Religious Studies 101  World Religions

Spring Semester 2009

Prof. S. L. Stewart  TA/Evil Minion - Colin McNamara

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Office Location- AL636  Office Hours:  MWF 1130-1230

Required Texts: Warren Matthews, World Religions, 5th Ed. -rental option available!

RELS 101 Workbook Matthews Version

Course Description

Religious Studies 101 - World Religions - is a survey course designed to help students familiarize themselves with the basic tenets, philosophies, and practices of the world's major religious traditions. We will examine the historical development of and sociocultural worldview arising from each tradition as documented in the main course text, supplemented by visual media and course handout materials. The main intent of this course is to both provide students a broad-based knowledge of world religions and to present an opportunity for them to deepen their awareness regarding their own thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions about religion and spirituality.

This course is one of four Foundations courses that you will take in the area of Humanities and Fine Arts. Upon completing of this area of Foundations, you will be able to: 1) analyze
written, visual, or performed texts in the humanities and fine arts with sensitivity to their
diverse cultural contexts and historical moments; 2) describe various aesthetic and other
value systems and the ways they are communicated across time and cultures; 3) identify
issues in the humanities that have personal and global relevance; 4) demonstrate the
ability to approach complex problems and ask complex questions drawing upon knowledge of
the humanities.

Learning Objectives

- To gain a working knowledge of the basic tenets, core beliefs and essential
  teachings of the world’s major religious traditions in order to improve multicultural
  literacy and sensitivity.
- To further develop critical thinking skills through comparative study by identifying
  both differences and similarities of religious teachings, practices, symbols,
  mythology, etc.
- To develop self-reflective abilities and heighten self-awareness through the
  practice of identifying and articulating thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions
  regarding religion and its influence on human history and modern culture.
- To develop integrative cognitive and expressive communication skills through
  preparation and composition of written assignments.

Course Requirements:

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<th>Grading Scale:</th>
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<td>94-100 A</td>
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<td>90-93 A-</td>
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<td>87-89 B+</td>
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<td>83-86 B</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belief-o-Matic Quiz</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journals (20 pts. each)</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter Tests (7@40pts ea. Minus two lowest dropped)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>100%</td>
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*I - Incomplete - will only be given to students who have completed all assignments up to the time of request. No Exceptions

* If you register for this course on a Credit/No Credit option, please note that you must complete all assignments (meaning, you may not skip any chapter tests to count as a lowest dropped grade) and obtain a cumulative 73% or higher to be issued a "C."

* Computer and internet access are required for this course, and you must have an active, working email account in order to access Blackboard, view announcements and assignments, and receive email communications from me. I regularly communicate with the class as a whole and with individuals via email; therefore, it is essential that you regularly check your email to stay current and aware of class-related changes or issues.

Reading Assignments
All reading assignments listed on this syllabus are required readings, and completion of these is necessary for successful participation in discussions and performance on exams.

Classroom Participation

Daily roll-taking is a horrendous waste of time, and I'm not your mommy, so I won't be checking up on you each class meeting. Nonetheless, regular attendance is necessary for you to gain the full benefit of instruction and to prepare for exams. If you do not wish to come to class, that is your decision; however, do realize that all decisions have consequences, so be prepared to reap the benefits or liabilities of them by the end of the semester when it is time to calculate participation as a part of your final grade.

Participation grading is based upon timely completion of all assignments, tests, and exams; level of effort shown in content of written work; attendance; and participation in class discussion and Q & A. We will conduct a mid-term evaluation and debriefing that will count for 10 of the 30 possible points.

Journals
Students will keep a journal in which they will be expected to write their personal responses to the study of World Religions. Around the end of each chapter of study you will be given a "reflection exercise" about which you will be expected to write AT LEAST 1-2 pages (i.e. the minimum requirement equaling a "C") in a self-reflective manner. Journals will be submitted to me via the gmail account for credit by midnight on the Friday they are assigned. Submission of late journals will be allowed for two days after the due date, however, there will be a substantial point penalty (-2 points per day late), and any entries submitted after 6pm Sunday will NOT be accepted under
any circumstances. (Period. Do not test me on this. 😎) These entries will reflect your grasp of the material covered, how you are synthesizing information, and how you may or may not be applying what you are learning to your life process.

Journal due dates are as follows:
- Journal #1 - Friday, Feb. 6
- Journal #2 - Friday, Feb. 20
- Journal #3 - Friday, Mar. 6
- Journal #4 - Friday, Mar. 20
- Journal #5 - Friday, Apr. 10
- Journal #6 - Friday, Apr. 24
- Journal #7 - Friday, May 8

You are responsible for keeping track of due dates and times for your assignments. Please do not expect me to announce reminders.

Workbook
The workbook is meant to function as a study guide for learning the extensive vocabulary of world religions, and for test-taking practice. We will be skipping the first chapter "Introduction" to begin reading at the section on Native American Religions. This reading will be the only assigned portion of the workbook, the rest is up to you to decide how best to utilize this resource for your learning goals.

Chapter Tests
Each chapter of study will culminate in a 40-question test. At the end of the semester, each student's (with the exception of credit/no credit students) two lowest test grades will be dropped from the total points. I do not allow make up tests: a student may choose to either take a zero to be dropped at the end of the semester as one of two lowest grades, or have their next test grade counted twice - one grade for the current test, and the same grade for the missed test. The second option will be made available only once during the semester.

Exams
The Mid-term exam will be cumulative from material covered during the first half of the semester, and the Final exam will be cumulative for material covered during the second half of the semester. No makeup exams will be allowed, and final exams cannot be administered before the scheduled date for that class.
Class Etiquette

In all matters pertaining to this class and whatever our situation from day-to-day, I expect everyone to conduct themselves with an attitude of respect for self and others. To follow are some guidelines you will be expected to apply in your class-related interactions:

- All cell phones, IPODs, and other electronic devices must be turned off (and I am so serious about this) before entering class, and side-conversations limited to class materials. If you wish to listen to music or carry on a conversation with your friends or family in person or via phone or text, you may do so outside of the classroom.

- Discussions and debates will be conducted in a reasonable manner with absolute respect for the differing beliefs, understandings, opinions, and perspectives of others. You do not have to agree with or condone another's beliefs, but you must learn to express your disagreement in a way that is not harmful to self or others.

- If you send an email message to me, please include a polite salutation (i.e., “Hello Professor Stewart”) and your name somewhere in the message. I will not respond to mails that start out with something like, “Hey...”, and/or do not include clear identification of the sender.

- If you need to leave class early, please let me know before the beginning of class, and seat yourself near an exit to minimize disturbance of the class when you leave.

- If you are ill or strongly feel you are becoming ill (especially with something infectious), please do not come to class, and notify me as soon as you know you will be absent. Networking with your classmates will assist you in catching up on missed lecture material. I strongly urge you to not abuse this particular concession - your classmates will become very cranky about sharing their notes with chronic absentees, and I notice these things.

- If you are a student with a documented disability on record with SDSU, and require special accommodations made for you in this class, please see me immediately.
**Class Schedule:**

*NOTE:* This schedule is meant to act as a general guideline for the course of our study together this semester, and is subject to change at any time. You will be responsible for obtaining information regarding changes from Blackboard announcements.

### Week One

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri. 1/23</td>
<td>First day of class – Orientation</td>
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<td>Review Syllabus</td>
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<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading:</td>
<td>Matthews, Introduction - pp. 1-11</td>
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### Week Two

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon. 1/26</td>
<td>Why Study Religion? - Examining thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading:</td>
<td>Matthews, Chapter 1: Religions of the Americas, pp. 15-29</td>
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<td><strong>Belief-o-Matic Quiz due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. 1/28</td>
<td>Tribal Religions – North American Native Traditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading:</td>
<td>Workbook: pg. 11 &quot;A Summary of Native American Religions&quot; - pg. 37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri. 1/30</td>
<td>North American Native Traditions</td>
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### Week Three

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<tr>
<td>Mon. 2/2</td>
<td>Religions of Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading:</td>
<td>Matthews, Chapter 2: Religions of Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. 2/4</td>
<td>Religions of Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri. 2/6</td>
<td>Indigenous Religions overview</td>
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<td>Journal #1 due in gmal by midnight</td>
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### Week Four

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. 2/9</td>
<td>Chapter Test #1 – Indigenous Religions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. 2/11</td>
<td>Introduction to Hindu Dharma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading:</td>
<td>Matthews, Chapter 3: Hinduism, pp. 65-99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri. 2/13</td>
<td>Hindu Dharma</td>
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### Week Five

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. 2/16</td>
<td>Hindu Dharma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 2/18</td>
<td>Conclude Hindu Dharma</td>
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</table>
Fri. 2/20   Chapter Test #2 - Hindu Dharma
           Journal #2 due in gmail by midnight

Week Six
Mon. 2/23  Introduction to Buddhism
Reading:   Matthews, Chapter 4: Buddhism, pp. 101-141
Wed. 2/25  Buddhism
Fri. 2/27  Buddhism

Week Seven
Mon. 3/2   Conclude Buddhism
Wed. 3/4   Chapter Test #3 - Buddhism
Fri. 3/6   Introduction to Jainism
Reading:   Matthews, Chapter 5: Jainism, pp. 143-153
           Journal #3 due in gmail by midnight

Week Eight
Mon. 3/9   Jainism
Wed. 3/11  Introduction to Taoism
Reading:   Matthews, Chapter 6: Daoism, pp. 170-179
Fri. 3/13  Conclude Taoism

Week Nine
Mon. 3/16  Chapter Test #4 - Jainism & Taoism
Wed. 3/18  Mid-Term Evaluation/Debriefing
Fri. 3/20  Mid-Term Exam Review
           Journal #4 due in gmail by midnight

Week Ten
Mon. 3/23  Mid-Term Exam
Wed. 3/25  Introduction to Judaism
Reading:   Matthews, Chapter 8: Judaism, pp. 233-270
Fri. 3/28  Judaism
Week Eleven

Week Twelve

Mon. 4/6         Judaism
Wed. 4/8         Judaism
Fri. 4/10        Conclude Judaism

Journal #5 due in g-mail by midnight

Week Thirteen

Mon. 4/13        Chapter Test #5 Judaism
Wed. 4/15        Introduction to Christianity
Reading:         Matthews, Chapter 9: Christianity, pp. 276-316
Fri. 4/17        Christianity

Week Fourteen

Mon. 4/20        Christianity
Wed. 4/22        Christianity
Fri. 4/24        Chapter Test #6 - Christianity

Journal #6 due in g-mail by midnight

Week Fifteen

Mon. 4/27        Introduction to Islam
Reading:         Matthews, Chapter 10: Islam, pp. 321-355
Wed. 4/29        Islam
Fri. 5/1         Islam
Week Sixteen

Mon. 5/4 Islam
Wed. 5/6 Conclude Islam
Fri. 5/8 Chapter Test #7 - Islam
    Journal # 7 due in gmail by midnight

Week Seventeen

Mon. 5/11 Universal Sufism
Wed. 5/13 Final Exam Review

Week Eighteen
    Finals

Have a GREAT Summer!!