

Living World Religions

REL-102

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Course #: <u>REL-102</u>	Course Title: Living World Religions	GenEd? <u>Yes</u>
GenEd/Elective Categories: <u>Humanities</u>	Prerequisites: <u>none</u>	Corequisites: <u>none</u>
Degrees required for: <u>none</u>	Degrees Key Elective for: <u>A.A. Liberal Arts; L.A.Humanities</u>	
Transfers in NJ as: <u>typically equivalent</u>	Special Notes: _____	

Catalogue Description

A comparative study of the world's major religions, through a critical study of the essential teachings and practices in historical and cultural context of religions such as Hinduism, Buddhist, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Daoism, Confucianism among others, including pre- and post-colonial African and American traditions.

Course Description

The primary aim of this course is to introduce students to 10 major World Religions: Hinduism, Buddhism (Theravada and Mahayana), Jainism, Daoism/Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto (The way of the kami), Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. 'Comparative Religions' has become a very important subject since the second half of the 19th century in the Western academic world. There is no doubt that Religions ought to be studied within the boundaries of their own particular cultures. However, we'll try to at least conceptually understand the essence of these religious disciplines to the best of our abilities. We should remember that some Religions, if not all, have come through various founders, to wake us up from our deep sleep to the mystery of life and being. They have been forgotten and used and abused throughout the history of mankind. Nevertheless, it seems that the Ultimate Reality- whatever that may be- keeps on shining like the sun regardless of the clouds of our forgetfulness which cover it temporarily. Religion and Philosophy have become separated in our Western world for the past several centuries. In this course we'll see that in fact there was never a gap between the traditional Philosophy defined as the love of wisdom and Religion. Religion, Philosophy, and Science have always tried to save the phenomena, that is, to explain the world around us and give us the reason why we're here in this Universe. Although they went their separate ways, we're now coming to see how by understanding and cooperation among them we can at least hope to solve the mystery of being. Let us use our given intelligence properly in order to finally see who we really are.

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Identify common features of the major religions such as: Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, and indigenous and emerging traditions, (Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A, B, E, F, G)
- Critically distinguish between and relate different religious traditions' practices and beliefs regarding common religious features and functions, including applying categories & methods from sociological, anthropological, psychological and other fields
(Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A, B, C, D, E, F, G)
- Analytically compare different major religious traditions' internal and external narratives, commitments and histories, employing studied examples and case study techniques

(Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A, B, C, D, E, F, G)

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):

The World's Religions: Worldviews and Contemporary Issues (4th Edition) by William A. Young

Recommended Texts:

Studying Religion, Gary Kessler, 3rd edition, McGraw Hill, 2008, ISBN:9780073386591

Information Sources:

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

The World's Religions: Worldviews and Contemporary Issues, William A. Young, 3rd edition, Prentice Hall, 2010, ISBN:9780205675111

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

The World's Religions, Huston Smith, Harper One; 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, Harper One, 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*

Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America"

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

The Sociology of Religion, Max Weber, tr. Ephraim Fischoff, 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

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 religious topics, though there are tutors for writing. Professor Howarth is available to meet with students for tutoring to augment students meeting with their class professors.

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

If the student does the work assigned for this course, s/he will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze the basic perspectives and characteristic practices of the major religions of the world;
2. Define, summarize, and analyze the major similarities and differences between various religious world-views;
3. Use critical thinking methods appropriate to the interpretation and appraisal of religious ideas to analyze and evaluate the ways in which various religions approach life and its problems;
4. Analyze the relationships between religion and other aspects of human culture such as science, philosophy, art, and politics;
5. 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
6. State and support their own views on religious issues, both orally and in writing, and with logical and critical precision, clarity, 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.

Course-specific General Education Knowledge Goals and Core Skills.

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.

Units of study in detail.

Unit 1 – Studying Religion and Religions

Unit 2 – A World of Religions

Unit 3 – Religion and Ethics in the World

The general plan for this course is broadly the study of religion in its various manifestations across the spectrum of myriad religions. This REL102 course is our “comparative religion” offering; REL-101 focuses on the study of religion more than the study of religions, even while through the examination of cases, religions do wind up being the means of studying religion. As such, the structure of this course generally reflects its attentive survey nature. The first unit serves as a primer of religious studies approaches, dealing with definitions, stances, etc.; while Unit 2 is outsized, by design to minimize (though probably not avoid, viz. assessing) the often overused and arbitrary groupings of religions (western, polytheistic, etc.), wherein students are introduced to and explore major religious traditions in detail. In Unit 3, some ethical issues are framed in religious ethics terms, but due care is needed here to not conflate religion and ethics, or let the idea of a necessary relationship between the two go unexamined. The interplay between religion and the wider world of understanding the fundamental human issues of the self and others is studied, including inter-religious issues.

Detailed Units:

Unit One: Studying Religion and Religions

Learning Objectives - The student will be able to...

- Identify reasons for studying religion and different religions

(Course Competencies 1, 2; General Education Goals 1, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A,B,G.)

- Distinguish between the major areas of religious studies and their central concerns, including the role of reason, evidence and judgments

(Course Competencies 1, 2; General Education Goals 1, 6, 7, 9; Core Skills A,B,C,G.)

- Explain key religious concepts, elements, practices and traditions from both internal and external perspectives

(Course Competencies 1, 2; General Education Goals 1, 6, 7, 9; Core Skills A,B,C,G.)

- Critically distinguish different definitions, histories and roles of major world religions
(Course Competencies 1, 2, 3; General Education Goals 6,9; Core Skills A,B,C,G.)

Unit 2: A World of Religions

Learning Objectives - The student will be able to...

- Identify common features of the major religions such as: Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, and indigenous and emerging traditions,
(Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A, B, E, F, G)
- Critically distinguish between and relate different religious traditions' practices and beliefs regarding common religious features and functions, including applying categories & methods from sociological, anthropological, psychological and other fields
(Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A, B, C, D, E, F, G)
- Analytically compare different major religious traditions' internal and external narratives, commitments and histories, employing studied examples and case study techniques
(Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A, B, C, D, E, F, G)

Unit 3: Religion and Ethics in the World

Learning Objectives - The student will be able to...

- Identify & critically distinguish different and shared features of major religious traditions accounts of good and evil, suffering and success, and the human condition and ways of living
(Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A, B, C, D, E, F, G)
- Critically distinguish between different religious traditions' grounds and practices regarding individual ethical beliefs and actions, applying examples, case studies, and categories & methods from philosophical and scientific fields
(Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A, B, C, D, E, F, G)
- Critically compare and contrast different religious traditions' grounds and practices regarding family, community and societal political, economic and other cultural contexts, organizational authorities, structures and actions, applying examples, case studies, and categories & methods from philosophical and scientific fields
(Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A, B, C, D, E, F, G)
- Identify & critically distinguish different and shared features of emerging religious traditions accounts of good and evil, suffering and success, and the human condition and ways of living
(Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A, B, C, D, E, F, G)

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 class as well as is always available on the website. www.parvizdehghani.com)

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