

The Human Religious Experience -- Religion 100-A02

Summer 2008

Science and Technology Bldg., room 122

Instructor: David Dakake

Office: Robinson A407D

Office Hours: By appointment

Phone: 703 915 6312

Email: ddakake@gmu.edu

Course Description and Objectives:

This course will deal with seven of the world's major religious traditions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism/Taoism, the North American Indian tradition, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Each religious tradition will be examined from the perspective of its fundamental doctrines and practices, and with consideration to the fact that within each tradition two universal elements may be discerned: (1) a "truth" – an essential doctrine or dogma, and (2) a "way" – a means of realizing that truth within the life of the individual. In addition to this general framework of study, we will also spend time dealing with some of the issues confronting followers of these faiths today, that is to say, we will explore within each tradition some of the particular conflicts and challenges posed by religious life lived in modernity.

The objectives of the course are, to familiarize students with the basic concepts and practices of each faith, as well as to make students aware of the fundamental religious history that informs each of these traditions. By the end of the class students should be aware, not only of the various formal and historical elements that distinguish these traditions from one another, but they should also be able to articulate something of the internal unity of these various doctrines that can be said to lie beyond the formal plane. Students will also be expected to understand some of the basic challenges posed to each of these religious traditions by modernity.

Course Requirements:

Attendance at lectures and class discussions is left to the discretion of each student, although students are responsible for all materials presented at these times, as well as any announcements made in class (which could include changes to the course requirements and assignments). Each student is expected to complete two exams (a midterm and a final).

Grading:

Final grades are determined on the basis of the midterm (40%) and the final (60%). The instructor reserves the right, in borderline cases, to take into consideration a student's attendance and participation in class in assigning the final grade.

Course Outline and Reading Assignments:

May 20 **Introduction to the Study of Religion and Hinduism**, read: *The World's Religions*, pp. 12-77.

May 22 **Hinduism**, read: *Ethical Issues*, pp. 1-51.

May 24 **Buddhism**, read: *The World's Religions*, pp. 82-149.

May 27 **Buddhism**, read: *Ethical Issues*, pp. 55-93.

May 29 **Confucianism/Taoism**, read: *The World's Religions*, pp. 154-218.

May 31 **MIDTERM EXAM**

June 3 **Review of Midterm Exam**

North American Indian, read: *Black Elk Speaks*, entire book.

June 5 **Judaism**, read: *The World's Religions*, pp. 271-315.

June 7 **Judaism**, read: *Ethical Issues*, pp. 135-170.

June 10 **Christianity**, read: *The World's Religions*, pp. 317-362.

June 12 **Christianity**, read: *Ethical Issues*, pp.175-214.

June 14 **Islam**, read: *The World's Religions*, pp. 221-268.

June 17 **Islam**, read: *Ethical Issues*, pp. 220-258.

June 19 **FINAL EXAM**, 7– 10:05pm.

Textbooks:

Black Elk Speaks, John G. Neihardt, Washington Square Press, 1972.

Ethical Issues in Six Religious Traditions, eds. Peggy Morgan and Clive Lawton, Edinburgh University Press, 1996.

GMU ELECTRONIC RESOURCE: BJ1188.E82 1996eb

Click on “Linked Resources” and follow prompts.

The World's Religions, Huston Smith, Harper SanFrancisco, 1991.

Electronic Reserve Materials:

Go to GMU website. Click on “Libraries” in the column on the right.

Select “E-Reserves” from the pull down menu under “Library Quick Links.”

Click on “Search Electronic Reserves” at the top of the page.

Under “select a course” use the pull down menu and choose “RELI 100” or under “select an instructor” use the pull down menu to choose my name.

Enter the password: prayer

Click on “Submit.”

Click on the appropriate reading for the assignment.