

SYLLABUS
INTRODUCTION TO WORLD RELIGIONS
HUMS-1200

2009

WESTERN NEBRASKA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DIVISION OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

HUMS-1200

Introduction to World Religions

Prerequisite: ACFS-0060R or Reading Placement Exam

This course surveys the history, beliefs and practices of the great religions of the world, including Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. Indigenous sacred ways and new religious ideas/movements are also examined, as well as the relationship between world religions and various political and social issues.

(3/45/0/0/0/3)

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES/COMPETENCIES:

Upon successful completion of this course, learners will be able to:

- A. Define and explain at least one working definition of “religion” that is specific enough to distinguish religion from other phenomena and general enough to include the rich variety of religions in the world.
- B. Discuss and evaluate the question of whether there is a basic unity or fundamental diversity among the world’s religions.
- C. Identify and discuss at least three reasons why studying religion is important in the twenty-first century.
- D. Define the concept of *myth* and discuss the popular understanding of myth today, distinguishing it from its meaning in the comparative study of religion.
- E. Define, explain the function of, and provide at least 3 examples *religious rituals*.
- F. Define, explain the function of, and provide at least 3 examples *religious symbols*.
- G. Compare and contrast the beliefs of at least three of the world’s major religions with respect to at least three of the following critical questions:
 1. What does it mean to be human?
 2. What is the basic human problem?
 3. What is the cause of the problem?
 4. What is the end or goal of transformation?

5. What are the means of transformation?
6. What is the nature of reality?
7. What is the sacred and how may the sacred be known?

III. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

A. Required Text:

1. William Young, *The World's Religions: Worldviews and Contemporary Issues* (current edition)

B. Alternative texts (these can be used only with prior written approval from the Social Science Division Chair, in consultation with the primary instructor):

1. Mary Pat Fisher, *Living Religions* (current edition)
2. Warren Matthews, *World Religions* (current edition)
3. Huston Smith, *The World's Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions* (various editions available)

C. Supplementary materials:

1. Supplementary readings, exercises, projects, videotapes/DVDs, PowerPoint slides, etc. to be supplied by instructor as appropriate

IV. COURSE OUTLINE:

- A. Religious responses
- B. Indigenous Sacred Ways
- C. Hinduism
- D. Jainism
- E. Buddhism
- F. Daoism and Confucianism
- G. Shinto
- H. Judaism
- I. Christianity
- J. Islam

K. Sikhism

L. New Religious Movements

M. Religion in the 21st Century

V. METHOD OF EVALUATION:

A. Evaluation methods will be at the discretion of the instructor, including but not limited to the following:

1. Traditional examinations (reflecting a strong emphasis on essay and developed short-answer questions)
2. Announced and unannounced quizzes
3. Class attendance and participation
4. Critical thinking exercises and reflection papers/assignments
5. Cumulative journal or portfolio projects (containing graded exercises, critical reflections on readings, application of course concepts to personal experiences as well as current event topics, etc.)
6. Contemporary film analysis project (having students select films dealing with religious themes from a pre-selected list and write a critical analysis of such films)
7. Individual or small group presentations
8. Case studies
9. Traditional research/term papers (*faculty-directed topics strongly recommended rather than “open-ended” assignments, particularly to stimulate original analysis which simply integrates authoritative source material and to reduce plagiarism opportunities)

B. Students will be graded using the standard WNCC grading scale (as specified in the most current WNCC Catalog)

VI. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Academic integrity forms a fundamental bond of trust between colleagues, peers, teachers, and students, and it underlies all genuine learning. At WNCC, there is no tolerance for plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form, including unacknowledged "borrowing" of proprietary material, copying answers or papers, or passing off someone else's work as one's own.

A breach of ethics or act of dishonesty can result in:

- failure of a paper or exam within a course
- failure of an entire course (blatant plagiarism, cheating on a test or quiz)
- academic suspension or expulsion from the college

VII. EQUAL ACCESS STATEMENT:

Western Nebraska Community College is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities. If you qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), please notify the Director of Counseling, 308-635-6090, as soon as possible to begin the process of documentation review and determination of appropriate accommodation or adaptive strategies.

8-20-09