Spring Semester 2014

Prof. S. L. Stewart lori.stewart@mail.sdsu.edu - only personal messages here, please

Evil Minions: Naomi Mendez - naomimendez27@gmail.com

Alicen Gaitanis - 87alicen92@cox.net

Corrine Hensley - corrinehensley@gmail.com

Michael Reigleman - mikereigelman@yahoo.com

Class Email: rs101s14@gmail.com - all assignments go here - please do not send personal messages to this address!

Office Location- AL636 Telephone: 619-594-1767 (41767)

Office Hours: MW 1130 - 1300, Fridays by appointment

Required Text: Mary Pat Fisher, "Living Religions" (MyReligionLab is optional)

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, occasionally supplemented by relevant visual media. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Requirements</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grading Scale:</td>
<td>Belief-o-Matic Quiz</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>94-100 A</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-93 A-</td>
<td>Site Visit</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>87-89 B+</td>
<td>Chapter Tests</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>83-86 B</td>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-82 B-</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79 C+</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>530</td>
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<td>73-76 C</td>
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<td>70-72 C-</td>
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<td>67-69 D+</td>
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<td>63-66 D</td>
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<td>60-62 D-</td>
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Grades
During the course of the semester you will be able to view your grades by checking the “Gradebook” section of Blackboard. Your final grade is determined by the accumulated points indicated on the above grading scale chart. This is an introductory course, so with dedicated application of study and effort, an “A” is not beyond reach. If you are taking the course for C/NC, please note that the university considers a “C-“ as an NC or failing grade. *If you register for this course on a Credit/No Credit option, please note that you must complete all assignments and obtain a cumulative 73% or higher to be issued a “CR.”

- "I“ – Incomplete - I will only issue an Authorized Incomplete when a small portion of the required coursework has not been completed due to unforeseen, but fully justified reasons. You must sign an “Authorized Incomplete” Agreement contract and complete the required work within one calendar year immediately following the end of the term in which it was assigned. If this is not done, you will receive an F.

* 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.

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Ground Rules:
Students and teachers have particular obligations to each other, and successful teaching and learning largely depends upon our honoring of these obligations.

This is what I expect from my students:

- Since you have chosen to be a part of this class, you will enter every session prepared to give your full attention.
• You will complete the required readings, and submit all assigned work on time.
• You will treat everyone in the class, including the instructor, with the respect
  rightly due all human beings.
  o If someone in our class is treating you with disrespect, you will alert me
    immediately.
• Acknowledge that your perception of effort by itself is not enough to justify a
distinguished grade (A); and understand that grades are not personal value
judgments, but are objective assessments of the work you have submitted.
• You will not make excuses for your failure to do what you ought to do, and accept
the consequences of your actions or lack of action.
• You will turn off ALL electronic devices for the duration of the class period.

This is what you can expect from me:
• I will treat you with absolute respect.
• I will come to class organized, prepared, and ready to teach on that day.
• I will finish grading papers and tests within a reasonable time frame (1-2 weeks).
• I will maintain office hours and be available during those hours, or set up an
  appointment when scheduling conflicts occur.
• I will pursue to the fullest extent the university imposed penalty for plagiarism,
  cheating, and other violations of academic integrity.
• I (and my graders) will maintain strict confidentiality concerning your journals and
  class performance.
• I will support your learning efforts and answer your questions and concerns
  thoughtfully and with care.

Belief-O-Matic Quiz (10 points)
To complete the quiz, go to www.beliefnet.com, click on the tab marked "Faiths and
Prayers", then choose "belief-o-matic" from the drop-down menu. Complete the quiz, print
the results and bring them to class on the third class meeting, Monday, January 27th.

Journal (50 points) - Due by 1159pm Friday, February 28th.
Students will be given one "Reflection Exercise" that require active participation in
mindfulness practice and a written personal response. You will be expected to write AT
LEAST 1,300 words (i.e. the minimum requirement equaling a "C") in a self-reflective
manner. Journal will be submitted to me via the class gmail account for credit by 1159
pm on the Friday it is assigned. Submission of late journals will be allowed for two
days after the due date, however, there will be a substantial point penalty (-5 points per day late), and any entries submitted after 6pm Sunday will not be accepted under any circumstances. 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.

A full description of the exercise can be found on Blackboard under Assignments. This description is a three-page document that includes instructions on how to understand and approach the exercise (pg. 1), a detailed breakdown of the grading criteria (pg. 2), and specific descriptions of the journal assignment (pg. 3.) Please thoroughly read the entire document before attempting to perform the exercise or write your journal entry.

All assignments must be sent to the class gmail account ONLY! Any journals sent to Prof. Stewart's email address will be deleted without being read.

Site Visit (50 points) due by 1159pm, Friday, April 18th.
Students will be expected to visit one house of worship from a list I have posted on BB under Assignments. You may not report on any site not listed in the posted document. You will be expected to write a minimum of 1,300 words describing your experience of the visit. A detailed prompt is located on BB under Assignments.

Chapter Tests (2 @ 20 points, 5 @ 40 points each)
Each chapter of study will culminate in a 20 or 40-question test. I do not allow make up tests except for athletes &/or other students who are compelled to miss class for university-sponsored or sanctioned activities, or for recognized religious holidays. If for some reason you cannot avoid missing a 40 point (Hindu Dharma, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity) test, you may choose to have your next test score counted twice - one grade for the current test, and the same grade for the missed test. The doubled-score option can only be used once during the semester. Please note that the doubled score option does not apply to the second test (Indigenous Sacred Ways). I will provide a sign-up sheet at each test for double-score requests.

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. The double-score option does not apply to the mid-term or final exams.
**Extra Credit**: I have come to strongly dislike extra credit. I believe that student grades should reflect their engagement in class lecture/discussion and efforts toward successful completion of assignments and tests. There are occasionally campus academic events relevant to our study for which I will offer a few points of extra credit, but nothing beyond that. Just do the work I have assigned, and your grade will honestly reflect your efforts toward developing a working knowledge and understanding of World Religions.

**A few words about grade inflation**: If you have read the above paragraph, you will already have an idea of how much I value accurate and honest grading. With this in mind, please know that I will not respond to any requests, no matter how desperate, for additional points to be added to your final score. The grade you have at the end of the term is the grade you earned. That's about it.

**Class Etiquette**

*Don't make me call my flying monkeys!*

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:

* I do not allow the use of laptop/notebook computers in my classes. Additionally, all 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 are welcome 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 -- you may be exempt from the laptop prohibition.

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 class and/or Blackboard announcements.

Week One

Mon. 1/20  Holiday - No Classes
Wed. 1/22  Introduction to World Religions
Fri. 1/24  What's Up With Religion?

Week Two

Mon. 1/27  What's Up With Religion?
Belief-o-matic Quiz due
Wed. 1/29  What's Up With Religion?
Fri. 1/31  Chapter Test #1 - What's Up... + post-test review
Week Three
Mon.2/3    Indigenous Sacred Ways
Wed.2/5    Indigenous Sacred Ways
Fri.2/7    Indigenous Sacred Ways

Week Four
Mon.2/10   Chapter Test #2 - Indigenous Sacred Ways + post-test review
Wed.2/12   Hindu Dharma
Fri.2/14   Hindu Dharma

Week Five
Mon.2/17   Hindu Dharma
Wed.2/19   Hindu Dharma
Fri.2/21   Hindu Dharma

Week Six
Mon.2/24   Chapter Test #3 - Hindu Dharma + post-test review
Wed.2/26   Buddhism
Fri.2/28   Buddhism

**Journal #1 due in gmail by Friday, 2/28 no later than 1159 pm**

Week Seven
Mon.3/3    Buddhism
Wed.3/5    Buddhism
Fri.3/7    Buddhism

Week Eight
Mon.3/10   Chapter Test #4 - Buddhism + post-test review
Wed.3/12   Mid-Term Exam Review
Fri.3/14   Mid-Term Exam

Week Nine
Mon.3/17   Judaism
Wed.3/19   Judaism
Fri.3/21   NCAA Tournament - No class
Week Ten
Mon. 3/24 Judaism
Wed. 3/26 Judaism
Fri. 3/28 Judaism

Week Eleven

Week Twelve
Mon. 4/7 Judaism pre-test review
Wed. 4/9 Chapter Test #5 - Judaism + post-test review
Fri. 4/11 Christianity

Week Thirteen
Mon. 4/14 Christianity
Wed. 4/16 Christianity
Fri. 4/18 Christianity

**Site Visit essay due in gmail on Friday, 4/18 no later than 1159 pm**

Week Fourteen
Mon. 4/21 Christianity
Wed. 4/23 Chapter Test #6 - Christianity + post-test review
Fri. 4/25 Islam

Week Fifteen
Mon. 4/28 Islam
Wed. 4/30 Islam
Fri. 5/2 Islam

Week Sixteen
Mon. 5/5 Islam
Wed. 5/7 Chapter Test #7 - Islam + post-test review
Final Exam: Day/date: Friday, May 9th
Time: 1030 am-1230 pm
Location: PG153
Have a Grrreat Summer!!