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 (administered prior to July 2009), or
- Completion of appropriate GWAR Placement, or
- Successful completion of English 109W/M

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:**
1/27   Homo Religiosus: The religious propensities of humankind
2/3    Vedic Religion and the Upanishadic reformation (B: 17-27, 32-58; S: 12-26, 63-75)
2/10   The Bhagavad-gita and Popular Hinduism (B: 27-31, 58-91; S: 26-50, 75-77)
2/27   Buddha's teaching (B: 105-134, 142-148; S: 99-119)
2/24   The Confucian vision (B: 483-491, 498-529; S: 154-193)
3/3    Daoism (B: 533-574; S: 196-218)
3/10   Mahayana Buddhism (B: 148-155; S: 111-139)
3/17   **Mid-term; First paper due**
3/24   Abraham and the Early Patriarchs (B: 219-230, 235-332; S: 271-310)
3/31   **Spring Break**
4/7    The prophetic tradition (B: 333-345)
4/14   Judaism on the eve of the Rise of Christianity
4/21   Jesus' teaching (B: 385-412; S: 330-335)
4/28   Jesus' teaching revised (B: 412-434; S: 336-346)
5/5    Mohammed's teaching (B: 437-469; S: 221-266)
5/12   Homo Religiosus revisited. **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 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.