradition, Challenge, and Change, Second Edition*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Co., 2001

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to the historical, philosophical and spiritual foundations of the major religious traditions of the world, among which are Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The course will examine their foundations and founders, basic teachings, historical development and current world status. In addition, the course will invite students to explore their sense of the sacred in their personal lives. It will endeavor to encourage students to develop a more universal understanding of relationship between humanity and the sacred in order to foster a sense of membership within the global community.

OBJECTIVES

On completion of this course, students will be able to:

- discuss the important elements of the major religions-- their myth, symbols, ritual, doctrine, moral codes and artistic expression;
- recognize the differences and similarities among the religious traditions;
- understand the religious issues and conflicts in the modern world;
- appreciate more their own religious backgrounds and that of the Chaminade community;
- reflect on their own beliefs, feelings and attitudes towards different religious perspectives, correlating and contrasting them with what they are learning.

**Organizational Themes:
Marianist Educational Philosophy and Diversity**

Organizational themes refer to underlying structural links that contribute to the choice of content, the pedagogy selected 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 journals 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 of 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.

Course Methodology

Instruction will consist of lectures, film/video, group discussions and presentations. Students will be expected to participate in the group discussions and presentations.

REQUIREMENTS:

Students are expected to:

- attend class regularly;
- read required text assignments and other reading assignments given at the discretion of the instructor;
- participate in group discussions in class;
- do additional research as required;
- complete all assignments on time. Points may be deducted for late work if the student does not inform the instructor in advance.

GRADING:

Grading will be based upon class attendance, class work and discussion, homework, journals, quizzes, participation, effort, and final term project or exam. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, 12 point font only with 1-1/2 inch margins with appropriate citations using a consistent style. Style must be consistent with the *Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers*.

Attendance: The instructor may, at her discretion, lower any student's grade by one grade level for more than three unexcused absences. Excessive absences may result in failure of the course.

Extra-Credit: Students may submit up to **three** extra-credit assignments for additional points toward final grade. Requirements: two-page reflection/review paper on an extracurricular, intercultural activity or service attended, pertinent films or enrichment reading. These extra credit options may not be used to fulfill any other requirements for the course, especially journal entries.

Note: It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor of any specific special needs or difficulties that one may have in order that appropriate strategies for the completion of the work may be mutually developed.

CATEGORIES:	Total points possible	WEIGHTING:
Class Participation and Attendance:	50 points	25%
Essays:	30 points	15%
Journal:	20 points	10%
Quizzes:	40 points	20%
Group Presentation:	10 points	5%
Final Option:	50 points	25%
	200 total points	100%

A: 90-100%; B: 80-89%; C: 70-79%; D: 63-69; F: 62% and below

Class participation and attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes. The student is responsible for contacting the instructor regarding any absence. Participation includes preparing readings, discussion and in-class writing assignments given at the discretion of the instructor.

Essays:

There are three homework essays. These essays must be typed, double-space using 12 point type and with appropriate citations using a consistent style. Essay topic choices will be given in class.

Journal:

The purpose of the journal is to enhance one's awareness of the sacred in everyday life. There are three steps to this process of reflection.

- 1a. Collect newspaper clipping, magazine article, or other information regarding current religious issues. or
- 1b. Use pictures, images, drawings, poetry, music, art work, paintings and other creative works to express your own meaning of religion and religious experience in your life. or
- 1c. Respond to statements, questions or suggested journal entries provided by instructor. There will be a limit indicating how many of these you can use for that section of your journal.
2. Date your journal entry.
3. Write a short paragraph expressing your understanding of the significance of the entry to your study of the world's religions or respond to the reflection question you have selected.

Journals will be collected three times during the semester. At least seven entries should be submitted for each of the first two due dates with the final six completed by the last due date for a total of 20 entries.

Quizzes:

There will be four quizzes based on the classroom discussions and reading materials. The tests are not cumulative and will consist of material from text, lectures and video covered during that portion of the course.

Group Presentation:

Students will be assigned to a group consisting of two or three students. Each group will select a religious tradition and prepare a participative seven-minute presentation of a food, ritual or art associated with it. The group will share the story or symbolism with the rest of the class. The group will be required to do some research in order to acquaint the rest of the class symbolism or meaning associated with the food, ritual or art.

FINAL OPTION: Service Learning, Term paper, or Cumulative final exam:
You will be expected either to turn in a paper or take the cumulative final exam on May 7 at 8-10 a.m. unless otherwise notified.

The following are the three options for the final. Select one. Note that if you are selecting option A or B, you must inform the instructor in advance by the third week of class.

- **Option A: Service Learning**
 - Contact Br. Tom Spring for a service learning project.
 - Students will keep a log of activity and hours worked. You must work for a minimum of 12 hours. You may not use the 12 hours for this class and another one but you may use the same project for more than one course adding the necessary hours to meet the requirements for both courses.
 - Students participating in service learning will write a final paper of 4-5 pages that integrates the material learned in class with the service learning activity.

- **Option B: Term Paper**
 - Students will write and submit a 7-10 page paper on the topic selected.
 - Suggested topics
 - Attendance at a service other than one's own religion;
 - Attend a service in a religion that is new for you. Describe the service. If possible, interview the minister and ask about the ritual elements that were part of the service. Compare and contrast this service with your own.
 - Creating a new religion;
 - In creating this new religion, develop the primary symbols, rituals and stories that describe the sacred and the relationship between the sacred and humanity.
 - Planning an imaginary pilgrimage that involves visiting at least five religious sites;
 - Explain the purpose of visiting these five sights. What significance do these sites have for the pilgrim? What prayers or rituals would be included in this pilgrimage?
 - A project of the student's design with prior approval from instructor. This could be a research project on one of the religious traditions studied in class focusing in on a particular idea or aspect.

- **Option C: Cumulative Final Exam**
 - The cumulative final exam will include all material studied in class and through the required readings.
 - It will be similar in format to the quizzes but will consist of 50 questions.

LEARNING OUTCOME ASSESSMENT:

Student's work will be evaluated for:

- knowledge of the subject matter from textbooks, class presentations, discussions, videos, research, outside class activities;
- ability to apply the knowledge to understand current issues in society;
- understanding of the subject matter from different viewpoints;

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to revision)

Reading assignments are for the following class.

- Week I: Introduction**
- Jan. 15: Introduction and overview
Reading assignment: pp. 1-25
- Jan. 17: What do we mean by religions? Why should we study religions?
Video: *Pillars of Faith*
Reading assignment: pp. 27-58
- Week II: Oral Religions and Hinduism**
- Jan. 22: Oral religious traditions
Reading assignment: pp. 59-102
- Jan. 24: Beginnings of Hinduism
Reading assignment: pp. 167-188
- Week III: Hinduism, cont.; Jainism and Sikhism**
- Jan. 29: Hinduism
- Jan. 31: Jainism and Sikhism
- Week IV: Quiz I**
- Feb. 5: Review (chapters 1-3)
Those selecting to do Service Learning must submit forms by today.
- Feb. 7: Quiz I: Oral Traditions, Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism
Reading assignment: pp. 105-137
- Week V: Buddhism**
- Feb. 12: Life of the Buddha, basic teachings
Due: Journals – first seven entries
- Feb. 14: Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism
Reading assignment: pp. 150-161
- Week VI: Buddhism, cont.; Taoism**
- Feb. 19: Tibetan Vajrayana
Reading assignment: pp. 191-209
- Feb. 21: Taoism and early Chinese religion
Due: Essay one
Reading assignment: pp. 209-235
- Week VII: Taoism, cont.; Confucianism and Shinto**
- Feb. 26: Taoism and Confucianism
Reading assignment: 137-150, 237-263
- Feb. 28: Shinto and Buddhism in Japan

Week VIII: Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism and Shinto Quiz II

March 5: Review (chapters 4-7)

March 7: Quiz II

Reading assignment: pp. 265-318

Week IX: Judaism

March 12: Origins, Hebrew scriptures

Due: Second set of seven journal entries

March 14: Rabbinical Judaism, Reform

Week X: Judaism, cont.; Christianity

March 19: Judaism and the Holocaust

Reading assignment: pp. 321-354

March 21: Early Christianity

Due: Essay two

March 25-29 Spring break

Week XI: Christianity

April 2: Brief history of Christianity's development

Reading assignment: pp. 355-361

April 4: Jesus' message of the Kingdom of God

Reading assignment: pp. 362-373

Week XII: Judaism and Christianity quiz

April 9: Review (chapters 8 and 9)

April 11: Quiz III

Reading assignment: pp. 405-455

Week XIII: Islam

April 16: Muhammad, Qur'an, Five Pillars

April 18: Sufism, modern Islam and group presentations

Reading assignment: pp. 457-539

Due: Last six entries of journal (total 20 entries)

Week XIV: New Religious Movements

April 23: A brief overview of some emerging movements and group presentations

April 25: Review and group presentations (chapters 10-12)

Due: Essay # 3

Week XV: Final week

April 30: Quiz IV and group presentations

May 2: Final thoughts and Review

Week XVI: Final Exam: Tuesday, May 7 at 8-10 a.m.