Religions of the World – REL 2250
Spring 2020 Term II - Tuesdays 6-10:15 PM
Instructor: Cassie Lipowitz
Office: TDB
clipowitz@ndnu.edu

Just as a candle cannot burn without fire, men cannot live without a spiritual life. ~ Buddha
Doubt isn’t the opposite of faith; it is an element of faith. ~ Paul Tillich
The truth is a snare: you cannot have it, without being caught. You cannot have the truth in such a way that you
catch it, but only in such a way that it catches you. ~ Soren Kierkegaard
Faith brings us to truth; philosophy makes us grasp it; ethics makes us practice it; and ritual makes us one with
it. ~ Jagmanderlal Jaini
The history of religions reaches down and makes contact with that which is essentially human: the relation of
man to the sacred. ~ Mircea Eliade

NDNU CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION
REL2250 Religions of the World (CDiv) (3) Focuses on a critical survey of world religions, exploring the beliefs,
rituals, sacred texts, and ethical ideals of representative religious manifestations of the past and present. It covers
characteristic traits and patterns in tribal, imperial, naturalistic, mystical, and national religions. It also examines
the role assigned to women by world religions and the importance given to building a just and peaceful society.
The amount of work required for upper-division credit will differ in both quantity from that required for lower-
division credit. Fulfills Core Curriculum Religious Studies requirement.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
In the earliest expressions of conscious awareness, our ancestors long ago gazed up into the vast expanse of starry
sky and questioned the ultimate meaning of their existence: Why are we here? From whence does life come and
what happens when we die? Who or what created us and for what purpose? Is the earthly reality all there is, or
is there another sacred reality that calls us to return? How are we to live in harmony with the ‘will’ or ‘wish’ of
this sacred reality while on earth? This course will examine how various peoples have defined God or the
sacred, and will consider the cultural, historical, philosophical, ethical, and social aspects or expressions of this
encounter between human beings and the divine. This semester, we will explore and examine the religious
traditions of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, as well as Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism,
Christianity, and Islam. In considering these traditions, a comparative approach will be encouraged, wherein a
sense of openness towards various faith traditions may be cultivated.

TEXTBOOKS

COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Engage the diverse belief systems of the world's major religious traditions (Mission ILO)
2. Describe, compare and contrast the ethical systems of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism,
   Judaism, Christianity and Islam (Critical Thinking ILO)
3. Critically analyze the underlying metaphysical assumptions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism,
   Daoism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam (Critical Thinking ILO)
4. Analyze and evaluate the relationship of self to society in Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism,
   Daoism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam (Critical Thinking ILO)
5. Critically evaluate issues and problems that arise in relation to the social, psychological, and ethical
dimensions of the world’s religions (RS PLO)
GRADING
Attendance and class participation 30%
Reflection papers 35%
Final paper 35%

**Total points possible = 1000
A= (1000-900); B= (899-800); C= (799-700); D= (699-600); F= (599-0)

If at any time you are concerned about your grade, consult with the instructor.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance and Class Format: Your presence and participation in class is vitally important, as it furthers not only your own education, but also the education of others. Intensive classes require a stringent absence policy since even one absence may significantly affect achievement of course learning objectives. With only 28 class contact hours as opposed to the traditional 45 contact hours, all class time is critical. A student who misses more than one class period or the equivalent (four accumulated hours) must withdraw from the class and will be assigned a failing grade for the course unless officially dropping the class. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate the drop or withdrawal. There are no exceptions.

As the instructor, I promise to do all I can to create a lively and engaging class environment. In order to include various learning styles and opportunities, class sessions will generally include lecture, small group work, class discussion, as well as video clips and films.

Assignment Policy: The intensive program penalizes late work. Late assignments will be marked down. Late assignments will not be accepted more than 2 weeks past the due date. If you are absent for one class, you must complete the reflection paper for that class session and submit it online via the Moodle course page by the due date. Please note that the very first class has required reading and a writing assignment (the first Reflection paper must be submitted during the first class, or may be submitted beforehand on Moodle).

Academic Honesty: NDNU’s core values include learning, integrity, and honesty, values we live out in all areas of our learning community. Academic honesty means you are able to demonstrate your own knowledge and skills and receive feedback on your learning that can help you improve. By taking responsibility for your own work and avoiding actions that could give you an unfair advantage over others, you are contributing to the NDNU learning community and developing professional skills and values that will serve you well into the future. Academic honesty is one of the most important values of a university community, and breaches of this trust have serious consequences. First offense of plagiarism will result in an F on the assignment. Second offense will result in an F for the class. Consult the NDNU Student Handbook regarding consequences of misrepresenting your work.

Privacy and Confidentiality: One of the highlights of the NDNU academic experience is that students often use real-world examples from their organizations in class discussions and in their written work. However, it is imperative that students not share information that is confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature. Students must be mindful of any contracts they have agreed to with their companies.

ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly Reflection Papers: Each week, students will turn in a paper of 500 words (minimum) based on the assigned readings, to be submitted in class on the day they are due, or on the course Moodle site. Prompts for the reflection papers will be posted on the Moodle course page. The purpose of writing the reflection papers is to assist you in clarifying and refining your ideas as you engage with the readings. Writing the papers will also better prepare you to engage in class discussions. Have fun with these—be creative and reflective!

Final Paper: This assignment, due on the last day of class, will require students to visit a place of worship outside their own faith tradition and write a 1700-2000 word paper (approximates 7-8 pages) reflecting on the
experience, and also incorporating the ideas and concepts we discussed this semester. You must consult with the instructor about your paper topic (in class or via email) no later Tuesday, April 14th.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES
Student Success Center / 650-508-3696
The Student Success Center (SSC), located in the Campus Center, is dedicated to supporting students’ academic success at NDNU. The SSC provides writing and subject tutoring, test proctoring for students with accommodations, facilitates the math placement test (MPT), and is open for students from 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. with business hours from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. For more information, see: https://www.ndnu.edu/academics/student-success-center/

The goal of the Student Success Center is to promote student learning and academic innovation. Professional staff members, peer tutors, academic advisors, and faculty work together to promote a supportive educational environment. Writing and subject tutoring schedules are forwarded directly to students’ NDNU e-mails and are included in the Student Weekly Update circulated by NDNU’s Communications Department.

Disability Resource Center: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities, whether physical, learning, or psychological, who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. Please meet with the DRC staff to verify your eligibility for any classroom accommodations and for academic assistance related to your disability. Accommodations are not provided retroactively. The Disability Resource Center is located at St Joseph Hall, 117. Please contact the DRC by email at DRC@ndnu.edu or by phone at 650-508-3670.

Counseling Services: The mission of Counseling Services is to promote and enhance the overall wellbeing of students so that they may reach their potential for personal growth and academic success. Counseling Services is open Monday-Friday from 9am to 5pm, and currently enrolled students are welcome to call, email or drop-by to schedule an appointment. Contact information: (650) 508-3714 / Counselingservices@ndnu.edu Location: New Hall E18 / E19

Workload: Intensive classes at NDNU stipulate 3 hours of work (per unit) each week outside of class. For a 3 unit class, this means 12 additional hours a week should be spent on assignments. The distribution of weekly instruction/study for this course should follow (approximately) the following model:

Distribution of Average Weekly Study/Instruction (total = 16 hours):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Instruction</th>
<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text Readings</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Writing Assignments</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Paper and Site Visit Research/Writing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES
- Please be respectful during class. Turn off cell phones or switch them to silent. Although we live in an electronic age where texting and facebooking have become the norm, please be mindful of the class community and refrain from such activities during class time.
- Keep copies of all your written work (hard copies or electronic copies on your computer) in case something is lost.
**SCHEDULE**
This schedule is subject to revision. Any major changes will be discussed with the students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/17 - Introduction to the course</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- What is Religion?  
- Discussion of *The Five Stages of the Soul*  
- Epic of Gilgamesh  
Young, Chapter 1  
Moody, Chapters 1 & 2 |
| Reflection Paper #1 Due | |
| 3/24 – Hinduism |  
- Vedic Religion  
- The Upanishads: from Outer Ritual to Inner Meaning  
- The Bhagavad Gita  
- The Four Desires  
- The Four Stages of Life  
- The Four Paths to Moksha  
Young, Chapter 3 - Hinduism  
Moody, Chapter 3 |
| Reflection Paper #2 Due | |
| 3/31 - Buddhism |  
- Life Story of the Buddha  
- The Four Passing Sights & The Four Noble Truths  
- The Eightfold Path  
- The Five Skandhas  
- Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism  
Young, Chapters 4 & 8 - Buddhism  
Moody, Chapter 4 |
| Reflection Paper #3 Due | |
| 4/7 - Chinese Traditions - Daoism and Confucianism |  
- Laozi  
- *Daodejing*  
- Philosophical Daoism and *wu-wei*  
- *Zhuangzi*  
- Confucius and His Vision for Society  
Young, Chapters 6 & 7 - Confucianism & Daoism  
Moody, Chapter 5 |
| Reflection Paper #4 Due | |
| 4/14 - Judaism |  
- One God  
- Genesis: Two Creation Accounts  
- Exodus, Prophets, Exile, and the Book of Job  
- Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist  
Young, Chapter 10, Judaism  
Moody, Chapter 6 |
| Reflection Paper #5 Due | Paper Topic DUE |
| 4/21 - Christianity |  
- Life, Ministry, and Death of Jesus  
- Comparative Study of the Four Canonical Gospels  
- Early Varieties of Christianity (Gnosticism, etc)  
Young, Chapter 11, Christianity  
Moody, Chapter 7 |
Developing “Orthodoxy”
Council of Nicea
Eastern Orthodoxy, Protestantism

Reflection Paper #6 Due

4/28 - Islam
- The Life of Muhammad
- The Qur’an
- The Five Pillars
- Sufism
- Islam and Modern Developments

FINAL PAPER due in class (Hard copies ONLY)

Instructions for Accessing the Moodle Course Page

1.) Navigate to: https://ndnumoodle.remote-learner.net/
2.) Log in to Moodle with your NDNU ID number and campus portal password
3.) Under the “navigation” module on the left-hand sidebar, select “my courses” and click on “REL 2250 – 09 – Religions of the World Spring 19-20”

**Note that all assignment prompts and additional readings will be posted on the Religions of the World Moodle course page indicated above, so make sure you are able to access it. Let me know IMMEDIATELY if you run into any issues or problems accessing the course page.**
FINAL PAPER AND SITE VISIT INSTRUCTIONS

For the final paper, students will write an essay on a particular religious tradition and topic of their choice. However, the paper should focus on a religious tradition different from the student’s own tradition or spiritual practice. For this assignment, students are required to visit a place of worship outside their own faith tradition, for a prayer/worship service or a religious or spiritual ritual. Students should take detailed notes from their site visit and then incorporate these into the final paper. Final papers should be **1700-2000 words (about 7-8 pages)**.

**Detailed guidelines for the site visit and incorporation into the final paper:**

For the purposes of this project, you will act as a participant observer, and possible interviewer, depending on whether you simply observe a worship service/religious ritual, or speak with community leader(s)—if you can do both, all the better, although an interview is not required. Ideally, you will have conducted some preliminary research prior to the site visit, in order to formulate a focus for the paper (in this way, you will be prepared to ask community leaders or service participants questions most relevant to your particular area of interest/research). At the same time, you should also be open to any information/experiences that your interviewees would like to share with you.

For the project, your observations of the worship service should constitute the “centerpiece” of your essay, but the essay should also incorporate your thoughts, reactions, and reflections about the service and/or interview(s).

**Additional guidelines:**

- Arrange your site visit well in advance. Many places of worship have a website or other online presence (see the handout for a listing of a few places of worship in the Bay Area). Make sure to call or email beforehand to schedule a visit and let them know the purpose of your visit.
- During your visit, be respectful and mindful of the community’s customs and practices.

The following website, part of the Pluralism Project at Harvard University, also provides useful guidelines. Although this website is not applicable in its entirety to the specific research your essay will entail, it will provide you with a valuable context for religious research in general. The section on “Etiquette” (and its subsections) is particularly relevant: http://www.pluralism.org/research/guidelines.php

If you have any further questions about the parameters of the assignment, please let me know.

**PLACES of WORSHIP**

Listed below are a few suggestions for places of worship you may visit for the final paper/project. You may choose to visit one not on this list, but please remember it should be a place of worship outside your own faith tradition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yaseen Foundation Community Masjid (Mosque)</th>
<th>Peninsula Temple Beth El</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>621 Masonic Way, Belmont, California 94002</td>
<td>1700 Alameda de las Pulgas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 650-591-3690</td>
<td>San Mateo, CA, 94403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Mail: <a href="mailto:yaseen@yaseen.org">yaseen@yaseen.org</a> / Web: <a href="http://www.yaseen.org/">http://www.yaseen.org/</a></td>
<td>Phone: 650.341.7701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyvale Hindu Temple and Community Center</td>
<td>Peninsula Temple Sholom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450 Persian Drive, Sunnyvale CA 94089</td>
<td>1655 Sebastian Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: (408) 734-4554</td>
<td>Burlingame, CA 94010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:info@sunnyvaletemple.org">info@sunnyvaletemple.org</a></td>
<td>Office Phone: (650) 697-2266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web: <a href="http://www.sunnyvale-hindutemple.org/">http://www.sunnyvale-hindutemple.org/</a></td>
<td>Web: <a href="http://sholom.org/">http://sholom.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Mateo Buddhist Temple</td>
<td>Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 South Claremont Street</td>
<td>1040 Alameda De Las Pulgas, Belmont, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Mateo, CA 94401</td>
<td>Phone: (650) 593-6157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office phone: (650) 342-2541</td>
<td>Web: <a href="http://www.ihmbelmont.org/">http://www.ihmbelmont.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:smbt@sanmateobuddhisttemple.org">smbt@sanmateobuddhisttemple.org</a></td>
<td>Zhi Dao Guan – The Taoist Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web: <a href="http://www.sanmateobuddhisttemple.org/index.html">http://www.sanmateobuddhisttemple.org/index.html</a></td>
<td>3824 MacArthur Blvd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palo Alto Buddhist Temple</td>
<td>Oakland, CA 94619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2751 Louis Road, Palo Alto, CA</td>
<td>Phone: 510-336-0129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: (650) 856-0123</td>
<td>Web: <a href="http://www.thetaoistcenter.com/">http://www.thetaoistcenter.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:office@pabt.org">office@pabt.org</a> / Web: <a href="http://www.pabt.org/">http://www.pabt.org/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plagiarism Policy and Proper Use of Sources

NDNU classifies plagiarism as academic misconduct. The student handbook defines plagiarism as:

Representing another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words, as your own; using the ideas, organization, or words of another from a book, article, paper, computer file, or another source in any assignment without giving proper credit following accepted citation rules (plagiarism).


Below you will find guideline on avoiding plagiarism:

1. **Always cite direct quotes**: When taking words directly from another source (book, article, etc.) you must use quotation marks and cite the source following one of the accepted citation styles (APA, MLA, Chicago Style, etc.).
   
   a. Example: “The problem life poses for the human self is to cleanse the dross of its being to the point where its infinite center can shine forth in full display” (Smith 22).

   b. The general rule is, if you insert more than seven consecutive words from a source into your paper, **make sure to give credit by citing and using quotation marks**.

2. **Always cite when paraphrasing a source**: Much of your paper will consist of paraphrasing (summarizing someone else’s work in order to present the main ideas that are most relevant to your own paper). When paraphrasing, **you must also cite the source**, otherwise, it is considered plagiarism.
   
   a. Example: Although early Western interpreters often viewed Buddhism as a pessimistic tradition, Buddha’s teaching was not, in fact, pessimistic. The Buddha simply understood and taught that life, as most human beings live it, is ultimately unfulfilling and full of uncertainty. Buddha did not doubt that pleasure was attainable; rather, he argued, this enjoyment was often experienced at a superficial level and thus, did not last. Ultimately, he argued, the kind of pleasures most of us experience are passing, and, as a result, often end in pain (Smith 99-100). (This is an example of a summary/paraphrase of Huston Smith’s description of the Buddha’s First Noble Truth.)

   b. When you paraphrase a paragraph from a source, you must put a **significant portion of it into your own words**. It is not enough to change only a handful of words from the original.

3. **When it is NOT necessary to cite**:
   
   a. When you write about a common fact.
   
   b. When writing about your own analysis, ideas, and opinions.

4. **Papers consisting entirely of quoted material, even if cited properly, will not be accepted**.

For more detailed examples of plagiarism, see the handouts on the main page of the class portal.