REL S 101 - WORLD RELIGIONS
Monday: 16:00-18:40, SH 136; Schedule # 29105

Instructor: Prof. JOHN GILLMAN
Office: AL 672; Office Hours: Monday: 15:30-15:55 (also in classroom after class)
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Syllabus

Course Description
Survey of seven world religions, their world views, teachings, practices, major figures.
Our study will include at brief look at the Maya tradition, and then the Hindu, the
Buddhist, the Confucian, the Taoist, the Jewish, the Christian and the Muslim traditions.

Learning Goals and Outcomes
Upon completion of this course, students will be able:
➢ To understand the role religion plays in culture and to improve multicultural literacy
➢ To become more reflective about one’s own beliefs and more tolerant about the
beliefs of others
➢ To be able to discuss the origin, development, world views, practices and beliefs of
seven major religions
➢ To understand the life story and impact of the founders of these religions
➢ To comprehend the diversity of expressions and their meaning within each tradition
➢ To become familiar with sacred texts and their impact within each tradition
➢ To interpret religious values, ideas, images, symbols, and texts critically
➢ To improve reading, oral, and written communication skills

Approach
Our approach will be to offer a sympathetic understanding of each religious tradition to
be considered. This will include both the historical developments and the contemporary
expressions of the various traditions. What is required on the part of the student is the
willingness to deepen one’s understanding through an attitude of openness and
dialogue. Together we will discern the meaning that these traditions have for their
adherents. Also, the student is invited to explore how each tradition relates to one’s own
experience and self understanding. Our concern is not to determine the comparative
worth or the truth of the various religions. Guest speakers from different religious
traditions may be invited to speak to the class.

Required Texts
Fisher, Mary Pat.  Living Religions  (sixth edition).
Hesse, Hermann.  Siddhartha.
The Song of God. Bhagavad-Gita.
Neihardt, John G.  Black Elk Speaks.
Potok, Chaim.  The Chosen
Readings posted on Blackboard
10. Apr 2    Jewish Tradition
   Read Living Religions, chapter 9, “Christianity,” pp. 284-324, by Apr 9
   Film: Judaism - The Chosen People
   + Discussion of The Chosen: Jewish Feasts

11. Apr 9    Christian Tradition
   Read Living Religions, chapter 9, “Christianity,” pp. 324-361, by Apr 16
   Read "Dorothy Day" on Blackboard by Apr 17

12. Apr 16   Christian Tradition
   + Discussion of "Dorothy Day"
   Film: Christianity
   Read Living Religions, chapter 10, “Islam,” by Apr 23
   Reminder: Essay is due next Monday Apr 24, at 4 pm.

13. Apr 23   Islamic Tradition
   Guest Speaker on Islamic tradition: Nurcan Keskin
   Read Living Religions, chapters 11, “Sikhism,” by Apr 30
   Read "Mecca" on Blackboard by May 1
   + Essay on Experience of Middle Eastern Religious Tradition is to be
     handed in at beginning of class (no papers will be accepted after 4 pm)

14. Apr 30   Islamic Tradition, Sikh Tradition
   Read Living Religions, chapter 12, “New Religious Movements,” and
   chapter 13, “Religion in the Twenty-First Century,” by May 7
   Film: There is No God But God
   + Discussion of Women in Islam, and of "Mecca" by Malcolm X

15. May 7    New Religious Movements
   Review for the Final

16. May 14   FINAL EXAM (Bring SCAN-TRON Form No. F-288-ERI)

Course Requirements

1. Class attendance, class participation and oral presentation. Your consistent
   presence and active participation is important for you to understand the content of the
course. Attendance may be taken; two or more absences may prevent a person from
receiving course credit.

2. Reading assignments and Quizzes. Assigned readings are required for each class.
   During each class there will be a brief, open book quiz given either at the beginning or
   at the end of class. The questions may be about any of the material covered during the
   previous class or on any of the assigned reading material for the current class.