

RELIGION 100
HUMAN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE
FALL 2008

Tuesdays & Thursday 1:30 to 2:45 p.m.; Robinson Hall B, Room B-124

Instructor: Vicky Dreyer

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Office: Robinson Hall-B, Room 465

Office Hours: Before & after class
or by appointment.

Course Description:

This class will provide an overview of the most popular contemporary religions in the world today. While there are currently some 4,300 religions around the world -- only 19 of them are large enough to have a following of over one million adherents. These religions will be our target.

Some of these religions are very modern -- such as Tenrikyo (Japan) and Juche (North Korea); others are relatively modern -- like Baha'i (Persia). Others have been around for a couple of thousand years, and are considered being of the 'classical' persuasion -- such as Zoroastrianism (Persia); Hinduism & Buddhism (India), and Confucianism & Taoism (China). The monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity & Islam are also included.

We will also examine the current secular movement in Europe & Asia, & explore why Neo-Paganism is such a growing religion today. In this regard, we will look at some of the earliest forms of religious thoughts, such as animism, shamanism & the occult, & the Neo-Pagan religions of Druidism (the old Celtic religion), Norse Mythology of Scandinavia, and Wicca (modern-day witchcraft).

Required Texts:

"The Everything World Religions Book" by Robert Pollock

"The 7 Spiritual Laws of Success" by Deepak Chopra

Grading Policy:

Final grade will be based on an accumulation of:

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|----|-----------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. | Your Group Presentation | 10 pts. |
| 2. | Midterm Exam | 40 pts |
| 3. | Final Exam | 40 pts. |
| 4. | Movie, class participation & attendance | 10 pts. |

Evaluation:

Students are expected to attend the lectures and participate in discussions as well as display an ability to absorb, understand and analyze the course material.

Course Goals:

(1) To provide an intellectual framework in which the student can discuss, reflect upon and understand a variety of world religions. (2) To examine the origin of these religions and to situate them in comparative & cross-cultural terms both past & present. (3) To investigate what they share in common and where and how they differ from our own beliefs. (4) To know more about ourselves and each other, & the belief system that guides us.

Course Requirements:

It is important to keep track of your Course Outline so you know where we are at all times. Keep up with the reading assignments and take good notes.

There will be no papers in this class, instead we will have (1) an additional reading in conjunction with Hinduism (*The 7 Spiritual Laws of Success*); (2) a movie (*The Little Buddha*) in conjunction with Buddhism, and (3) various group presentations in Christianity. Each of these will be reflected in Midterm & Final Exams.

Since we will be examining many religions different from our own, empathy, compassion -- and especially tolerance -- are important tools in our analysis. Every religious expression is accepted in this class without judgment.

Attendance and Participation:

Your presence in class is important. Midterm & final exams are based 60% on my lectures and 40% of the required texts. Since religious concepts often lend themselves to discussions, it means that asking questions and sharing your own experiences and observations with the class are very important.

Disability:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office at the beginning of the semester.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism of other peoples' ideas or words will result in an 'F' on an exam and a referral to the Dean of Students.

Course Outline -- REL 100 -- Fall 08

<u>Week:</u>	<u>Date:</u>	<u>Description:</u>
1. .	Tues 26 Aug Thur 28 Aug	Introduction, Syllabus, World Religion Chart Monotheism, Polytheism, the Spirit World
2. .	Tues 2 Sept Thur 4 Sept	Animism, Shamanism, Magic, Sorcery, Gods & Goddesses
3.	Tues 9 Sept Thur 11 Sept	Neo-Paganism. Begin with Druidism (the old Celtic Religion) Druidism
4.	Tues 16 Sept Thur 18 Sept	Asatru (Norse Mythology) Asatru
5.	Tues 23 Sept Thur 25 Sept	Wicca (Modern Day Witchcraft) Wicca
6.	Tues 30 Sept Thur 2 Oct	Chinese Indigenous Religions (incl. Confucianism, Taoism) African Diasporic Religions
7.	Tues 7 Oct Thur 9 Oct	Shinto (Japan) Kardecian Spiritism (worldwide); <u>Midterm Overview</u>
8.	Tues 14 Oct Thur 16 Oct	Columbus Day Extension. No Class. MIDTERM
9.	Tues 21 Oct Thur 23 Oct**	Hinduism (India) Class Discussion of ' <u>7 Spiritual Laws</u> ' - begin Buddhism
10.	Tues 28 Oct** Thur 30 Oct	Buddhism (worldwide) -- See Movie ' <u>The Little Buddha</u> ' Jainism & Sikhism (India)
11.	Tues 4 Nov Thur 6 Nov	Tenrikyo (Japan) + Cao Dai (Vietnam) Baha'i (worldwide)
12.	Tues 11 Nov Thur 13 Nov	Juche (North Korea) Non-Religious Scene
13.	Tues 18 Nov Thur 20 Nov	Zoroastrianism (Persia) Judaism
14.	Tues 25 Nov** Thur 27 Nov	Christianity (<u>Peter Jennings tape</u> : see study guide) Thanksgiving. No class
15.	Tues 2 Dec** Thur 4 Dec	Christianity -- <u>Group Presentations</u> Islam; <u>Final Exam Review</u>
16.	Tues 9 Dec Thur 11 Dec	Reading Day FINAL EXAM