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**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**REL 104: INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION**

**INSTRUCTOR:** John Robison D.P.A.

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**OFFICE HOURS:**By appointment

**COURSE SCHEDULE**  
Spring Semester / Session I: January 8th - March 3rd, 2024

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**  
This course introduces the critical study of religion. Students examine the cognitive,  
performative, and social characteristics of religion. The course includes cross-cultural studies of religious beliefs and practices.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**  
Van Voorst, R. E. (2013). RELG: World. Boston, MA: Wadsworth.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**  
After completing this course, the student will be able to:

* Discuss the history of religion in the world including origin, meaning and purpose within each society.

* Discuss the psychological, sociological and theological influence of religion within society and society’s influences upon religion.

* Discuss the transition of beliefs and their influence upon believers and societies.

* Discuss the origins and growth of the major religions of the world with emphasis on Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

* Discuss the origins, compilation, growth and major thesis of each of the five major religions of the world.

* Elaborate through discussion and essay the significance of the major moral, ethical and religious themes of the five major religions of the world and how they relate to the life of the student

**COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**CREDIT HOUR STATEMENT**  
Courses offered in an 8-week session are twice as intensive as those held during a traditional full semester. Each week students should expect to spend 14 hours interacting with course content through a combination of direct instruction and out-of-class student work.

Examples of direct instruction may include viewing or reading course lectures, engaging in class forum discussions with the course instructor and other students, viewing or reading supplementary online content required by the instructor, completing course quizzes and/or examinations, and reading instructor announcements related to course material and instructor feedback on assignments.

Examples of out of class student work may include reading the assigned course textbook, doing independent library research, completing essay assignments, developing more extensive research papers, and studying in preparation for exams and quizzes.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**  
All assignments must be completed by the learner. Learners are expected to read and adhere to the Academic Integrity section of Reinhardt University’s Academic Catalog. Cases of academic dishonesty may result in expulsion from the University, a failing grade for the course, or a failing grade for the assignment.

The following are recognized as unacceptable forms of academic behavior at Reinhardt University:

* Plagiarizing, that is presenting words or ideas not your own as if they were your own. The words of others must be enclosed in quotation marks and documented. The source of the distinctive ideas must also be acknowledged through appropriate documentation. (NOTE: Strictly adhere to APA citation and referencing guidelines to avoid this).

* Submitting a paper written by another student or another person as if it were your own.

* Submitting a paper containing sentences, paragraphs, or sections lifted from another student’s work or other publication; there must be written documentation.

* Submitting a paper written by you for another course or occasion without the explicit knowledge and consent of the instructor.

* Fabricating evidence or statistics that supposedly represent your original research.

* Cheating of any sort on tests, papers, projects, reports, etc.

* Using the internet inappropriately as a resource. See 3 above.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS/ASSIGNMENTS**  
Knowledge of the material presented in this course will be evaluated based on the satisfactory completion of all coursework. Methods of instruction and learning include reading assignments, video lectures, discussion postings, individual research, and essay assignments. Learners are expected to complete all activities during the week they are assigned and in the manner prescribed.

**Reading Assignments**

Learners are expected to complete the assigned textbook readings for each module prior to submitting module assignments.

**Discussion Post Assignments**

Each module discussion posting must contain a minimum of a 200-word initial response. The deadline for postings shall be published within individual Module Academic Requirements. Initial postings must cite material from the course textbook and one outside scholarly source in accordance with APA guidelines.

Learners must reply to a minimum of THREE DIFFERENT students in the class with a minimum of a 100-word response for each. Exceeding the minimum response requirement can result in additional discussion post scoring credit. The responses must be substantive in nature by adding additional knowledge to the conversation. Learners must support their responses with material cited from the course textbook or an outside scholarly source in accordance with APA guidelines. Learners must also respond to any questions posed by the instructor.

All postings and replies must adhere to APA 7th Edition guidelines regarding citations and referencing. Learners must also employ proper grammar, punctuation, and correct spelling. Discussion posts will be averaged together and will account for 30% of the final course grade.

**Essay Assignments**

Essay assignments often have more than one part. Be sure to answer each part of each question. Learners must adhere to the minimum word count specified for each assignment. Assignments must adhere to the citation and referencing guidelines contained in the 7th Edition APA Manual. Learners must also employ proper grammar, punctuation, and correct spelling in all submissions. Essay assignments will be averaged together and will account for 40% of the final course grade. The deadline for submission shall be published within individual Module Academic Requirements.

**Course Research Component**

A final paper will be required for this course and must be uploaded within Module 5. The paper will account for 30% of the final course grade. See the detailed requirements for the course paper listed on the last pages of this syllabus

**EVALUATION & GRADING**  
The following grading scale will be utilized in the determination of the student’s course grade:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Percentage of Grade** | **Corresponding Letter Grade** |
| 90%  to 100% | A |
| 80% to 89% | B |
| 70% to 79% | C |
| 60% to 69% | D |
| 0% to 59% | F |

**FINAL AVERAGE BREAKDOWN**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assignment Category** | **Percentage of Grade** |
| Discussion Assignments | 30% |
| Essay Assignments | 40% |
| Course Paper | 30% |

**PROJECTED LEARNING SCHEDULE**

**Module #1 (2 Weeks) January 8th - 21st, 2024**  
• Chapter 1: Beginning Your Study of World Religions  
• Chapter 2: Encountering Indigenous Religions  
• Chapter 3: Encountering Hinduism

**Module #2 (2 Weeks) January 22nd - February 4th, 2024**  
• Chapter 4: Encountering Jainism  
• Chapter 5: Encountering Buddhism  
• Chapter 6: Encountering Sikhism

**Module # 3 (2 Weeks) February 5th - 18th, 2024**  
• Chapter 7: Encountering Daoism & Confucianism  
• Chapter 8: Encountering Shinto  
• Chapter 9: Encountering Zoroastrianism

**Module #4 (1 Week) February 19th - 25th, 2024**  
• Chapter 10: Judaism  
• Chapter 11: Christianity

**Module #5 (1 Week) February 26th - March 3rd, 2024**  
• Chapter 12: Islam  
• Chapter 13: Encountering New Religious Movements

**ONLINE ATTENDANCE AND WITHDRAWAL POLICY**  
Students are accountable for all required work in each of their courses. They must assume full responsibility for class attendance in a way satisfactory to the instructor and for work missed because of absence. Since class sessions function not merely for individual learning but also for group interaction, absences can be-come a serious problem both for the individual and for the group.

Online courses are delivered over a period of eight weeks with activities and assignments specified for each week. An online week is defined as being Monday 12:00 AM (EST) through Sunday at 11:59 PM (EST). Deadlines for attendance are based on Eastern Standard Time.  
A student will be considered in attendance for a given week of online instruction if he or she participates in the course. Participation is defined as posting a response to a discussion assignment or submitting a completed course room activity/assignment during the online week prior to Sunday at 11:59 PM (EST).

**Initial Course Participation**  
A student who fails to participate during the first 8 calendar days of a course shall be administratively withdrawn from the course.

**Ongoing Course Participation**  
Ongoing course participation is satisfied through the continued completion of course room activities, such as written assignments, quizzes, or discussion question responses. Students who do not participate in a course for 7 or more consecutive days are not satisfying ongoing course participation.

Students who are not satisfying the ongoing course participation requirement shall be notified by a University representative via University email. The learner must resume participation in the course within 3 calendar days following the sending of the notification.  
Students who do not resume participation in the course will be administratively withdrawn from the course and be issued a grade of “W” or “F”.

A grade of “W’ will be issued if an administrative or voluntary withdrawal occurs before 11:59 PM (EST) on Monday of the fifth week of the course.

A grade of “F” will be issued if an administrative or voluntary withdrawal occurs after 11:59 PM (EST) on Monday of the fifth week of the course.

Students may be impacted academically and financially in the case of voluntary and administrative withdrawals. It is the student’s responsibility to understand these implications.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**  
Reinhardt University does not discriminate in any of its policies, programs, or activities on the basis of race, color, age, culture, national origin, socioeconomic status, gender, religious belief, sexual orientation, physical (dis)ability or genetic information.

**COURSE PAPER INFORMATION**

**Purpose of the Project**

Research is an integral part of the collegiate educational experience. The educational experience should be more than just memorizing facts and figures. Rather, the student should learn to analyze information and apply concepts to broader issues.

**Paper Topic**

Martin Luther King’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” is considered one of the most important modern works in religion. It sets out many major themes that run current with faith communities and tenants all around the world. Address the following in your the course paper:

* Highlight the similarities and differences in King’s work with the idea of justice present in other religious traditions. Attention should be paid to King’s influences, his religious tradition, and ways he incorporates other faiths. Please do not focus on King’s personal history or civil rights history as this should be a paper more about religion and its tenants.

* Demonstrate a grasp of justice, eschatology, prophecy, and salvation that you have learned throughout the course.

The paper is due no later than Tuesday, February 27th, 2024 at 11:59 PM (EST). Upload your completed paper within Module #5.

**Specific Requirements**

* Must adhere to APA 7th Edition format

* Must have a minimum of 5 acceptable scholarly references listed on the reference page and cited in the body of the work. You are highly encouraged to exceed the minimum reference count.

* Must be a minimum of 2,000 words excluding cover page and reference page…this does not mean 5 pages and a paragraph or two.

* Must have a title page that conforms to APA format. An abstract is not required.

* Must have a reference page that conforms to APA format.

* Students may use the course text as a source, but make sure your other sources fit the category of being scholarly in nature. Wikipedia or general websites are not scholarly. Students should seek guidance from the instructor if in doubt about the acceptability of a source.

* Double spacing is required between sentences and paragraphs per APA guidelines.

* Use Times New Roman 12 font when preparing the paper.

* Must demonstrate the ability to utilize short quotes, and summary/paraphrase in proper APA format.

* Plagiarism will not be tolerated…your paper must properly document all ideas and information not your own. Plagiarism or academic dishonesty may result in a failing grade for this course. Other sanctions may be imposed based on University policy. See your syllabus and the University’s Academic Catalog for additional information.

* Do not attempt to copy and paste from research papers or essays available online. The instructor will diligently check all papers for plagiarism.

* Use of proper grammar, correct spelling, and writing principles are expected in all work. Full credit will not be granted for work that contains grammatical or spelling errors. In the event a student does not feel competent in this area he/she should discuss the matter with the instructor.