

INTRO TO RELIGIOUS STUDIES

REL-101-010

Instructor: **Parviz Dehghani**
Class Meetings: **Thursday 06:00PM - 08:45PM, Liberal Arts, Room LA213**
Office Hours: **Thursday 07:45PM - 08:45PM and by appointment.**
Phone and Fax #: **(732) 906-8377** {home}. NO CELL
Personal e-mail: **drparviz@optonline.net** (Phone calls preferred for speedy response).

Course #: <u>REL-101</u>	GenEd? <u>Yes</u>	Credits: <u>3</u>	Prerequisites: <u>NONE</u>	Co-requisites: <u>NONE</u>
--------------------------	-------------------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

Catalogue Description

An introduction to the study of religions, focusing on that nature of religious beliefs and practices, such as sacred power, myths, texts, art and rituals, the problem of evil, and the relationship between cultures, ethics and religions.

Objective

In this kind of approach to Religion, we would like to encourage students to get involved in knowing what Religion is from an “academic and comparative perspective” as the author of this book, Professor Gary E. Kessler intended. The goal is for students to comprehend Religions, their beliefs and practices from a more universal transcendent view.

Course Competencies/Goals/Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)

1. Identify and define the key religious terms, traditions, practices, materials, issues and theories
2. Employ critical thinking and academic religious studies methods and criteria to determine and analyze the different ways Western and non-Western religions influence the lives of their followers and others, individually and collectively, within and across different cultures
3. Distinguish and analyze how religious considerations relate to philosophical and scientific considerations with regard to fundamental questions (origins, meaning, etc.) and contemporary ethical, political, economic and other issues and events
4. Describe, explain, interpret, and compare the differing religiosities of individuals and groups as expressed traditionally, formally, textually and in actual practice, including factoring the issues of respect and rights
5. Frame and present your own views on religious issues, both orally and in writing, with logical and critical precision, clarity, coherence and rigor.

Each goal or outcome relates to “religious studies literacy” with respect to content knowledge and to the “discipline-specific methodologies” of the study of religion with respect to relevant content material. Other learning goals may be specified in particular sections by the instructor with the course coordinator’s approval in addition to but not as a replacement for the above listed goals.

General Education Knowledge Goals for this course:

Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

Goal 5. Social Science. Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.

Goal. 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

Goal 7. History. Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.

Goal 8. Diversity. Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

MCCC Core Skills for this course:

Goal A. Written and Oral Communication in English. Students will communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.

Goal B. Critical Thinking and Problem-solving. Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.

Goal C. Ethical Decision-Making. Students will recognize, analyze and assess ethical issues and situations.

Goal D. Information Literacy. Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

Goal F. Collaboration and Cooperation. Students will develop the interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.

Goal G. Intra-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Responsibility. Students will demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.

Requirements

Class Participation/Attendance:

Participation is reflective of your attendance. You won’t really be able to participate if you are not in class. A lot is covered in class lectures therefore it is your job to make sure you do not miss what was covered. You can attempt to get what was covered in a class you were not able to attend by asking a classmate for notes. Also remember although you did not make it to a class the required reading assignment for that class must also be completed so you will not fall behind. Class participation will be also determined not only in how well the student demonstrates religious literacy but in the contribution to the class in active questioning, helping other students in understanding course materials through in class discussions, as well as attendance.

Attendance

The final grades will have a lot to do with your attendance records. Whether legitimate or not your absences will have an effect on the depth and the quality of your works. Thus, the more you are absent the lower your grades will be for the semester. The burden of making up for your absences is on your shoulders and not your teacher's. You must control the number of your absences so they will not exceed # 3. With any extra absence your (A) can drop to (A-). You are also responsible for catching up with the rest of the class by perhaps borrowing your friends' notes, etc.

Attendance/Regulations

Mercer County Community College does not have a "cut system." Students are expected to attend all classes of every course on their schedules. Only illness or serious personal matters may be considered adequate reasons for absence.

It is the prerogative of the instructor to excuse absences for valid reasons, provided the student will be able to fulfill all course requirements.

Students in the Medical Laboratory Technology and Radiography programs must arrange with the program coordinator to make up all missed laboratory and clinical hours. Students in nursing courses are required to attend all lecture, recitation, college laboratory, and clinical laboratory sessions.

The college is required by law to maintain attendance reports on students who are funded by Veterans benefits, Social Security payments and various other federal, state, or private scholarship programs.

Attendance Verification and Progress Grades

Student performance in classes is formally verified at the middle of each full semester. If a student's attendance has been infrequent or performance unsatisfactory, he or she may receive notification in the mail. At any time, the instructor may withdraw the student from class as a result of insufficient attendance.

Students who receive an unsatisfactory progress report are encouraged to see their instructor, advisor, and/or counselor and to take the steps necessary to complete the course successfully by the end of the semester.

Class Presentation/Reading Assignments:

There will be class presentations given by the students throughout the semester. These presentations will be based on the reading assignments for each class. Students shall be randomly chosen to give these presentations and they will be graded in-class. Students will not be permitted to read from their notes. However, they are allowed to glance at them once in a while. They are to maintain proper eye contact with their classmates while keeping an eye on the highlights of the subject at hand. If they are not ready, they will receive a negative sign in front of their name, which will in turn affect their final grade at the end of the semester. But if they are ready, they will get a positive sign, in front of their name, which will help them with their final grade. Those who have already given a presentation can be called upon again to give another one at any time. ((If you miss a class you are still obligated to complete the required reading assignment for that class so you will not fall behind.))

Quizzes:

Three quizzes throughout the semester to assess course's comprehension and literacy.

Midterm:

You will be required to write a three page paper using your texts, library sources, and class notes if needed. The class texts must not be bypassed for they are your main sources. **The Internet cannot be used as a source in the paper**

but students are free to read the material available on it concerning the subjects of their papers. All papers are to be cited properly, for example, (Palmer, p. 154). Failure to do so will render points reduction. The first page will be research, the second page will be a student's personal life experience (students are to think for themselves and discuss their own personal experiences and/or experiences of their friends or loved ones in relation to their chosen topic) and the third page will be the conclusion in which the students will summarize how their personal life experiences relate to the religious subject at hand. The conclusion is where the student will either agree or disagree with the religion or religious views and analyze their given situation with relation to the topic they have chosen for their paper. Students can choose any topic throughout the text. A bibliography is not necessary unless new sources aside from the course text are used. **Students are not allowed to bypass their texts and write their papers based on another source.** Depth is the key in this course. Do not let your papers be ordinary, strive to be unique and express your own individual perspectives on the issues. Use your past and present experiences or even what you are planning to do in the future for your life in relation to your topics. Your grades will reflect what you put into the papers.

Final Exam:

The Final Exam will be based on class discussions and lectures as well as the text. Therefore, it is very important not to miss too many classes because 75% of your final exam depends on class discussions. Remember participation by questioning during class presentations, especially text related, will help your grade. Interactions among students are a must. Students who do so are bound to earn better grades at the end.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

10% Class Participation/Attendance
15% Class Presentations/Reading Assignments
25% Quizzes
25% Midterm
25% Final Exam

Policies

Late papers will get late grades, so please do not turn in your papers late. Be actively involved in the class and do not make things more difficult for the rest of the class by chatting and distracting your class mates. Getting out of class as if you're going to use the bathroom while in fact you're to check your cell phones is not allowed. In fact you'll be asked to go to the bathroom before the class starts. Being late for the class will disturb your classmates as well as your teacher. If you choose to be absent for Religious holidays, you will be responsible for the material covered in the class.

Any student in this class who has special needs because of a disability is entitled to receive accommodations. Eligible students at Mercer County Community College are assured services under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you believe you are eligible for services, please discuss these with the instructor AND contact Arlene Stinson, the Director of Academic Support Services. Ms. Stinson's office is LB221, and she can be reached at (609) 570-3525.

There will be no tolerance for any plagiarism so I advise that you do not do it or else you'll put yourselves in harm's way. College policies will be strictly and maximally enforced. To wit, the College's Academic Honest Policy reads: —Mercer County Community College is committed to Academic integrity—the honest, fair and continuing pursuit of knowledge, free from fraud or deception. This implies that students are expected to be responsible for their own work and that faculty and academic support services staff members will take reasonable precautions to prevent the opportunity for academic dishonesty. See: <http://mlink.mccc.edu/omb/OMB210.pdf>. When in doubt, cite! Never cut and paste in any answer!

Required Text (You are expected to have the following book)

Religion: A Study in Beauty, Truth, and Goodness by Kent Richter ISBN-13: 978-0190291198

Recommended Texts: Peter Berger, "Religion and World-Construction" (Google books)

Information Sources:

Magic, Science, and Religion, Bronislaw Malinowski, Waveland Press, 1992, ISBN-13: 978-0881336573

The Sociology of Religion, Max Weber, tr. Ephraim Fischhoff, Beacon Press, 1993, ISBN-13: 978-0807042052

The Idea of the Holy, 2nd edition, Rudolf Otto, tr. John W. Harvey, Oxford University Press, 1958, ISBN-13: 978-0195002102

The Future of an Illusion, Sigmund Freud, CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2011, ISBN-13: 978-1463525378

The Interpretation of Cultures, Clifford Geertz, Basic Books, 1977, ISBN-13: 978-0465097197

Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditionalist World, Robert N. Bellah, University of California Press, 1991, ISBN-13: 978-0520073944

What is Religion? An Introduction, John F. Haught, Paulist Press, 1990, ISBN-13: 978-0809131174

Mircea Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, Forward through p. 23; pp. 30 - 33 (Google books)

Living Religions, 8th Edition, Mary Pat Fisher, Pearson; 2010, ISBN-13: 978-0205835850

Anthology of Living Religions, 3rd Edition, Mary Pat Fisher, Pearson, 2011, ISBN-13: 978-0205246809

Experiencing the World's Religions, 5th Edition, Michael Molloy, McGraw-Hill, 2009, ISBN-13: 978-0073407500

The World's Religions, Huston Smith, HarperOne; 2009, ISBN-13: 978-0061660184

Rethinking Religion: A Concise Introduction, Will Deming, Oxford University Press, 2004, ISBN-13: 978-0195169812

The Case for God, Karen Armstrong, 2009, Knopf, ISBN: 9780307397430

The World's Wisdom: Sacred Texts of the World's Religions, Philip Novak, HarperOne, 1995, ISBN-13: 978-0060663421

Anthology of World Scriptures, Robert E. Van Voorst, Wadsworth Publishing; 7th edition, 2010, ISBN-13: 978-0495808794

World Religions: A Historical Approach, S. A. Nigosian, St. Martin's; 4th edition, 2007, ISBN-13: 978-0312442378

A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Karen Armstrong, Ballantine Books, 1994, ISBN-13: 978-0345384560

The Battle for God, Karen Armstrong, Ballantine Books, 2001, ISBN-13: 978-0345391698

The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature, William James, Penguin, 1982. God: A Biography, Jack Miles, Vintage, 1996.

Eight Theories of Religion. 2nd Edition. Daniel Pals, Oxford University Press, 2006.

Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion and the Nature of Society, David Sloan Wilson, University of Chicago Press, 2003.

The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, Emile Durkheim

Discovering God: The Origins of Great Religions and the Evolution of Belief, Rodney Stark, HarperCollins, 2007. Clifford Williams, "The Ethics of Belief" (1877)

Russell T. McCutcheon, "Myth" (Google books) David Loy, "The Religion of the Market" (1997)

Mircea Eliade, "Ch. 1: Sacred Space and Making the World Sacred," in The Sacred and the Profane (Google books)

Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America" [AAR](#) (American Academy of Religion) [From Primitives to Zen](#), by Mircea Eliade [Eliaden terms](#)

["Darwin's God"](#) by Robin Marantz Henig (*NY Times Magazine*, 3/4/07): a good discussion of theories of religion in the field of evolutionary biology

["Insides, Outsides, and The Scholar of Religion"](#) by Russell McCutcheon

[Religion News](#)

[Religion and American politics](#) (news and opinion pieces)

[American Religious Identification Survey \(2008\)](#) **NEW**

[Mircea Eliade on "The Structure of Myth"](#)
"Enuma Elish" (Babylonian creation myth)
[N.K. Sandars trans.](#) [E.A. Speiser trans.](#)
[E.A. Speiser trans. with notes by Isaac Mendelsohn](#)
[Fanciful drawing of Marduk killing Tiamat](#)
[Ancient Near East internet sites](#)
[Judaism 101](#)
[Judaism and Jewish Resources](#)
[Jewish Virtual Library](#)
[The Tanakh \(Hebrew Bible\): 1917 JPS translation](#)
[Hebrew Bible \(1917 JPS translation\)](#) [The Dead Sea Scrolls](#)
[Debate over authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls](#) (*New York Times*, Dec. 24, 2002)
[Josephus: The Wars of the Jews \(Project Gutenberg\)](#) [Babylonian Talmud](#): first page
[Karaites of America](#) (small denomination of Jews who do not believe in the "Oral Torah" [Evangelicals and Jews](#), by Martin Marty (Aug. 15, 2000)
[Dabru Emet: Jewish statement on Christians and Christianity](#) (Sept. 10, 2000)
[Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews](#) (Feb. 18, 2001) NPR interview with James Carroll, 10 minutes
[Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the Jewish Community](#)
[Judaism in China](#)
[Jewish Japan](#) (some good stuff, some dead links, and some flaky theories) [King James version](#) (1611)
[American Standard Version](#) (1901)
[American Standard Version with links to concordance](#)
[New International Version](#) (1973) [English Standard Version](#) (2001) [Gospel of Thomas](#)
[Biblical Studies Guide](#) (Yale Divinity School) [Christian Classics Online](#)
[Online Encyclopedia of Early Church History](#) [From Jesus to Christ](#) (1998 PBS documentary) [Peter and Paul](#) (2005 PBS documentary)
[The Jesus Seminar Forum](#)
[Gospel of Judas](#) (National Geographic) *The Passion of the Christ*, by Mel Gibson [Jesus H. Christ: Slate review](#)
[Resources on the Mel Gibson movie](#) from [Boston College](#)
["Re flectio ns o n M el Gibso n's *Passion*"](#) (*Journal of Religion and Society*, 2004)
[A Viewer's Guide to Contemporary Passion Plays](#) (*Journal of Religion and Society*, 2004) [Catholic Information Center](#)
[The Vatican Orthodox Christian Information Center](#)
[Orthodox Byzantine Icons](#)
["Of Conservatism & Distinctiveness in the Religious Marketplace"](#) (*NY Times*) ["Tradition vs Charisma: The Sunni Shi'i Divide in the Muslim World"](#)
[The 2005 Hajj](#) (*NY Times*)
[Confucian Thought and Practice \(RLST 471\) links page](#)
[South Asian Religions links](#) (Timothy Lubin) [Ancient India](#)
["The Hindu Universe"](#) (Hindunet) [Harappa: The Indus Valley and the Raj Yogi seal from Mohenjo-daro](#)
[British Library India Office](#)
[Manifestations of Shiva](#) (video slide/lecture by Prof. Diana Eck, [Harvard University](#)) ["Millions at Holy Festival Bathe in Ganges"](#) (*NY Times*)
[The Caste System and Stages of Life](#) (Kelley L. Ross) [Article about a Dalit \(untouchable\) politician](#) *Journal of South Asia Women Studies*
[Indian philosophy](#)
[Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago](#)
[Hindu Temple in New York suburb](#)
[Buddhist Thought and Practice \(RLST 260\) links page](#)
[Tibetan Library](#)

[Zoroastrian feast in Iran](#)

[Religious Resources at University of South Carolina](#)

[Religion Facts](#)

[Religious Worlds at University of Florida](#) [Religious Studies Online Journals Reference](#) [Encyclopedia of Religion and Society](#)

[Why Study Religion?](#)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_studies

Additional resources The College library's text and NetLibrary and ebrary electronic resources, accessible through http://www.mccc.edu/student_library.shtml, as well as the Library Resource page (under development) provide a wide range of philosophical reference and topic specific texts. The Philosophy Repository on the College online course platform, Angel, contains specific auxiliary readings accessible for all sections that utilize Angel as at least a 'shell' resource for even classroom-based sections. A library of targeted readings handouts is also available in the Coordinator's office.

Learning Center Resources: There are no tutors or study groups through the Learning Center for philosophy topics, though there are tutors for writing. There are limited volunteers in the Philosophy S.P.A. Club available for peer-to-peer tutoring, and Professor Howarth is available to meet with students for tutoring to augment students meeting with their class professors.

Learning Center Resources

There are no tutors or study groups through the Learning Center for philosophy topics, though there are tutors for writing. There are limited volunteers in the Philosophy S.P.A. Club available for peer-to-peer tutoring, and Professor Howarth is available to meet with students for tutoring to augment students meeting with their class professors.

Americans with Disabilities Act

On July 26, 1990, the President of the United States signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA is intended to remove barriers against the more than 43 million people with disabilities in the United States. If a learner has a documented learning disability, psychological disability, physical disability, or other hidden disability that requires an accommodation, it is the responsibility of that individual to make an appointment to meet with the Course Instructor to provide documentation indicating the accommodation that supports that request that is being made. This meeting must occur prior to the due date for any course examinations or assignments to discuss what accommodations might be necessary. It is the responsibility of the student/learner to provide written documentation for the need.

Any student/learner in this class who has special needs because of a disability is entitled to receive accommodations. Eligible students at Mercer County Community College are assured services under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you believe you are eligible for services, please contact Arlene Stinson, the Director of Academic Support Services. Ms. Stinson's office is LB221, and she can be reached at (609) 570-3525. stinsona@mccc.edu

Academic Integrity (http://www.mccc.edu/admissions_policies_integrity.shtml)

Mercer County Community College is committed to Academic Integrity -- the honest, fair and continuing pursuit of knowledge, free from fraud or deception. This implies that students are expected to be responsible for their own work, and that faculty and academic support services staff members will take reasonable precautions to prevent the opportunity for academic dishonesty. **Violations**

The college recognizes the following general categories of violations of academic integrity, with representative examples of each. Academic integrity is violated whenever a student:

A. Uses or obtains unauthorized assistance in any academic work.

- copying from another student's exam
- using notes, books, electronic devices or other aids of any kind during an exam when prohibited.
- stealing an exam or possessing a stolen copy of an exam
- B. Gives fraudulent assistance to another student.**
- completing a graded academic activity or taking an exam for someone else
- giving answers to or sharing answers with another student before, during or after an exam or other graded academic activity.
- sharing answers during an exam by using a system of signals

C. Knowingly represents the work of others as his/her own, or represents previously completed academic work as current.

- submitting a paper or other academic work for credit which includes words, ideas, data or creative work of others without acknowledging the source.
- using another author's words without enclosing them in quotation marks, without paraphrasing them or without citing the source appropriately.
- presenting another individual's work as one's own.
- submitting the same paper or academic assignment to another class without the permission of the instructor.

D. Fabricates data in support of an academic assignment.

- falsifying bibliographic entries
- submitting any academic assignment which contains falsified or fabricated data or results

E. Inappropriately or unethically uses technological means to gain academic advantage

- inappropriately or unethically acquiring material via the Internet or by any other means.
- using any electronic or hidden devices for communication during an exam.

Each instructor and academic support service area is authorized to establish specific guidelines consistent with this policy.

Consequences for Violations of Academic Integrity

For a single violation, the faculty member will determine the course of action to be followed. This may include assigning a lower grade on the assignment, assigning a lower final course grade, failing the student in the course, or other penalty appropriate to the violation. In all cases, the instructor shall notify the chairperson of the Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) of the violation and the penalty imposed.

When two or more violations of academic integrity are reported on a student, the AIC may impose disciplinary penalties beyond those imposed by course instructors. The student shall have the right to a hearing before the AIC or a designated AIC subcommittee.

Appeals

The student has a right to appeal the decision of the instructor or the Academic Integrity Committee. Judicial procedures governing violations of academic integrity are contained in the Student Handbook.

Approved: Board of Trustees March 18, 2004

The reading Assignments (This will be distributed in the class.)

DUE DATES for the MIDTERM and the FINAL are mentioned in the reading assignment sheet.