Introduction to Major World Religions
REL 150    CRN # 62057
Summer II 2011   MTWR 10:00 – 11:35 AM   PALANA 214

Instructor: Christine Walters
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Office: Hale Pālanakila 152
Office Phone: N/A
Office Hours: MTW 11:35 AM to 12:30 PM
or by appointment.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION
Introduction to the world’s major religions: Primitive, Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto,
Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Field trips may be required outside
class time. (course fulfills 3 credit hours of the Global and Multicultural Perspectives, Group C
requirement and a Humanities requirement)

INSTRUCTOR’S NOTES
This course is an academic survey of the world’s religions, and as such, includes some of the most
populous religions across the globe. The religions covered in this course include, but are not limited to,
the major Indian religious traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism, and the major religions of the “West”:
Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In addition, this course explores the historical development, cultural
contexts, and beliefs and practices of each religious tradition. Because this course is an academic
survey, we will postpone judgment regarding the truth claim or social value of any given religious
tradition.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
(as defined by Windward Community College)
The student learning outcomes for the course are:
1. Identify the following elements or dimensions: origin, doctrines, ethics, sacred literature,
important figures/founders, rituals, worship, and institutions for each of the world’s major
religious traditions.
2. Identify the similarities and differences between two or more religions on the basis of the
aforementioned dimensions.
3. Examine the relationship between religion and culture/society.
4. Question and think critically.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
1. Attendance is required. Since this is a summer course, attendance will ensure your success in this
course. The exams will rely heavily on lecture material. If you miss class regularly, it will be
detrimental to your success in this course. You are responsible for obtaining information and
handouts missed due to absence from class.
2. Assigned reading for each day’s lecture is to be completed before class. In other words, if there is
a reading assignment listed under the date 7/25, the reading should be completed before class on
7/25.
3. There will be occasional quizzes on both the reading assignments and the material from lectures.
You will be responsible for showing up on quiz dates, as listed on the course schedule. Quizzes
can be taken in advance of the quiz date with prior approval from the instructor. If you miss a
quiz, you must make up the quiz before the next class meeting. Failure to do so will result in a
zero grade for the missed quiz.
4. In addition to the quizzes, there will be three exams, including the final. Attendance at all three exams is mandatory. If you know in advance that you will miss an exam, please contact the instructor to reschedule. If, for any unforeseen reason, you miss an exam, you must email the instructor immediately to reschedule, providing proof (and a very good explanation) for the absence. If a make-up exam is permitted by the instructor, the exam will be essay format.

5. There will be one “living religion” writing assignment due during the course of the semester. The paper will describe and analyze a visit to a religious service or meeting. The essay is to be approximately four (4) pages in length and to be composed of a minimum of 1500 words. This paper MUST be written about a visit to a religious community previously unfamiliar to you. Please see the course schedule for writing assignment deadlines. The instructor will NOT accept late papers.

TEXTBOOKS

GRADE BREAKDOWN
Quizzes: 20%
EXAM 1 20%
EXAM 2 20%
EXAM 3 20%
Living Religion Paper 20%

GRADE SCALE
A 100%-90%
B 89%-80%
C 79%-70%
D 69%-60%
F below 59%

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES
Students who anticipate being absent from class due to the observation of a major religious holiday must provide notice of the date(s) to the instructor, in writing, no later than the end of the first week of class.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Students with verified disabilities are highly encouraged to contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange reasonable accommodations to assist them in the successful completion of this course. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the Disability Specialist Counselor to discuss reasonable accommodations that will help you succeed in this class. Ann Lemke can be reached at 235-7448, lemke@hawaii.edu, or you may stop by Hale Akoakoa 213 for more information.

ACADEMIC HONESTY
There is ZERO tolerance for plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty. Students are expected not to engage or tolerate acts of plagiarism, cheating, copying, fabrication of citations, or other acts of academic dishonesty. Students charged with academic dishonesty face serious consequences that range from an F grade for the assignment to a Fail grade for the course. Any questions about proper citation of sources should be directed to the instructor.
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COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change)

WEEK 1: Introduction to World Religions; Academic study of religion, Indigenous religions
July 5 – July 7
T 7/5: Review of course syllabus/Introduction to course content
Create parameters for in-class discussions (Rules for Engagement)
Definition(s) of Religion
W 7/6: Academic study of religion
Read Religions, pages 15-29
R 7/7: QUIZ 1: Rules for Engagement in Discussion
Indigenous religions
Read Religions, pages 30-50

WEEK 2: Hinduism, Buddhism
July 11 – July 14
M 7/11: EXAM 1: Academic study of religion, Indigenous religions
T 7/12: Hinduism: early Indus Valley to foundational worldview
Read Religions, pages 77-98
W 7/13: Hinduism: classical period to today
Read Religions, pages 98-114
R 7/14: QUIZ 2: Hinduism
Buddhism: historical Buddha to emptiness
Read Religions, pages 134-144

WEEK 3: Shinto, Confucianism, Daoism (Taoism)
July 18 – July 21
M 7/18: Buddhism: spread of Buddhism to today
Read Religions, pages 144-156
T 7/19: QUIZ 3: Buddhism
Daoism (Taoism): survey
Read Religions, pages 179-192
W 7/20: Confucianism: survey
Read Religions, pages 192-203
R 7/21: Shinto: survey
Read Religions, pages 213-227
WEEK 4: Judaism
July 25 – July 28
M 7/25: EXAM 2: Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto, Confucianism, Daoism (Taoism)

T 7/26: Judaism: early Hebrew religion to Babylonian exile
   Read Religions, pages 253-262

W 7/27: Judaism: Second Temple period to forms of Judaism
   Read Religions, pages 262-271

R 7/28: Judaism: modern practice; festivals and life cycle rituals
   Read Religions, pages 272-284

WEEK 5: Christianity
August 1 – August 4
T 8/1: QUIZ 4: Judaism
   Christianity: from Jesus to Paul
   Read Religions, pages 292-310

T 8/2: LIVING RELIGION PAPER DUE
   Christianity: early Christian church to
   Read Religions, pages 310-322

W 8/3: Christianity
   Read Religions, pages 323-333

R 8/4: Islam
   Read Religions, pages 345-355

WEEK 6: Islam
August 8 – August 11
M 8/8: QUIZ 5: Christianity
   Islam
   Read Religions, pages 355-372

T 8/9: Islam
   (no reading assignment)

W 8/10: Synthesis and Review: Judaism, Christianity, Islam
   (no reading assignment)

R 8/11: EXAM 3, FINAL EXAM: Judaism, Christianity, Islam

FINAL EXAM: scheduled to start at 10:00 AM on Thursday, August 11th in Hale Pālanakila, room 214.