

History 37
History of World Religions
Fall 2009

Section #2390

T. and TH. 11:15-12:40; Room: SOCS 206

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Office Hours: M. and W. 1:00-3:00; T. 2:00-3:00 and by appointment

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Course web site: <http://www.elcamino.edu/faculty/fbaker/History%2037/Index.htm>

1. Course Description

The History of World Religions is a survey of the origins, essential doctrines and historical development of the world's major religious traditions from prehistory to today and their impact on the societies in which they appear. The course is divided into three parts: religions originating in India (Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism); religions originating in China (Daoism and Confucianism); and religions originating in the Middle East (Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam).

2. Course Overview

The purpose of this course is to assist you in acquiring the resources and analytical skills necessary to better understand, appreciate and evaluate the development of the major religions of the world and their impact in shaping contemporary life. Class materials include lectures, presentations, videos and assigned readings that will provide you with a basic framework of information. We will analyze these secondary sources as well as primary sources such as documents and cultural artifacts through class and group discussion and the writing of essay exams. In examining the past we will strive to identify and understand the broad patterns of religious thought and development as well as the role of religion in the history of global societies.

3. Required Text

Lewis M. Hopfe and Mark R. Woodward, *Religions of the World*, 11th Edition, Vango Books/Pearson, 2009.

4. Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Define and analyze the basic characteristics and functions of religion, theories of the origins of religion, and the historical method utilized to study world religions.
2. Assess the evidence of prehistoric religions and their major characteristics.
3. Identify and analyze the major characteristics of Native American religions and the influence of Christianity and non-native cultures in their development.
4. Identify the major characteristics of Native African religions and assess the impact of Christianity and Islam as well as the experience of colonialism and independence on Africa's religious development.
5. Evaluate the pre-Aryan and Aryan contributions to the development of Hinduism in India and the basic beliefs of Hinduism as expressed in the early Vedic scriptures.
6. Analyze the challenges posed to Hindu traditions by the teachings of Jainism and Buddhism and the relations between Hindus and Muslims in India, and the practice of Hinduism in India today.
7. Explain the basic teachings of Mahavira and the major contribution of Jainism to world religious thought.
8. Discuss the life of Gautama, analyze his teachings and the development of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, and identify various Buddhist beliefs and practices today.
9. Analyze Sikhism as a syncretism including its historical development from a pacific movement to a more militant one, and its divisions today.
10. Analyze the traditional religious beliefs of China and how the decline of the feudal system contributed to the development of Confucianism and Taoism.
11. Explain and assess the basic teachings of Confucius and Lao-tzu, and the extent to which they developed into religions.
12. Analyze the impact of the Communist revolution and regime on religious development in China.
13. Examine and analyze the mythological basis of Shinto and its development in Japan, and the impact of Buddhism and Christianity on Shinto and its revival in the 17th century as a patriotic devotional expression.
14. Identify and evaluate the basic beliefs and practices of Zoroastrianism, its contributions to Middle Eastern religious traditions, and its present day status.
15. Discuss and analyze the origins, beliefs and values of Judaism as expressed in the Old Testament, and

the impact of the Babylonian exile, diaspora and Holocaust on the development of Judaism.

16. Identify and explain the major divisions within modern Judaism.

17. Analyze the origins of Christianity in the context of first century Judaism and the Graeco-Roman

World, and the early teachings and rituals of Christianity as indicated in the New Testament.

18. Discuss and evaluate the development of the Christian Church, differences between Eastern Orthodox

and Western Christianity, and the impact of the Protestant Reformation.

19. Explain the significance of Vatican II and the ecumenical movement, and analyze Liberation

Theology and fundamentalism as modern Christian movements.

20. Analyze the origins of Islam and its roots in Arab, Jewish and Christian religious traditions, as well as

the major issues within Islam and the Muslim world today.

21. Analyze the Shi'ite origins of Baha'i and its major teachings and practices, and assess the significance

of Baha'i in the modern world.

22. Identify and discuss contemporary religious trends and issues.

5. Student Learning Outcomes

1. Upon completion of History 37, students will identify and explain major social, economic, political and cultural themes in the history of World Religions in a course exam or written assignment.

2. Given a primary or secondary source relating to the history of World Religions, students will accurately identify the source and apply appropriate historical methods to explain what the source reveals about its historical context.

3. Given primary and/or secondary source(s) pertaining to a significant economic, political, social or cultural aspect of the history of World Religions, students will develop and persuasively argue an historical thesis in a written or oral assignment that effectively uses the sources as evidence.

6. Course Requirements and Evaluations

You are required to complete all reading, writing and exam assignments. Your course grade is determined in the following ways:

1) In-class work that includes small group discussions and projects. Your participation in these activities is required and assignments are assessed to determine your understanding of course material and your progress towards achieving course goals, but a grade isn't given for each assignment.

2) Two take home essay exams of about 4 to 5 pages each, typed and double-spaced. These

exams are based on an analysis of course material including primary and secondary sources.

The exams are evaluated and graded according to the following criteria:

Answer ----- Did you answer the question assigned? All parts?

Evidence ---- Are your statements supported with evidence from class materials such as readings and lectures?

Analysis ---- To what extent does your essay demonstrate your use of critical thinking? Is there depth to your analysis? Is your argument presented logically and convincingly? Does it show your ability to synthesize diverse material and concepts?

Expression - Is your essay coherent, well-organized and written with clarity? Is your use of grammar and spelling correct?

3) A short research paper of about 7 to 8 pages in length, typed and double-spaced. In addition to

the above criteria, the quality and use of your research materials and proper formatting of notes and bibliography are evaluated in determining your grade.

4) A short oral presentation based on your research paper.

Grades for assignments and the course are based on the letter system as follows:

A - Excellent > indicates that assignment/course requirements have been met and a mastery of assignment/course objectives

B - Good > indicates that assignment/course requirements have been met and an above average proficiency of assignment/course objectives

C - Satisfactory > indicates that assignment/course requirements have been met and an average proficiency of assignment/course objectives

D - Less than satisfactory > indicates that not all assignment/course requirements have been met

and only a partial proficiency of assignment/course objectives

F - Fail > indicates that few assignment/course requirements have been met and little or no

proficiency of assignment/course objectives

7. Distribution of Grades

Class Participation ----- 15% (attendance, discussions and short assignments)*

Midterm Essay Exam ----- 20%

Research Paper ----- 35%

Oral Presentation -----5%

Final Essay Exam ----- 25%

* Participation grade is based on attendance as follows: 1- 2 absences = A; 3-4 absences = B; 5 absences = C; 6 absences = D. Also note: two late arrivals to class = one absence.

8. Student Presentations

If you have a special interest in or experience with a subject related to this course and would like to present a short presentation to the class, please let me know. Also let me know if you have any materials or artifacts related to course material that you would like to share.

9. Course Policies

< In accordance with the college's policy on attendance you are expected to attend class regularly, to arrive in class on time and to remain for the duration of the class. You may be dropped from the class if you miss more than three class meetings.

< **Cell phones, pagers, etc. are to be turned off and put away during class meetings.**

< Only course related materials are to be on your desk during class meetings.

< Disruptive behavior, such as habitually arriving to class late or leaving class early, or talking during class will not be tolerated and will result in being suspended from class.

< Dishonest behavior, such as cheating and plagiarism, will not be tolerated and will result in being suspended from class and a written report will be made to the appropriate College authorities requesting further disciplinary action. Please see the El Camino College Catalog for examples of cheating and plagiarism that include:

academic

- Representing the words, ideas or work of another as one's own in any

exercise (plagiarism), including the use of commercial term paper

companies

[and such study aids as Cliff Notes and Spark Notes].

- Copying or allowing another student to copy from one's paper or answer

sheet

during an examination [this includes for credit and graded assignments completed outside of the classroom].

- Falsifying or attempting to falsify attendance records and/or grade rosters.

History 37: History of World Religions **Schedule of lecture topics, assignments, and exams (Fall 2009)**

Week

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

Date

8/31

9/7

9/14

9/21

9/28

10/5

10/12

10/19

10/26

11/2

11/9

11/16

11/23

11/30

12/7

12/14

Lecture Topics

Introduction to the Study of Religions

Characteristics of Basic Religions

Monday: Labor Day – No Classes

Friday: Last Day to Add Classes

Hinduism

Hinduism

Jainism

Buddhism

Buddhism

Daoism; Confucianism

Thursday: Midterm Exam due

Zoroastrianism

Judaism

Judaism

Friday: Veterans Day – No Classes

Christianity

Friday: Last day to drop with a “W”

Christianity

Thursday, Friday: Thanksgiving – No Classes

Islam

Thursday: Research Paper due

Islam

Tuesday and Thursday: Oral Presentations

Thursday: Final Exam due

Readings

Pp. 1-11

Ch. 1

Ch. 4, pp. 72-96

Ch. 4, pp. 97-121

Ch. 5

Ch. 6, pp. 134-146

Ch. 6, pp. 146-162

Ch. 8

Ch. 10

Ch. 11, pp. 253-267

Ch. 11, pp. 267-291

Ch 12, pp. 292-317

Ch. 12, pp. 317-344

Ch. 13, pp. 345-361

Ch. 13, pp. 361-381