Fall 2016 Syllabus

Religious Studies 101: World Religions
Michael Caldwell
Fall 2016
San Diego State University
Office Hours: M/W 2:00-3:00 pm, in or around Starbucks next to Nasatir Hall
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TEXTS:

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This is a survey course designed to help students familiarize themselves with the basic philosophies and practices of the world's major religious traditions. We will look at the historical development of each tradition as documented in the main course text, supplementing this material with occasional audio and written material outside of the textbook. The course's main goal is to give students a broad exposure to and knowledge of world religions and offer them the opportunity to deepen their awareness of their own thoughts, beliefs and assumptions about religion and spirituality.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. 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.

2. To develop critical thinking skills through comparative study by identifying both differences and similarities of religious teachings, practices, symbols and mythologies.

3. 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.

4. To improve writing and thinking skills through exams, quizzes and essays.

COURSEWORK:
Students in this course will take two in-class exams as well as a final exam during exam week. There will be no make up dates for exams. Exams will cover material in the reading as well as topics covered in lecture. Quizzes and exams will make free use of this material. Doing well in the course is impossible without attending carefully to this component of class.
PARTICIPATION:
Regular and alert attendance at lecture is expected. Quizzes may be given, either on line or in lecture, drawing on specifics from the lectures themselves. You need to read the material assigned for a particular day before class. This is a hybrid course—expect material to be posted every Friday at class time. You are responsible for this material as if it were delivered in class as a lecture. Expect to be quizzed and tested on it.

POLICIES:
Incivility will not be tolerated. That includes obviously disruptive or unproductive behavior in class, as well as lesser forms of discourtesy such as texting, checking e-mail, sleeping, talking over others, and the like. (In other words, this will be an electronics-free lecture hall—this includes cell phones, laptops and tablets.) I reserve the right to ask those who are disruptive or deliberately offensive to leave the room. Additionally, I reserve the right to ask you to leave if you are obviously unprepared or unwilling to contribute to the class.

CHEATING:
Copying from others is a form of theft and will result in a grade of F (0) on the exam or quiz in question.

STUDENT DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION:
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 accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

GRADING
Exam 1 - 20%
Exam 2 - 20%
Final Exam - 20%
Geertz Observation Project - 25%
Quizzes - 15%

Dates on exams are non-negotiable. The only valid reasons for rescheduling a missed exam need to be documented in writing (medical, legal, etc.). If you think you have a valid reason for needing to be excused for an exam, see me BEFORE the exam date to discuss possible options. Travel plans (going home early, etc.) are never a valid reason to reschedule an exam. Missed in-class quizzes cannot be made up.

COURSE SCHEDULE:
(I reserve the right to shift around assignments or extend the time we spend on a particular item if I feel we need the extra time—in all such cases, I will give you advance
notice via e-mail as well as in class as to any schedule changes. Unless you hear differently in class or via Blackboard, this is the schedule we will follow.

Also, remember that this is a hybrid course. That is, there is an online component to the course that goes live each Friday. I’ll post links in Blackboard for this content as well as give an announcement letting you know it is there. You are responsible for this material as well, some of which may appear in quizzes. This material will take the form of audio files, possible video files and so forth; all of it designed to supplement and make easier your reading for the course. Skipping this material is not advised.

Aug. 29 - Introductions
Aug. 31 – Geertz (read pdf from Blackboard before class)
(Sept. 2) – Hinduism (audio lecture)

Sept. 5 – NO CLASS – LABOR DAY
Sept. 7 – Hinduism (read Matthews 68-108)
(Sept. 9) – Hinduism (audio lecture)

Sept. 12 – Hinduism / Geertz exercise due
Sept. 14 – Hinduism
(Sept. 16) – Buddhism (audio lecture)

Sept. 19 – Buddhism (read Matthews 109-150)
Sept. 21 – Buddhism
(Sept. 23) – Buddhism (audio lecture)

Sept. 26 – Buddhism
Sept. 28 – Buddhism
(Sept. 30) – Exam review (audio lecture)

Oct. 3 – Exam 1 (bring blue book and pen to class)
Oct. 5 – Religions of China and Japan (read Matthews 175-218)
(Oct. 7) – Chinese religions (audio lecture)

Oct. 10 – Religions of China and Japan
Oct. 12 – Religions of China and Japan / Due date to choose religion for observation
(Oct. 14) – Japanese religions (audio lecture)

Oct. 17 – Exam review
Oct. 19 – Exam 2 (bring blue book and pen to class) / Due date to decide if your observation is a group effort (names of all participants required)
(Oct. 21) – Judaism (audio lecture)

Oct. 24 – Judaism (read Matthews 243-287) / Must indicate what service (date) you will attend and where – it can have already taken place
Oct. 26 – Judaism
(Oct. 28) – Judaism (audio lecture)

Oct. 31 – Judaism
Nov. 2 – Judaism / Observation has to have taken place by this date
(Nov. 4) – Judaism (audio lecture)

Nov. 7 – Christianity (read Matthews 289-334)
Nov. 9 – Christianity
(Nov. 11) – NO AUDIO LECTURE – VETERAN’S DAY HOLIDAY

Nov. 14 – Christianity
Nov. 16 - Christianity
(Nov. 18) – Christianity (audio lecture)

Nov. 21 – Christianity
Nov. 23 – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
(Nov. 25) – NO AUDIO LECTURE – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Nov. 28 - Islam
Nov. 30 - Islam
(Dec.2) – Islam (audio lecture)

Dec. 5 – Islam
Dec. 7 – Islam / Geertz Observation Project due at the beginning of class
(Dec. 9) – Islam (audio lecture)

Dec. 12 – Islam
Dec. 14 – Exam review

Dec. 19 - FINAL EXAM 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM (bring blue book and a pen)