

**RELIGION 100 006**  
**HUMAN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE**  
**SPRING 2008**

**Wednesdays 4:30 to 7:10 p.m.; Enterprise Hall, Room 178**

**Instructor:** Vicky Dreyer  
**Office:** Robinson Hall B465

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**Office Hours:** Before & after class.

**Course Description:**

This class will provide an overview of the most popular contemporary religions in the world today. While there are currently over 4,000 religions around the world -- only 18 of them are large enough to have a following of over one million adherents. These 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 thousands of years, and are considered to be of the 'classical' persuasion -- such as Hinduism & Buddhism (India) and Taoism & Confucianism (China), as well as the monotheisms of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

We will also explore the current secular movement in Europe, & why Neo-Paganism is such a growing religion today. This gives us an opportunity to examine some of the earliest forms of religious thought (animism, shamanism, magic) as well as the Neo-Pagan religions of Druidism (the old Celtic religion), the Viking 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:

- |    |  |         |
|----|--|---------|
| 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.

**Add and Drop Deadlines**

Last Day to Add (Full Semester Course) is Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>.

Last Day to Drop (Full Semester Course) is Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Effective Withdrawal Period (Full Semester Course) is Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup> – March 21<sup>st</sup>.

**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 for REL 100  
SPRING 2008**

<u>Week:</u>	<u>Date:</u>	<u>Description:</u>
1.	Wed. 23 Jan.	Orientation, Syllabus, World Religion Chart; Paganism
2.	30 Jan	Neo-Paganism: Druidism, Asatru & Wicca
3.	6 Feb	African Traditional Religions (Yoruba, Voodoo, Santeria); Shinto & Tenrikyo (Japan)
4.	13 Feb	Kardecian Spiritism, Cao Dai, Chinese Popular Religion
5.	20 Feb	Chinese Religions: Worldviews, Confucianism & Taoism. Read the " <i>7 Spiritual Laws of Success</i> " for next week's Hindu lecture.
6.	27 Feb	Hinduism. <u>Midterm Review</u>
7.	5 Mar	MIDTERM
8.	12 Mar	SPRING BREAK
9.	19 Mar	Buddhism & Jainism. (See the movie, " <i>The Little Buddha</i> ")
10.	26 Mar	Sikhism, Juche, Zoroastrianism.
11.	2 Apr	The Non-Religious Scene. Baha'i.
12.	9 Apr	Judaism
13.	16 Apr	Christianity (Tape & Exercise)
14.	23 Apr	Christianity Group Presentations
15.	30 Apr	Islam. <u>Final Exam Review.</u>
16.	7 May	FINAL EXAM