Fall 2010  Exploring World Religions
Shek  2022 Mendocino  Off.Hrs: WR 5:00-6:00 p.m.  Tel: 278-5331  Email: rshek@csus.edu

Area:  C3

Department:  Humanities and Religious Studies   Course Number:  140

Course Title:  Exploring World Religions

Course Description:
A comparative inquiry into the nature of global religions.  Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam will be studied.  Material and social aspects of these religions will be considered along with primary beliefs and practices.  The common yearning to experience the divine and the numinous will be emphasized.  3 units.

Prerequisites:  Passing score on the WPE

Learning Objectives:
•  To develop an understanding of and appreciation for the diversity of the religious experience
•  To identify the principal values and precepts of various religious traditions, as they are expressed in texts and in the arts
•  To present the contributions and perspectives of various ethnic and religious groups as they experience the numinous

Assignments:
4 quizzes
1 mid-term
2 papers
1 Final

Texts:
Huston Smith, The World's Religions
Robert Ballou, The Portable World Bible

Grading System:
Quizzes  20%
Mid-term  20%
Papers  40%
Final  20%

Grading Considerations:
Quizzes test students on their mastery of the basic vocabulary
Mid-term and Final require synthesis of knowledge and critical interpretation of major religious traditions
Papers require students to explore common themes among religions through research on reference materials (length of each is 10 pp., typed)

Other Evaluation:  Attendance and class participation in discussion
Class Schedule:

9/2  
Homo Religiosus: The religious propensities of humankind
Vedic Religion and the Upanishadic reformation (B: 17-27, 32-58; S: 12-26, 63-75)

9/9  
The Bhagavad-gita and Popular Hinduism (B: 27-31, 58-91; S: 26-50, 75-77)

9/23  
Buddha's teaching (B: 105-134, 142-155; S: 99-139)

9/30  
The Confucian vision (B: 483-491, 498-529; S: 154-193)

10/7  
Daoism (B: 533-574; S: 196-218)

10/14  
Instructor absent

10/21  
Instructor absent

10/28  
Mid-term; First paper due

11/4  
Abraham and the Early Patriarchs (B: 219-230, 235-332; S: 271-310)

11/11  
Veterans' Day, No class

11/18  
The Jewish prophetic tradition (B: 333-345) and the rise of Christianity

11/25  
Thanksgiving, No class

12/2  
Jesus' teaching and the Christian tradition (B: 385-423; S: 330-346)

12/9  
Islam (B: 437-469; S: 221-266) Second paper due

Writing Component: All the tests have major writing components because of the advanced studies designation of this course

Comments:  
There shall be no ringing cellphones or pagers in the classroom. (They will be kept by the instructor until end of class). There shall be no food or drink (except water) in the classroom. Keep late arrivals to a minimum, and no leaving of the classroom during exams. There shall be no make-up exams without compelling reasons or advance arrangement with the instructor.