RELIGIOUS STUDIES 101 - WORLD RELIGIONS

TTh - 11:00-12:15
AZTEC ATHLETIC CENTER 1014

DR. HOLLER
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OFFICE HOURS: T 9:30-10:00; 12:30-2:00; TH 12:30-1:30 AND BY APPOINTMENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Religious Studies 101 is an introduction to the world's major religious traditions. We will explore diverse religious philosophies and practices in an effort to understand how they shed light on the nature, meaning, and struggles of human existence.

OBJECTIVES:
- To place images of God and religious values in space and time
- To be able to discuss the basic history, philosophies, and practices of major religious traditions and to begin comparative studies
- To interpret religious values, images, symbols, and texts critically
- To understand the role religion plays in culture and to improve (multi) cultural literacy
- To become more reflective about one's own beliefs and more tolerant of the beliefs of others
- To improve reading, oral, and written communication skills

TEXTS:
- MICHAEL MOLLOY, EXPERIENCING THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS (ANY EDITION)
- HERMANN HESSE, SIDDHARTHA
- ELIE WIESEL, NIGHT
- RS 101 READER: A PACKET OF ESSAYS AT KB BOOKS

Texts are available at KB Books on College Avenue and at the Aztec Bookstore, however the reader for the course is only at KB's. Molloy's text is on reserve at the Library. Before the semester is over, you will also need one #288-ERI ParScore Student Enrollment Sheet, 4 #289-ERI ParScore Test Forms (these are the RED scantrons), and 3 blue books.

REQUIREMENTS:

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Your success in this course is based largely on consistent and attentive class attendance, listening and questioning complemented by assigned reading. Your final course grade will be composed of 3 major exams worth 100 points each and 2 quizzes worth 20 points each. I will determine your grade as a percentage achieved. For example, a total of 275 divided by 340 = 80% (or B-). You can raise your course grade by quality in-class participation.

Exams and quizzes use matching, True/False, fill in the blank, and multiple choice to test your ability to identify, define, and describe basic concepts, sacred texts, and religious teachings. Essays on the midterms give you an opportunity to respond with more depth, creativity, and concrete detail. Essays should use complete sentences, provide specific examples, and give clear explanations that address the question asked. Study guides for exams will be provided.
I am available during office hours and by appointment to help you in any way that I can. Please let me know if you need accommodation due to a disability. Exams must be taken at the times scheduled unless I am notified prior to the exam. Quizzes cannot be made-up (sorry, it is just too chaotic otherwise). Also, because my time is as valuable as yours, I do not grade scantrons other than those identified on this syllabus and I do deduct for scantrons filled out improperly. A little care on your part saves me a lot of time.

**CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:**
- Turn off your cell phones and pagers BEFORE you enter class.
- Arrive on time and don't leave early unless absolutely necessary.
- Be respectful of your colleagues and don't get in the way of people who want to learn.
- Resist the temptation to do something other than giving the class your full attention (remember, I don't take roll and you need not come!)
- Inform me about any consistently aggravating classroom disruptions.

**SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS**
*(Open to minor changes announced in class)*

**I. INTRODUCTION: RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE**

For many of you, this may be the first time that you've studied religion. Adherents of particular traditions often feel they already know the religious "truth" while others deem religion unworthy of serious consideration. Try to enter our study by contemplating what you hold most dear and why. Religion is all around us in music, dance, poetry, film, and in sacred times and places. How is your cultural landscape and individual psyche informed by religious images? Turning to our most ancient religious heritage, what might we learn from First peoples about religious life?

9/2  **Orientation: What is Religion?**
Try the Belief-O-Matic (at beliefnet.com) and read "Which Religion Is Right For You?" (in your KB packet)

9/4  **The Sacred and the Profane**
READ: Molloy, Chapter One.

9/9  **Origins of Religion/The Upper Paleolithic, Neolithic, and Empires**
READ: Molloy, Chapter One and Chapter Two.

9/11 **Indigenous Religions/Film: Hopi, Songs of the Fourth World**
READ: Molloy, Chapter Two.

9/16  **Indigenous Religions/Discussion of Black Elk and Suzuki**
READ: Excerpts from Black Elk Speaks and from David Suzuki, *Wisdom of the Elders* (both in your KB packet)

**II. HINDUISM: ENLIGHTENMENT THROUGH RENUNCIATION**

In this section look for the ways Hinduism addresses the fact that people differ. Can you name Hindu contributions to American culture? Consider the claim that altered states of consciousness are necessary for spiritual awakening. Keep in mind the fact that Hinduism provides the context out of which Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism arise.

9/18  **Harappas, the Vedic Era and the Vedas/The Upanishads**
3

9/23
PLATO'S CAVE AND THE DOORS OF PERCEPTION. / THE PATH OF AWARENESS—JHANA AND RAJA YOGA
READ: MOLLOY, CHAPTER THREE.

9/25
COSMOLOGY, PSYCHOLOGY: 4 WANTS, 4 STAGES OF LIFE, 4 CASTES / FILM: THE FOURTH STAGE
READ: MOLLOY, CHAPTER THREE.

9/30
BHAGAVAD-GITA: PATH OF DEVOTION (BHAKTI YOGA) AND THE PATH OF WORK
READ: MOLLOY, CHAPTER THREE.

10/2
MODERN INDIA / REVIEW
READ: MOLLOY, CHAPTER THREE.

10/7
MIDTERM EXAM (BLUE BOOK AND SCANTRON #289-ERI REQUIRED)

III. BUDDHISM: SUFFERING AND RELEASE

BE ATTENTIVE TO THE WAYS THAT BUDDHISM ARISES FROM YET ALTERS HINDUISM. NOTE THAT THIS IS A PHILOSOPHY BASED ON THE NOTION THAT REALITY IS IN CONSTANT CHANGE AND ALL THINGS ARE INTERRELATED. WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE TO LIVE LIFE IN THE PRESENT? WHAT IS MINDFULNESS? DO YOU SEE ANY PARALLELS BETWEEN THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA AND THE LIFE OF JESUS?

10/9
RELATIONSHIP TO HINDUISM / LIFE OF THE BUDDHA / CORE TEACHINGS
READ: MOLLOY, CHAPTER FOUR

10/14
CORE TEACHINGS
READ: MOLLOY, CHAPTER FOUR (ONLY READ MOLLOY UP TO THE SECTION ON THE MAJOR SCHOOLS OF MAHAYANA)

10/16
FILM: BEING PEACE
READ: EXCERPT FROM BEING PEACE (IN YOUR PACKET)

10/21
QUIZ ON AND DISCUSSION OF SIDDHARTHA (20 PTS), SCANTRON #289-ERI;
READ: HERMANN HESSE'S SIDDHARTHA

10/23
TEACHINGS AND DIVISIONS WITHIN BUDDHISM
READ: "ZAZEN" AND "EYE ON THE BALL" (IN YOUR PACKET)

IV. CHINESE RELIGION—TAOISM AND CONFUCIANISM

YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT MAHAYANA BUDDHISM PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN CHINA. NOTE THE WAYS TAOISM AND CONFUCIANISM SEEM MIRROR IMAGES OF EACH OTHER. HOW DO YOU SEE THE WAY OF NATURE AND THE WAY OF VIRTUE AS COMPLEMENTARY? THE PHYSICIST NIELS BOHR TOOK THE TAOIST SYMBOL AS HIS FAMILY SHIELD. WHAT IS YOUR SPECULATION AS TO WHY? WHAT MIGHT AMERICAN SOCIETY LEARN ABOUT HEALTH FROM THESE TRADITIONS?

10/28
CHINESE RELIGION / TAOISM
READ: MOLLOY, CHAPTER SIX.

10/30
CHINESE RELIGION / CONFUCIANISM / REVIEW
READ: MOLLOY, CHAPTER SIX.

11/4
MIDTERM EXAM (BLUE BOOK AND SCANTRON #289-ERI)
V. JUDAISM: RELIGION OF THE COVENANT

JUDAISM IS NOT ONLY AN IMPORTANT RELIGION IN ITS OWN RIGHT DUE TO ITS ENCOUNTER WITH GOD IN HISTORY, ITS TEXTS, LEGAL TRADITIONS, AND EXPERIMENTS IN ETHICAL MONOTHEISM, BUT IT ALSO LOOK FOR THE WAYS IT ANTICIPATES AND GIVES RISE TO BOTH CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM.

11/6 HISTORY OF THE COVENANT-PATRIARCHS, EXODUS, SINAI
READ: MOLLOY, CHAPTER EIGHT

11/11 HISTORY OF THE COVENANT-MONARCHY, BABYLONIA, ROME
READ: MOLLOY, CHAPTER EIGHT.

11/13 RABBINIC JUDAISM: TRADITION AND PIETY
READ: MOLLOY, CHAPTER EIGHT AND JONATHAN ROSEN'S ESSAY (IN YOUR PACKET)

11/18 QUIZ ON AND DISCUSSION OF NIGHT, THE SHOAH, AND MODERN JUDAISM
SCANTRON #289-ERI (20 POINTS)

VI. CHRISTIANITY: INCARNATION AND REDEMPTION

TO IMAGINE THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIANITY WE NEED TO CONSIDER THE CULTURAL WORLD OF PALESTINE DURING FIRST CENTURY C.E. WHAT WAS GOING ON IN PALESTINE AND IN JUDAISM? HOW DID ZOROASTRIAN AND GREEK CULTURE INFLUENCE CHRISTIANITY? HOW DO YOU IMAGINE THE JESUS OF HISTORY?

11/20 THE JESUS OF HISTORY AND CHRIST OF FAITH/GOSPELS/LIFE OF JESUS
READ: ANNE LAMOTT'S EXCERPT (IN YOUR KB PACKET)

11/25 TEACHINGS OF JESUS/The CHRIST-EVENT/The Jesus Movement
READ: MOLLOY, CHAPTER NINE AND THE MARCUS BORG ESSAY (IN YOUR KB PACKET)

11/27 HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!!

12/2 THE EARLY CHURCH/CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY
READ: MOLLOY, CHAPTER NINE

VII. ISLAM: SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF ALLAH

ISLAM IS THE FASTEST GROWING RELIGION ON THE PLANET. WHY? WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT A RELIGION THAT PERMEATES EVERYDAY LIFE WITH RELIGIOUS PRACTICE AND THAT TRIES TO UNITE RELIGION WITH THE STATE? USE THIS WEEK TO CONSIDER THE INTERCONNECTIONS AMONG JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM. IN WHAT WAYS ARE THESE TRADITIONS MOST ALIKE AND WHERE DO THEY MOST DIFFER?

12/4 DIVISIONS IN CHRISTIANITY/FILM: ISLAM, AN INTRODUCTION
READ: MOLLOY, CHAPTER TEN.

12/9 DEFINITIONS/LIFE OF MOHAMMAD/SEAL OF THE PROPHETS/QUR'AN
READ: MOLLOY, CHAPTER TEN.

12/11 THE FIVE PILLAGRS/SOCIAL TEACHINGS/DIVISIONS WITHIN ISLAM
READ: EXCERPTS FROM A BORDER PASSAGE AND "ISLAMIC JIHAD"

12/16 FINAL EXAM: 1030-1230, (BLUE BOOK AND SCANTRON #289-ERI REQUIRED)