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***Religion 104 010 MC Introduction to Religion***

**Three credit hours: Fall Semester, 2023**

**TR 2:00 PM-3:15 PM (8/14/2023 - 12/3/2023)**

**Location: Main Campus, Tarpley 213**

**Instructor Information:**

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**404-408-0090**

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**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.

**How Much Time Will I Spend on This Course?**

For this 3-credit hour course, expect to spend a minimum of 150 minutes per week in lectures, class discussions, and examinations (37.5 hours for the semester). Instructional time includes a 3-hour final exam. Out-of-class work includes writing papers, posting on our discussion page, and preparation for exams and is estimated at around 300 minutes per week.

**Textbook and Other Materials Needed:**

There is no textbook for this class. However, I will be basing much of the material on Rev. Dr. Aquiles Ernesto Martinez’s book, ***Encounters with the Mystery: An Understanding of Religion***. You may purchase a copy from Amazon <https://www.amazon.com/Encounters-Mystery-Aquiles-Ernesto-Mart%C3%ADnez/dp/1729526675>

I will post handouts, articles, videos, and papers on Canvas.

***You must read all assigned material before the class in which we will discuss that topic.***

There may be multiple readings, videos, and handouts each week. I will tell you which of these your test material will cover and provide a study guide.

**Electronics Policy:**

***Devices will be used for class participation only and entirely at my discretion.*** If you listen to music, surf, do work for other classes, or text, I will ask you to leave the classroom. No devices will be allowed on your desk or in view during exams.

**Attendance Policy:**

Your complete attention is required in this class. I expect you to attend and be prepared for each class period. ***More than four unexcused absences will cause a reduction in your final course grade.*** If you cannot attend for some (excellent) reason, you must notify me before class is scheduled to begin.

**Evaluation of Learning Outcomes and Grade Computation:**

Grading is based on an 800-point scale. Your grade is the accumulation of points throughout the semester.

*Points Assignments*

**Points and Assignments:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **700-800** | **A** |
| **600-699** | **B** |
| **500-599** | **C** |
| **400-499** | **D** |
| **Below 400** | **F** |

**The best possible score for the class is 800 points distributed as follows:**

**1.** There will be **four exams** for 400 total points. These exams will cover information from the current topic and may consist of multiple choices, true/false, and short answers of one to two sentences. Some essay questions might be included that would require that you write at least a page. ***Make-up exams will be given only in cases of death, illness, or a documented emergency or approved sports absence***. If you are traveling for school activities, I will ask that you take the exam before the scheduled date. Makeup exams will be substantively different from exams taken in class.

**2. *Attendance and participation in class discussions are a critical part of your participation grade and will be worth 200 total points.***

**3. Group Project -** Choose a religion and present it to the class(200 points.) I will assign groups and leaders and supply you with a rubric in the fourth week of the course. Be creative! You will turn in a rough draft of your project ideas.

**Discussion Guidelines:**

**A portion of your course grade depends on your active and timely participation in discussions and exchanges of ideas, personal observations, and questions among all the students and the instructor.**

The following guidelines will apply to these discussions. If we agree to the same ground rules, we might feel free to express our ideas without worry of ridicule or shame. It is hoped that by the end of the course, you will be thinking about religion in a very different way - one that might make you more confident in your ability to express your thoughts and more interested in how these religions really can be relevant to university students in the 21st Century.

In the exchanges, we, the class, agree:

**To participate and stay on track with the topic.**

To politely challenge the ideas of others without becoming personal.

To respect one another’s ideas.

**To avoid slang and non-academic styles of expression.**

Our discussions need to be built on our interpretation of the readings, videos, and lectures, which means that we must be knowledgeable of that evidence; be able to support our opinions with facts, which means **diligently reading and engaging in the discussions.**

**The Center for Student Success (CSS):**

If you need extra help with composing your discussions or papers, please use the available assistance offered in The Center for Student Success (CSS) located in the library room 313. **CSS provides free peer and faculty tutoring for all subjects**. Go to the Reinhardt web page and click Center for Student Success for appointments.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities.  This legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that reasonably accommodates their disabilities. Reinhardt University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Therefore, if you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to register with the **Academic Support Office (ASO).** ASO is located in the basement of the Lawson Building. Please obtain the proper ASO letters to receive academic accommodations for this class.

***General Education Learning Outcomes:[[1]](#footnote-1)***

Reinhardt University's courses do not stand alone. Each session is linked to various learning outcomes. To help students understand the significance of what occurs in the class.

The General Education Learning Outcomes are expected of every student who graduates from Reinhardt University. In this course, the following learning outcomes are emphasized and required:

1. ***Effective communication of ideas through writing*** is demonstrated through discussion posts, reading responses, papers, and essays on tests. **Course Learning Outcome 1; Arts & Humanities Outcome 1**
2. Integrative, critical thinking, and inquiry-based learning using evidence, logic, and reasoning, demonstrated in discussions, reading responses, papers, and tests. **CLO 2; A&H0 2**
3. Knowledge of ***various research methodologies*** demonstrated through research for the final project. **CLO 3; A&HO 3**
4. ***Independent thought, and imagination*** demonstrated through discussion, reading responses, essays on tests, a short paper, and the final project. **CLO 4; A&HO 4**
5. ***Integrity and ethical responsibility*** are demonstrated in the attribution and citation of the source material. **CLO 7; A&HO 7**

**Religion Program Learning Outcomes (RPOs):[[2]](#footnote-2)**

**RPO 1.** To enable students to understand the five major religions of the world (Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam)

**RPO 3.** To assist students in understanding the Christian tradition.

**RPO 4.** To enable students to think critically and express those ideas in writing, speech, and visual media.

**RPO 5.** To help students become familiar with a variety of research methods appropriate to the field of religion, particularly those relevant to the study of primary sources.

**RPO 6.** To help students develop their understanding of moral and spiritual issues.

***Course Learning Outcomes:***

This course will introduce you to the fundamental characteristics that define the collection of diverse world religions. You will describe the beliefs and their cultural and historical development. Specifically, after completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe the atmosphere, evolution, and purpose of religion as a whole through knowledge of ***world religions*** demonstrated through an understanding of rituals, literary texts, beliefs, practices, and their historical background in discussions, reading responses, essays, tests, a paper, and a final project. **RPO 1, 3, 4, 5, & 6**
2. Discuss, in-depth, the relevance of religion in the postmodern era. You will have an awareness of the role of religion in modern life, demonstrated in the understanding of the human condition with its aspirations as presented in works of literature through reading responses, papers, tests, analysis, and forum discussions. This course will help you understand how religion functions and assist students in comprehending the foundation literature of different traditions as they relate to their present-day lives. **RPO 1, 3, 4, 5, & 6**

1. Understand the origin and evolution of world religions. **RPO 4 & 5**

1. Discuss the origins and the primary philosophies of diverse world religions. **RPO 4 & 5**

1. The student will attain knowledge of the diversity of societies and cultures and gain the ability to view oneself and others in different cultural and historical perspectives demonstrated through an understanding of literary texts and their cultural and historical background in reading responses, papers, tests, analysis, and discussions. **RPO 1, 3, 4, 5, & 6**

**The Need for Academic Honesty:**

Education thrives in an atmosphere of honesty and trust. *Students who do not do their own work degrade education, demonstrate a lack of respect for themselves and the college, and rob themselves of the opportunity to improve their thinking and writing.* In this course, all work must be your own. ***Cheating will not be tolerated.*** Plagiarism, the use of someone else’s ideas or words without acknowledging them as such, is a serious academic offense. Any suspected cases of academic misconduct will be dealt with severely, *usually resulting in a failing grade in the course*. ***If you are ever uncertain about whether or not your actions are academically honest, please consult your instructor, who will be glad to advise you.***

The ***Academic Catalog of Reinhardt University*** details what constitutes academic dishonesty. All students are expected to adhere to the highest academic integrity standards and abide by the ***Reinhardt Honor Code***. Also, all students are expected to be familiar with the Reinhardt policy on academic dishonesty stated in the University Catalog and the Student Handbook. Plagiarism (using the ideas and phrases of others without crediting them, therefore claiming those ideas and expressions as your own) will not be tolerated in this course or on this campus. To avoid such academic dishonesty, you must use a citation (footnote or in-text) for all ideas drawn from your reading and research, including research in encyclopedias and online, even when you have restated those ideas in your own words.

Consequences for cheating or plagiarizing are stiff, and the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs will be notified of actions taken against students who violate the academic integrity policy, which may result in further consequences, including the designation of “academic warning” on your official transcript, academic suspension, or expulsion for academic reasons.

Tentative Topic Schedule

**Week 1**

Course Introduction

What is Religion?

**Week 2**

In the Beginning – Pagans, and Shamanism

**Week 3**

Native American, Wicca, and Druids

**Week 4**

Zoroastrianism and the Cult of Mithra

**EXAM 1**

**Week 5**

**Reading day – NO CLASS**

Greek and Roman Religions

**Week 6**

Greek and Roman Religions cont’d

**Week 7**

Hinduism

**Week 8**

Hinduism continued

**EXAM 2**

**Week 9**

Buddhis

**Week 10**

Jainism, Sikhism

**Week 11**

Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto

**Week 12**

**EXAM 3**

Christianity

**Week 13**

Christianity continued

**Week 14**

Islam

**Week 15**

**Last day of class – Exam 4**

**Week 16**

**Religion Presentations during final exam period**

1. For more information see pages 3 & 4 in the Undergraduate Catalog

   <https://www.reinhardt.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2018-19-Undergraduate-Catalog-10032018-update-2.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See page 106 for further information on the Religion Program Outcomes in the Undergraduate Catalog <https://www.reinhardt.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2018-19-Undergraduate-Catalog-10032018-update-2.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)