

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

- A. Department Information:
Division: Humanities and Social Science
Department: Philosophy/Religious Studies
Course ID: RELIG 100
Course Title: Introduction to Religious Studies
Units: 3
Lecture: 3 hours
Prerequisite: None
- B. Catalog and Schedule Description:
An introductory study of religion, with emphasis on religious experience, the origins and function of religion and religious and theological modes of expression, drawing on Eastern and Western, ancient and modern religious phenomena to help in understanding various religions.

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Create and articulate a historical, cultural, and/or intellectual matrix within which the concerns and the questions of the discipline of religious studies can be placed;
- B. Read and critically evaluate selected primary sources in religious studies (including but not limited to sacred texts, dialogues, aphorisms, essays, sermons, theological treatises, credal formulae, novels, short stories, and non-textual primary sources such as music and visual art forms.
- C. Respond critically, analytically, and/or synthetically in writing to issues dealing with religious studies (including but not limited to the origin of religion, the function of religion, the expression of religion in literature, psychology, and the arts, and/or the relationships between and among religions).
- D. Apply the ideas and concepts in the discipline of religious studies to contemporary experience in its social, institutional, psychological, and/or political manifestations.

IV. CONTENT:

- A. What is Religion
1. What is Religion
 2. The History of Religion
 3. The Holy
 4. The Quest
- B. Conceptual Dimensions of Religion
1. Symbolism
 2. Speaking and Knowing
 3. Sacred Stories
 4. Scripture
 5. God
 6. Evil and Human Destiny
- C. Performative and Social Dimensions of Religion
1. Holy Communities
 2. Patterns and Varieties of Faith
 3. Salvation
 4. Holy Rites

V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. Lecture
- B. Discussions (class and group)
- C. Audio-Visuals
- D. Reading of texts, both secondary and primary
- E. Writing tasks appropriate for the material
- F. Computer Tutorials (if applicable)

VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Reading: Read the Bhagavad Gita. Be able to summarize the action of the dialogue as well as the key issues of the internal struggle Arjuna experiences. Be able to identify the cultural and religious bases of Krishna's advice to Arjuna. Be able to apply the ideas of karma yoga, bhakti yoga, and the gunas to aspects of your own experience.
- B. Writing, critical thinking: Compare the literal advice of Krishna to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita with Mahatma Gandhi's interpretation and universalization of the action of the dialogue. After noting the similarities and differences, evaluate the adequacy of each kind of interpretation--literal and metaphorical--for "postmodern" America using your own experience as well as information gleaned from researching contemporary religious experience.

VII. METHODS OF EVALUATION:

- A. Methods of evaluation will vary from instructor to instructor, but may include multiple choice tests, or sentence completion tests. In addition, written components such as essay tests, writing tasks (i.e. journals, summary reviews, interpretive essays, and/or term projects) will be included. Telecomputing can include downloading and uploading reading and writing tasks, on-line discussion, and computer tutorials. Grading may be comparative within a class or may be based on an absolute standard.
 - 1. Sample objective test question: The Supreme Court decision that made the modern, academic study of religion "legitimate" and that prompted the proliferation of departments and programs in the study of religion was
 - a) Engle v. Vitale
 - b) Abington v. Schemp
 - c) O'Hare v. Baltimore Township
 - d) Lemon v. Kurtzman
 - e) None of the above
 - 2. Sample subjective test question: Rehearse at least three different definitions of religion, making sure to evaluate them for the purposes of the academic study of religion at a public institution of higher education.
- B. While the frequency of evaluation will depend on the type of evaluation ("objective" or written), evaluation will take place periodically throughout the semester with enough frequency to be sufficient to measure student progress and will be sensitive to the various learning styles of students. The minimum evaluation will consist of at least two evaluative instruments (papers, projects, portfolios, or tests) chosen by the instructor of record for the class).

VIII. TYPICAL TEXT(S):

Cunningham, Lawrence S., et al. The Sacred Quest: An Invitation to the Study of Religion. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995.
Monk, Robert, et al. Exploring Religious Meaning. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994.
Porterfield, Amanda. The Power of Religion. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:

Supplementary material may include handouts, primary sources, maps, study guides, computer disks, and/or software.