

**HRS 140: EXPLORING WORLD RELIGIONS
FALL 2011
SECTION 2: TUESDAY/THURSDAY 10:30-11:45
MENDOCINO HALL 1024
DR. PHILIP C. DIMARE**

OFFICE: Mendocino Hall 2012

**OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday/Thursday, 12:15-1:15; Wednesday, 4:30-5:30; OR BY
APPOINTMENT**

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A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.

Émile Durkheim

Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opiate of the masses.

Karl Marx

Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness.

Alfred North Whitehead

Religion is the human attitude towards a sacred order that includes within it all being—human or otherwise—i.e., belief in a cosmos, the meaning of which both includes and transcends man.

Peter Berger

When you believe in things you don't understand, then you suffer . . .

Stevie Wonder

COURSE DESCRIPTION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES**CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION**

Comparative inquiry into the nature of global religions. Hinduism, Buddhism, 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. **Note: Fulfills “Intensive Writing” requirement; fulfills three units of C3 General Education requirement. Prerequisite: Passing score on the WPE.**

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The differences among the definitions of “religion” quoted above indicate how difficult it is to understand what exactly is meant by this term. Is religion, as experienced by human beings, truly an expression of the relationship between humanity and the sacred, or simply a “sigh of the oppressed”? With these kinds of questions in mind, this course explores how different cultures come to define the historical, cultural, and philosophical dimensions of the “religious experience.” Using both primary and secondary source material, the course focuses on the traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism, and other non-Western traditions, and their relationship to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

While one of the goals of this course is to arrive at an intellectual understanding of different religious traditions of the world, another is to begin to appreciate the importance of these traditions for those people who practice them. In order to do this, it will be necessary to be open to the traditions on different levels. Toward this end, we will seek to explore different traditions without forcing them to fit within the boundaries of our own religious experiences. In other words, our emphasis will not be on demonstrating which tradition is “true,” but on seeking to understand how important a given tradition is for those who adhere to it.

- Identify, explain, and analyze the ideological perspectives revealed by course materials
- Apply the techniques of formal analysis to various works within interdisciplinary contexts
- Understand and appreciate the distinction between descriptive and analytical writing and be able to use this knowledge to produce conceptually based essays
- Compare and contrast basic values and behaviors of various Western and non-Western cultures that have influenced the identity of the “World’s Religions”
- Appreciate the diversity of Religious culture

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Esposito, John, ed.: *World Religions Today*

Barbara Stoller Miller, tr.: *The Bhagavad-Gita*

Jack Kornfield: *Teachings of the Buddha*

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

Abdullah Yusuf Ali, tr.: *Qur'an*

Michael Coogan, ed.: *The Oxford Annotated Bible*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) As an **Intensive Writing** offering, this course demands more than the normal workload from students. Students should be able to read, digest, and analyze 100-200 pages of complex material per week. Students should also expect to produce assignments that meet the University requirement for Writing Intensive courses: **not fewer than 5000 words (approximately 16-20 pages) of written work**. In this class, approximately 3/4 of this written work will be submitted during the course of the semester and 1/4 during finals week. All written work is expected to be both substantively and stylistically appropriate for college level courses. The instructor will return written assignments with extensive comments addressing both areas of concern. Should my comments not be sufficient to help the student improve his or her writing without further assistance, I recommend that students come to me for more help and/or visit the Writing Center.
- 2) Students are expected to complete all reading by the date for which it has been assigned.
- 3) You will submit five **comment papers** (2 pages) dealing with assigned reading material (see "Comment Papers" below for due dates). You should take these assignments seriously; use them to help you to understand the material more thoroughly and to prepare yourself for your exam and final paper. They should be well-reasoned inquiries that are stylistically and grammatically appropriate. These comment papers will be worth 20 points each, for a total of 100 points. These short assignments constitute 1/2 of the writing requirement for the course; approximately 10 pages of written material. **All comment papers must be submitted in class on the day that they are due! Comment papers will not be accepted by e-mail. In order to receive credit for these assignments, you must attend the full class session—don't drop papers on the table in front of the room and leave before class begins!**
- 4) Students will be given one in-class essay "mid-term" exam worth 100 points. You will be given a study guide for this exam one week before it is scheduled. This in-class mid-term exam will constitute 1/4 of the writing requirement for the course; approximately 5-8 pages of written material.
- 5) Students will submit a paper (6-8 pages) exploring the material from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This assignment will be worth 100 points. The assignment will be due during finals week. You will receive an essay prompt for this assignment two weeks before it is due. This take-home assignment will constitute 1/4 of the writing requirement for the course; approximately 6-8 pages of written work.

- 6) I will be happy to discuss any of the course material with you; I will also be happy to read any drafts or outlines you might complete before your essays are due. Please do not hesitate to come by my office or to e-mail me.
- 7) Students must have passed the **WPE** in order to be enrolled in World Religions.

GRADING:

Comment Papers:	100 points
Essay exam:	100 points
Take-home Essay:	<u>100</u> points
Total Points:	300 points

EXAM SCHEDULE:

In-class essay exam: Tuesday, Oct 11
 Paper Due: Tuesday, December 13

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

300-285: A
 284-270: A-
 269-264: B+
 263-249: B
 248-240: B-
 239-234: C+
 233-219: C
 218-210: C-
 209-204: D+
 203-189: D
 188-180: D-
 179-0: F

COMMENT PAPER DUE DATES:

Comment 1: Tuesday, September 6
 Comment 2: Tuesday, September 20
 Comment 3: Tuesday, October 25
 Comment 4: Tuesday, November 8
 Comment 5: Tuesday, November 29

ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICIES:**ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICIES:**

Computers, I-Pads, and Cell Phones are not permitted for use in classroom during class sessions, unless there is an emergency. In regard to Cell Phones, this includes listening to messages, texting, E-mailing, etc. Turn phones to vibrate when you enter the room. If you are using a Cell Phone in the classroom during a class session you will be asked to leave the room for the rest of the session.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

The Sac State Catalogue says the following about Academic Honesty:

The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars and teachers. California State University, Sacramento expects that faculty, staff, and students will honor these principles, and in so doing, will protect the integrity of academic work and student grades. Students are expected to know and abide by university policy about cheating, including plagiarism. The entire document, Policies and Procedures Regarding Academic Honesty, may be found on the university's web site.

Cheating will not be tolerated in this course. If you cheat by using disallowed sources, copying from someone else's paper, or plagiarizing, you will receive a failing grade for the course. You are also subject to being expelled from the university. [University Policy Manual](#)
[Library's Plagiarism Website](#)

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION POLICY

If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). For more information please visit the [SSWD website](http://www.csus.edu/sswd/) (<http://www.csus.edu/sswd/>). They are located in Lassen Hall 1008 and can be contacted by phone at (916) 278-6955 (Voice) (916) 278-7239 (TDD only) or via email at sswd@csus.edu.

Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after class or during my office hours early in the semester.

SAC STATE LIBRARY

As a Sac State student you have access to the various resources offered by the library such as book checkout, study areas, computer labs, online tutorials, research databases, etc. To learn more about available resources visit the [Sac State Library](http://library.csus.edu/) website (<http://library.csus.edu/>).

STUDENT COMPUTING LABS

Students can use any of the IRT managed student computer labs on campus. Visit the [University Labs website](http://www.csus.edu/uccs/labs/generalinfo/about.stm) (<http://www.csus.edu/uccs/labs/generalinfo/about.stm>) for information about locations, hours, and resources available.

SOME HELPFUL WEBSITES:

- [The APA Website](http://www.apa.org/) (<http://www.apa.org/>)
- [Purdue University Online Writing Lab](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/) – OWL (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>)
- [Sac State Library](http://library.csus.edu/) (<http://library.csus.edu/>)
- [Sac State Research Guides](http://db.lib.csus.edu/guides/) (<http://db.lib.csus.edu/guides/>)

CLASS SCHEDULE:**Week One: August 30 and September 1****Read: *World Religions Today***

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Indigenous Religions

Chapter 9: Globalization: From New to New Age Religions

Chapter 6: Hinduism

Discussion Topics

- Characteristics of Religion
- Mythological Language/Historical Language
- Symbolism
- Nature Religions
- Sacred Time and Space
- Sacrifice
- Shamanism

Discussion Topics

- Sanātana dharma
- Aryan Invasion
- The Vedic Period
- Shruti
- Smriti
- Henotheism
- The Close of the Vedic Period (Upanishads)
- Upanishads
- Atman/Brahman
- Samsara and Moksha
- Non-Vedic Texts (Ramayana, Mahabharata)
- Brahma/Vishnu/Shiva
- Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Bhakti

Week Two: September 6 and 8**Read: *World Religions Today***

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 9

Chapter 6

Comment Paper 1, Due: September 6

Week Three: September 13 and 15**Read:** *Bhagavad Gita* (entire text)**Discussion Topic**

- Devotional Hinduism

Week Four: September 20 and 22**Read:** *World Religions Today*

Chapter 7: Buddhism: Ways to Nirvana

Teachings of the Buddha (Selections to be read in class)**Discussion Topics**

- Life of the Buddha
- Four Sights
- Four Noble Truths
- Tathagata
- Buddha/Dharma/Sanga
- Skandhas
- Theravada Buddhism

Comment Paper 2, Due: September 20**Week Five: September 27 and 29****Read:** *World Religions Today*

Chapter 7

Discussion Topics

- Rise of Mahayana Buddhism
- Bodhisattvas
- Devotional Buddhism
- Buddhism in Tibet

Week Six: October 4 and 6

Review of Buddhism

Study Guide for Exam Distributed**Week Seven: October 11 and 13****Read:** *World Religions Today*Chapter 3: The Many Stories of Judaism: Sacred and Secular
Bible (Selections to be read in class)**Discussion Topics**

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Monarchy
- Temple
- Exile and Destruction of the Temple

Exam: October 11

Week Eight: October 18 and 20**Read: *World Religions Today***

Chapter 3

Bible (Selections to be read in class)**Discussion Topics**

- Post-Exilic Judaism
- Fall of Jerusalem
- Making of the Talmud

Week Nine: October 25 and 27

Review of Judaism

Comment Paper 3, Due: October 18**Week Ten: November 1 and 3****Read: *World Religions Today***

Chapter 4: Christian Diversity and the Road to Modernity

Bible (Selections to be read in class)**Discussion Topics**

- Life, Ministry and Death of Jesus
- The Apostolic Age
- The Early Church

Week Eleven: November 8 and 10**Read: *World Religions Today***

Chapter 4

Bible (Selections to be read in class)**Discussion Topics**

- Developing “Orthodoxy”
- Christianity as an Imperial State Church
- Augustine

Comment Paper 4, Due: November 8**Week Twelve: November 15 and 17**

Review of Christianity

Week Thirteen: November 22 and 24 (note: no class on November 24, Thanksgiving holiday)**Read: *World Religions Today***

Chapter 5: Islam: The Many Faces of the Muslim Experience

Qur'ān (Selections to be read in class)**Discussion Topics**

- The World of Muhammad
- Mecca and Medina
- The Five Pillars of Islam

Week Fourteen: November 29 and December 1

Read: *World Religions Today*

Chapter 5

Qur'ān (Selections to be read in class)

Discussion Topics

- The Party of Ali
- Modern Developments

Comment Paper 5, Due November 29

Week Fifteen: December 6 and 8

Review of Islam

Week Sixteen, Finals Week: December 12-16

Paper Due: Tuesday, December 13