

PHIL 210: World Religions Spring 2009

WNC – Monday & Wednesday 2:30-3:45 pm (Cedar 313)

Credits: 3

Prerequisite: None

Transferability: Transfer to institutions within UCCSN as PHIL 210.

Fulfills: Humanities requirement for Transfer & General Education Degrees. This course is designed to allow students to demonstrate appropriate:

1. College-level writing skills;
2. College-level reading skills;
3. Critical-thinking skills; and
4. Appreciation for ethics, diversity and cultural traditions.

Instructor: Susan Priest

Email: spriest@wnc.edu

Office: Cedar 311

Phone: 775-445-3318

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 1:15-2:15 PM; Wednesday 4:00 – 5:00 PM, and Tuesday and Thursday 11:00 am – 12:00 pm.

****NOTE – Office Hours may change during the semester, but I will announce them in class and update my website if this happens.**

MY Website: www.susanpriest.com Check it out and tell me what you think! Class syllabi and other helpful hints are located on the website.

THIS IS AN ENHANCED CLASS: Login to BLACKBOARD(Online learning platform) --

<http://webcampus.wnc.edu/webct/entryPageIns.dowebct> If you have never taken an online or an enhanced class, first read directions for logging in to BLACKBOARD at

<http://www.wnc.edu/online/login.php> . If you need help, please check the frequently asked questions and then contact the Reference Librarians at (775-445-3227.) They will help you. Make sure to let me know if you have not been able to access Blackboard/WebCT by Week 2 of the semester.

Take advantage of your instructor's Office Hours ☺!

I) Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce you to the major religions of the world – Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Using a variety of methodological approaches (historical, anthropological and experiential) we will attempt to flesh out what defines *The Sacred* in the world's religions.

II) Course Objectives:

- A) To **increase awareness** and **appreciation** of the world's religions by seeking to understand how they name *The Sacred*.
- B) To learn the **basic moral tenants, doctrines** and **religious practices** of the world's major religions.
- C) To identify differences in **myth, ritual, symbol, architecture and artistic expression** among the world's religions.
- D) To improve **critical thinking skills** in oral and written communication.

III) Methods of Instruction:

Class may involve a combination of activities including: lecture, class discussion, music appreciation, viewing films and video/ritual analysis.

IV) Course Requirements – Student Responsibilities:

A) Preparation, Attendance & Participation (50 Points)

Preparation: It is important to be at every class, and be prepared to participate in class discussion. Being prepared includes **completing 100% of reading assignments** and being ready to discuss them. Use the Calendar of Assignments and Study Guide to prepare for class discussions. For a study of world religions, being prepared also includes being open to new ideas.

Attendance & Participation:

- “90 % of success is showing up.” Woody Allen
- Without you class is not the same. Plan to attend every session.
- You will receive **two points** for every class you attend and in which you participate (except for Final Exam Day.)
- If you are late to class, leave early or do not participate you will receive a fraction of those **two points**.
- The instructor may drop any student when she feels the student has had an excessive number of unexcused absences. For this course, unexcused absences in excess of 3 classes may be considered excessive. If you have an emergency, please contact the instructor.

A word on participation and discussion in World Religion: It is important to remember that this course is not designed to “convert” anyone. As we enter into conversations about deeply held beliefs and issues of faith it will be helpful to locate our conversation within the academic field of philosophy. All world religions are philosophies. (Note: Philosophy comes from two Greek words which roughly translate = to love wisdom.) Our goal will be to create a respectful forum for discussing and exploring the wisdom of the world’s religions.

B) Tests (150 Points)

There will be 3 Tests throughout the semester on religious terminology and concepts (use *World Religions Study Guide - Terminology List* handout) and reading assignments (refer to page 6-8 of this syllabus – IX Calendar of Assignments.) These Tests are worth 75 points each and may include short answer definitions, multiple choice questions and/or brief essays. NOTE: Tests will take place during the 2nd half of class on Test Day. You will be given the option of taking a Multiple Choice/Short-Answer Test or an Essay Test on that day. **I will drop the lowest Test grade. (No make-up tests will be given. If you miss a test day, you will receive a zero.)**

C) Homework, Activities & Writing Assignments (150 Points)

Homework – Throughout of the semester there will be a few brief assignments for

which you will receive points. See Calendar of Assignments (p.6-7) for Due Dates:

- **LOGIN to BLACKBOARD/CE6** – To familiarize yourself with the enhanced portion of this course and to make sure you are familiar with the assignments before “crunch” time, please login to BLACKBOARD and complete the following “brief” assignments. Due: End of Week 2, 9/5/08.
(20 points Total)
 - **Post an Introductory Bio about yourself for the class:** Tell the class something about yourself and what you are interested in learning about PHIL 210: World Religions. This bio should be at least 7 sentences.
(10 points)
 - **Complete “SAMPLE” Turnitin Assignment:** All writing assignments in this course will be submitted electronically via BLACKBOARD (CE6.) Your papers will be processed through the turnitin (anti-plagiarism) website and software. Submit this “sample” assignment to become familiar with the process. You will need to access BLACKBOARD (CE6) to learn what the assignment is. **(10 points)**
- **Facilitate a Discussion of one of the World’s Religions** – The first day of class there will be a sign up for you to participate as a class facilitator. You will need to work with the other student(s) signed up for that day to bring in questions and/or activities for class to help explore the religion that week. Guidelines and suggestions will be handed out in class. Week 3-14 **(30 points)**

Writing Assignments – Two short papers (3-6 pages) are designed to give each student an opportunity to reflect critically on religious texts and themes from different faith traditions. Through your encounters with these sacred stories and poems you will gain a deeper understanding of the religions of the world. Use primary source material¹ to explore the essay topics. **You will need to login to BLACKBOARD (CE6) in order to see the paper topics.** (NOTE: if you want to suggest your own topic please consult with the instructor before the due date.) There are several options for these writing assignments.

50 points (max) are given for each writing assignment. I will deduct 5 points each day that a paper is late.) IF you turn your paper in on time, you may re-write it for an improved grade.

□ **Writing Assignment 1 – Due end of Week 5 – 2/18/09**

□ **Writing Assignment 2 – Due beginning of Week 11 – 4/6/09**

ALL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS WE BE EVALUATED ON THE FOLLOWING:

Composition (15 Points)

- The writing assignments should be typed (double-spaced) and 3-6 pages in length.
- Please include your name, PHIL 210 - Carson, Spring 2009 and the date in the upper left hand corner of the paper.
- **Citing References:** Every time you include a direct quote or refer to an idea

¹ By primary source material, I mean actual sacred texts or collections of prayers, poems, rituals and stories from different religious traditions. The World's Wisdom: Sacred Texts of the World's Religions, Ed. By Philip Novak is a compilation of source material.

mentioned in the book, you need to include a reference note. For this class, please include author's name and page # in parentheses. (e.g., If you are referring to ideas on the nature of religion that you read about in your textbook (on page 6) your note should look like this: (Molloy 6))²

- Proper punctuation, grammar and spelling. (*Don't just rely on the computer spell checker, proof read your assignment before you turn it in.*)
- Clear writing style.³

A Word on Plagiarism: When you properly cite references you avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense in writing papers and all academic coursework.

“Plagiarism = taking any idea or writing that is not your own and including it in your paper without citing your source. For example, if you go to a website and take information or sentences from that website and do not cite that website in your paper, you are plagiarizing...This also includes using the textbook, quoting it, or describing a philosopher's view not your own without citing the page from which you took the information.”⁴ **Plagiarizing = F.**

Content (35 points) ask yourself these questions before you turn in the assignment:

- Have you clearly stated a thesis on a philosophical, theological, literary, artistic or historical aspect of the religion in question?
- Have you addressed the assigned essay topic?
- Have you fully explored the nuances of the sacred texts?
- Have you accurately represented the religious tradition? (*While you may believe your comments are simply a matter of opinion, it is possible to misread and misrepresent a sacred text.*)
- Is your brief essay a collection of random thoughts or a coherent series of interrelated thoughts? (*You are striving for the second.*)

HOW YOUR WRITING WILL BE EVALUATED: The following are some general guidelines that I will be following, when I grade your written work, submitted online in BLACKBOARD(CE6):

- All writing (including official discussion posts, writing assignments and final projects) will follow standard practices of English Grammar. For full credit you will write in complete sentences. Please, NO “text message” symbols or shortcuts will be accepted.
- When you consult references or cite material in your papers you must use MLA (Modern Language Association) format to cite your sources. **(Otherwise you will be plagiarizing.)**

I will use the **CARS** method of evaluating the form and content of your writing. Are you

² You may need to do outside research and I want you to get in the habit of properly documenting ideas, which is a part of all scholarly writing. For philosophy courses you should be using MLA format -- Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 6th Ed. New York: The Modern Language Association, 2003. You may also consult: <http://www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/workshop/citmla.htm> and http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html#Works-Cited.

³ If you need some concrete suggestions for how to improve your writing style I recommend looking at William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White's classic book *The Elements of Style*. 4th Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000.

⁴ *Introduction to Philosophy Syllabus*. David Yount, Ph.D., Mesa Community College. <<http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/~yount/text/101syllbs.html>>

Clear, Accurate, Relevant and have you used Sufficient support?

D) Term Project (75 points)

Choose one of the following projects. All term projects are **due May 4th, 2009**. You **may** choose to do an oral presentation of your project for extra points on May 4th or 6th. No term project will be accepted after 5 pm Monday May 11th. (Note: You **may** lose points for projects turned in after May 4th.)

1. Attend a church/temple service of a religion different from the one in which you were raised. Write a response paper (**5-7 pages**) that includes details of the service that you attended (a funeral is not generally representative), a copy of the bulletin, description of the architecture, artistic expression that you experienced, and some analysis of the service you attended. The more detail you include the better.
2. Create on paper (**7-9 pages**) a new religion. Include details such as – Doctrines, Moral Tenants, Beliefs, Ritual, Sacred Places, Drawings of Art & Architecture, Sacred Literature, etc. The more details you include the better.
3. Design your own project (**7-9 pages**) (e.g., research paper of new religious movement or aspect of one of the religions that we have covered.) Please plan to consult the instructor before you hand in your term project if you desire to design your own.

E) Final Exam (75 Points)

A Final Exam will be given on **May 11th**. It will have 2 parts: 1) An objective section much like the quizzes and it will cover material from all readings, lectures, discussions, and films and 2) An essay section. Essay topics **may** be given out ahead of time and **may** be prepared ahead of time. NOTE: I may change the form of the Final Exam.

No Make-up exams will be given. The final exam is a course requirement.

(Translation: you must take the Final Exam to pass the course.) **Mark your calendars now with this date.**

V) Assignments for Instructor ~ Susan Priest:

- I will come to class on time.
- I will give this class 100% of my attention while we are meeting.
- I will prepare and deliver class lectures, bringing in relevant additional sources.
- I will facilitate class discussions and seek to create a respectful forum at all times.
- **I will grade writing assignments and quizzes/tests promptly.** Papers will include sufficient comments to assist students in re-writing. *(Exception: I may not turn late papers back promptly.)*
- I will make myself available for your class related questions and concerns by appointment, as needed.
- I will assign final grades to each student using the following criteria:

VI) Grades:

The final grade will be determined by the course requirements:

- **Class attendance & participation**

50 points

- **Tests (2 out of 3)** 150 points
 - **Homework, Discussion & Writing Assignments** 150 points
 - **Term Project** 75 points
 - **Final Exam** 75 points
- 500 points**

Points Earned	Grade Received
465 - 500 points	A
450 – 464 points	A-
435 - 449 points	B+
415 – 434 points	B
400 – 414 points	B-
385 – 399 points	C+
365 – 384 points	C
350 – 364 points	C-
335 – 349 points	D+
315 – 334 points	D
300 – 314 points	D-
Below 300 points	F

NOTE: If you wish to withdraw from the course, rather than receive the grade that you have earned, it is your responsibility to withdraw. If you have earned below 300 points, you receive a grade of F not W for this class. If you run into problems, ask for help (445-3318). MAY 8TH is the last day to drop a full-term class with a “W.”

VII) Reading:

Required TEXT (TX): *Experiencing the World's Religions: Tradition, Challenge & Change, 4th Edition.* Michael Molloy. Boston: McGraw Hill Higher Education, 2008.

Recommended READER (RD): *The World's Wisdom: Sacred Texts of the World's Religions.* Michael Novak. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994.

VIII) Calendar of Assignments:

All reading assignments are to be completed before class.

WK	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments Due
1	1/19/09	No Class	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	
	1/21/09	SYLLABUS – Introduction to World Religion	SYLLABUS Discuss – Explore: What is Sacred?	Sign-up for “Facilitating”
2	1/26/09	Study of Religions – Why Study Religion	TX: Chapter 1 (p.1-71)	DUE: Login to BLACKBOARD/CE6 – Introductory Post & Sample Assignment
	1/28/09	Indigenous Religions	TX: Chapter 2 (p.1-71) RD: Selected creation myths (p. 331-351)	
3	2/2/09	Hinduism	TX: Chapter 3 “Hinduism (p.73-120)	

			RD: Selections from <i>The Bhagavad-Gita</i> (p. 24-40)	
	2/4/09	Hinduism	RD: Selections from <i>The Bhagavad-Gita</i> (p. 24-40)	
4	2/9/09	Buddhism	TX: Chapter 4 "Buddhism" (p.123-189)	
	2/11/09	Buddhism	RD: Selections from the life of Buddha and from the <i>Dhammapada</i> (p.49-65; 103-109)	
5	2/16/09	No Class	President's Day Holiday – NO School	
	2/18/09	Hinduism – Buddhism Wrap Up		DUE: Writing Assignment #1
6	2/23/09	Test #1		Test 1 (On topics covered in class from 1/21-2/11)
	2/25/09	Jainism & Sikhism	TX: Chapter 5 "Jainism & Sikhism" (p.191-213)	
7	3/2/09	Chinese Religions	TX: Chapter 6 "Chinese Religions" (p. 215-263)	
	3/4/09	Chinese Religions Continued. -		
8	3/9/09	Chinese Religions Continued. - Shinto	RD: Selections from <i>The Great Learning</i> and from <i>The Tao Te Ching</i> (p.133-161)	
	3/11/09	Shinto	TX: Chapter 7 "Shinto" (p. 265-291)	
	3/16 – 3/22	No Classes	Spring Break	
9	3/23/09	Eastern Religions Wrap-Up		
		Test #2		Test #2 (On topics covered in class from 2/25 – 10/22)
10	3/30/09	Judaism	TX: Chapter 8 "Judaism" (p. 293-349)	
	4/1/09	Judaism	RD: Selections from the Oral Torah (p.213-224)	
11	4/6/09	Christianity	TX: Chapter 9 "Christianity" (p. 351-435)	DUE: Writing Assignment #2
	4/8/09	Christianity	RD: Selections from creeds & other Christian writings outside the canonical Bible (p.262-279)	
12	4/13/09	Islam	TX: Begin Chapter 10 "Islam" (p. 437-499)	
	4/15/09	Islam	RD: Selections from the Qur'an (p.282-310)	

13	4/20/09	Baha'i and other New Religious Movements	TX: Chapter 11 "Alternative Paths" (p.501-533)	
	4/22/09	New Religious Movements Cont.		
14	4/27/09	Wrap-Up – Western Religions and New Religious Movements	TX: Chapter 12 "The Modern Search" (p. 537-574)	
	4/29/09	TEST #3		Test #3 (On Topics covered in class from 3/30 – 4/27)
15	5/4/09	Review & Presentations		DUE: Term Projects BLACKBOARD/CE6
	5/6/09	Review & Presentations	<i>May 8th is the last day to withdraw from class.</i>	
16	12/11/08	Final Exam	2:30 PM	

IX) Final Notes:

- A) **CAVEAT FROM INSTRUCTOR ON COURSE CONTENT:** As the course progresses there may be a need to modify topics, offer additional readings and handouts, assign additional assignments, and/or change the calendar of assignments to meet course objectives.
- B) **DISABILITY STATEMENT:** WNC supports providing equal access for students with disabilities. Susan Trist (DSS Coordinator) is available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that students may require. Please either meet with me or contact Susan Trist (445-3275) at your earliest convenience.
- C) **REVIEW OF CLASSROOM POLICIES:**
- **RESPECT:** This says it all about my expectations of classroom behavior. See WNC's "Principles of Community" (p.3, 2008-2009 Catalog) for more details. Also make sure to read WNC's "Student Code of Conduct" to know your rights and responsibilities.
 - **ATTENDANCE:** Please contact instructor with questions or concerns related to attendance. If you must be absent due to illness or unforeseen emergency you may ask instructor what in-class writing assignments you missed to make up points. It is your responsibility to find out what you missed.
 - **LATE WORK:** I accept late writing assignments, but you will lose 5 points per day. Writing assignments that are turned in late **may not be re-written** for an improved grade. Late Final Essay Exams may not be accepted.
 - **MAKE-UP TESTS:** There are no make-up Tests or Final Exam. I drop the lowest test grade. Please contact the instructor with questions.
 - **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Honesty is the best policy. See WNC's policy on "Academic Integrity" 3-4-5 <http://www.wnc.edu/policymanual/3-4-5.htm> (OR read p. 3 of your Student Handbook 2008-2009.) Plagiarism and cheating may result in an automatic "F" for that assignment/quiz/test and an "F" for the course.
 - **CELL PHONES:** Please turn off all cell phones and electronic devices in class. NO TEXTING in class.

