Course Overview

Catalog Course Description
Major world and selected tribal traditions from primal times to present. Broad historical development and philosophical overview including founders, teachings, beliefs, practices, and interactions with culture, such as art, literature, politics.

Scope and Purpose of Course
What is the place of religion in human life? In this course, we will ask this question using two main approaches. In the first, we will seek to understand what it means to interpret religion through examining some major standpoints of interpretation: sociological, psychological, comparative, and others. In the second, we will seek to understand how some of the major religious traditions of the world work, looking especially at three traditions that have often been constructed as "other" to conventional Western religious self-definitions. The traditions we will look at include Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam.

Student Learning Outcomes
1. To cultivate second-order study of religion as a focus of humanistic inquiry (as opposed to first-order participation in religious life) by identifying and reflecting upon major interpretive frameworks through which religion is encountered and experienced;
2. To ask synchronic (how do we identify major features that constitute a tradition?) as well as diachronic (how does a tradition change over time?) questions to further their understanding of religion. The religious traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam will serve as case studies.
3. To develop a heightened sensitivity to the dialogical nature of religious traditions, that is, that traditions are not monolithic but rather a series of conversations within the tradition, and between the tradition and those outside of the tradition.
4. Through the study of human religiosity in its myriad manifestations, to balance a reflexive understanding of oneself (and one's communities) with a critically empathetic understanding of others (and their communities).

Required Materials

Required Books (additional readings provided by instructor in PDF form on Blackboard)
5. Scantron quiz strips, 100 answer capacity (Scantron 882-E).
Course Requirements and Grading

Internet Access, E-mail and Blackboard
You will need Internet access and an e-mail address. Your e-mail address should preferably be a university e-mail address to ensure compatibility with Blackboard, our online course site. The syllabus, course schedule, information on readings and exams, your grade and attendance information and other materials will be available there; it will be your responsibility to make sure that you are up to date on relevant information relating to the course and to your progress in it. Please check Blackboard regularly for current announcements. Please go to https://blackboard.sdsu.edu/webapps/login to log on to or find help regarding Blackboard.

Graded components (%)                                      Grading Scale (%)
Attendance (5%)                                             A (93-100); A- (90-92)
Discussion Board (30%)                                      B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82)
Quizzes (40%)                                                C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72)
Site Visit (25%)                                            D+ (67-69); D (63-66); D- (60-62)
                                                            F (0-59)

Attendance
You will be asked for your signature on a sign-in sheet that will be circulated at the beginning of each class; it will be your responsibility to make sure that you have signed the sheet, which constitutes the official record of your attendance. Beginning with the third unexcused absence, each unexcused absence will result in a 1% deduction from your final grade. The sixth unexcused absence automatically results in failure from the course. Please note that only official university absences and documented cases of serious illness, catastrophic accident, or family emergency may constitute excused absences. Work missed due to absences is not excused, but I will work with you to make arrangements for you to make up missed work in the case of excused absences.

Discussion Board Posts
There will be a number of sessions set aside for discussion throughout the semester. A discussion board post reflecting on the assigned reading will be due on Blackboard by midnight of the day prior to that class day. See “Tips for Engaged Learning” for questions you might address in your posts – particularly those that identify the main point or argument of the reading and your reflections and assessments of that main point or argument. Further guidelines will be provided in a separate handout.

Unit Quizzes
Unit quizzes are structured around in-class lectures, films and the assigned readings, and will consist of multiple-choice questions that will assess your ability to recognize critical terms (concepts, figures, practices, events); to be able to identify relationships between critical terms; and to critically evaluate selected reading passages. Students who miss a quiz due to an official university absence must contact me before the exam is missed. Students who miss a quiz due to serious illness, catastrophic accident, or family emergency must notify me if possible before the quiz and in no instance wait until later than the day after the scheduled quiz to do so. In any case, sufficient documentation must be provided.

Site Visit and Write-up
During the semester, you will visit a worship site (Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic) in the San Diego area and write up a reflective account of your experience. This visit will give you a firsthand glimpse into a religious community in our neighborhood and allow you to experientially connect what we have been learning and discussing in class with a real-life case study. I will provide further guidelines on preparing for the site visit, the visit itself, and the write-up.

Other University Policies

Academic Integrity
Cheating and plagiarism are serious violations of academic standards, not to mention reflecting a lack of personal integrity, and warrant responsive action on my part but also on the part of the administration (ranging from probation to suspension). Please note that faculty are required to report any instance of cheating or plagiarism to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities. Please see http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srrl for further details.

**Students with Disabilities**
I will work with students to accommodate disabilities as well as protect student confidentiality regarding disability issues. Please contact me by the end of the second week of class to set up a time to discuss any accommodations you may be eligible for. For more information, please see the Student Disability Services office (http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/dss/dss_home.html).

**Religious Observances**
University Policy on Absence for Religious Observances includes the following statements: “By the end of the second week of classes, students should notify the instructors of affected courses of planned absences for religious observances. Instructors shall reasonably accommodate students who notify them in advance of planned absences for religious observances.” Please communicate such issues with me in a timely fashion.

**Tips for Engaged Learning (also useful for Discussion Board Posts)**

**Reading Effectively**
*Before* you read, think about the following:
- Flipping through the pages and skimming quickly to get a general “lay of the land,” what does this reading seem to be about?
- What are key terms that I should understand by the time I finish this reading?
- What am I trying to get out of this particular reading? What am I curious to learn more about?

**While** you are reading, ask yourself:
- How is this particular reading selection organized? If I had to make an outline of this reading, what would be the main headings?
- Are there any words, phrases, ideas or parts of the reading that I don’t yet understand?
- What sentence or passage provides, in a nutshell, the author’s main argument?
- What evidence does the author employ to support that main argument?
- What kinds of assumptions is the author basing that argument upon?

**Afterwards, ask yourself**
- In one sentence, can I summarize the main point that the author is trying to make in this reading?
- What about the reading strikes me as intriguing, thought-provoking, objectionable, or worth further discussion?
- What question would I like to bring to class as a result of preparing this reading?

**Engaging Yourself in the Classroom**
- Try to come to each class with at least one question or comment from the reading (for examples, see some of the reading questions given above). It can be as simple as a question about a term or phrase that is unfamiliar to you, or a question or comment about the main point or argument of the reading, or about an issue that relates to your own experience or observations.
- During lectures, raise your hand at any point and ask if there is anything that is not clear to you, or if you have a comment that relates to and deepens our inquiry. Please remember that if you have a question, chances are good that several other people are wondering the same thing. Please speak up! Your questions and comments benefit everyone, and give me a chance to find out what areas need further or more focused attention.

**Course Calendar**

1/18 Introduction

**INTERPRETING RELIGION** (Reading: William Paden, *Interpreting the Sacred*)

3
1/23  Chapter 1 (Interpretive Frames)
1/25  Discussion**: J.Z. Smith, Preface to "Imagining Religion" (available as PDF on Blackboard)
1/30  Chapter 3 (As Society, So Religion)
2/1   Chapter 4 (As the Psyche, So the Gods)
2/6   Chapter 5 (Comparative Perspective in the Study of Religion)
2/8   Discussion**: Selection from L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (PDF); R. Edwards, "The Search for Family Resemblances of Religion" (PDF)
2/13  Quiz 1

2/15  Chapter 2 (Revelation and the Transmission of Knowledge)
2/20  Chapter 3 (Understanding the Self)
2/22  Discussion**: Selection from *Bhagavad-Gita* (PDF)
2/27  Chapter 4 (Divine Heroes: The Epic Tradition)
3/1   Discussion**: Selection from D. Eck, *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India* (PDF)
3/6   Chapter 5 (The Divine Presence)
3/8   Quiz 2

TRADITIONS (II): BUDDHISM (Reading: Damien Keown, *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*)
3/13  Chapter 2 (The Buddha)
3/15  Chapter 3 (Karma and Rebirth)
3/20  Chapter 4 (The Four Noble Truths)
3/22  Discussion**: Selections from *The Questions of King Milinda;* and T. Hahn, *The Heart of Understanding*
3/27  SPRING BREAK
3/29  SPRING BREAK
4/3   Chapter 5 (The Mahāyāna)
4/5   Discussion**: Selection from *The Dharma Bums* (PDF)
4/10  Quiz 3

4/12  Chapter 2 (The Quran and the Prophet)
4/17  Chapter 3 (Divine Unicity)
4/19  Discussion**: L. Ridgeon, "War and Peace in Islam" (PDF)
4/24  Chapter 4 (The Shari'a and its Consequences)
4/26  Chapter 6 (The Two Jihads)
5/3   Quiz 4
5/8   Discussion**: L. Yearley, "New Religious Virtues and the Study of Religion" (PDF)
5/15  Site Visit Write-ups with documentation due by 5:00 pm to AL 670

* Syllabus reflects current plans and objectives, but may adjusted to adjusted to enhance class learning. Such adjustments, if necessary, will be communicated in a clear and timely fashion.

**Discussion board posts are due on Blackboard by midnight of the day before class discussion days. For example, you would contribute a discussion board post by midnight on 1/24 in preparation for the 1/25 class discussion.
WORLD RELIGIONS
Religious Studies (REL S) 101
San Diego State University

Course Overview
Catalog Course Description
Major world and selected tribal traditions from primal times to present. Broad historical development and
philosophical overview including founders, teachings, beliefs, practices, and interactions with culture, such as
art, literature, politics.

Scope and Purpose of Course
What is the place of religion in human life? In this course, we will ask this question using two main approaches.
In the first, we will seek to understand what it means to interpret religion through examining some major
standpoints of interpretation: sociological, psychological, comparative, and others. In the second, we will seek
to understand how some of the major religious traditions of the world work, looking especially at three traditions
that have often been constructed as “other” to conventional Western religious self-definition. The traditions we
will look at include Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam.

Learning Outcomes
1. To differentiate between the second-order study of religion as a focus of humanistic inquiry, which is the
   focus of this course, and first-order participation in religious life.
2. To cultivate second-order perspectives on religion by identifying and reflecting upon major interpretive
   frameworks through which religion is encountered and experienced;
3. To ask synchronic (how do we identify major features that constitute a tradition?) as well as diachronic
   (how does a tradition change over time?) questions to further their understanding of religion. The
   religious traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam will serve as case studies.
4. To develop a heightened sensitivity to the dialogical (and hence constructed) nature of religious
   traditions, that is, that traditions are not monolithic but rather a series of conversations within the
   tradition, and between the tradition and those outside of the tradition.
5. To detect unitiies as well as diversities in human religiosity. For example, a religious tradition may be
   understood in terms of its continuities as well as its internal diversity. Religious traditions, as a whole,
   may also be seen in terms of what they share as well as what they do not share.
6. Through the study of human religiosity in its myriad manifestations, to balance a reflective
   understanding of oneself (and one’s communities) with a critically empathetic understanding of others
   (and their communities).

Required Materials

5. A Scantron quiz strips, 100 answer capacity (Scantron 882-E).

Attendance
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will be your responsibility to make sure that you have signed the sheet, which constitutes the official record
of your attendance. After five absences, each subsequent absence will result in a third of a letter grade deduction
from your final grade. Please note that only official university absences and documented cases of serious
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absences is not excused, but I will work with you to make arrangements for you to make up missed work in the
case of excused absences.

Internet Access, E-mail and Blackboard
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ROHAN address (http://rohan.sdsu.edu/rohan adore). To ensure compatibility with Blackboard, our online course
site, the syllabus, course schedule, information on readings and exams, your grade and attendance information
and other materials will be available there; it will be your responsibility to make sure that you are up
to date on relevant information relating to the course and to your progress in it. Please check Blackboard
regularly for current announcements. Please go to https://blackboard.sdsu.edu/webapplogin to log on to or
find help regarding Blackboard.

Exams
Exams are structured around in-class lectures, films and the assigned readings, which serve as guides that
support what we will do in class. Each exam will consist multiple-choice questions that will assess your ability
to recognize critical terms (concepts, figures, practices, events); to be able to identify relationships between
critical terms, that is to say, the relationship of major themes or ideas to each other or relationships of cause
and effect over time; and to critically evaluate selected reading passages. Further information on exams will be
made available on Blackboard.

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missed. Students who miss an exam due to serious illness, catastrophic accident, or family emergency must notify
me if possible before the exam and in no instance will I wait later than the day after the scheduled exam to do so.
In all cases, sufficient documentation must be provided.

Graded components (%)  Grading Scale
Exam 1 (25%)  A (90-100)  Excellent
Exam 2 (25%)  B (80-89)  Good
Exam 3 (25%)  C (70-79)  Satisfactory
Exam 4 (25%)  D (60-69)  Passing
F (0-59)  Failing

Other University Policies

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disability issues. Please contact me by the end of the second week of class to set up a time to discuss any
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