



World Religions
RELG 2211

Syllabus
Summer, 2009
Meeting at: Faith Baptist Church,
11 Glenridge Road
Rexford, NY.

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I. Description of Course

This course surveys each of the major non-Christian religions of the world with a focus on their histories, primary tenants as distinct from Christianity, and some contemporary practices. These will include Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Protestantism, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholicism and two major cults, Mormonism and Jehovah Witnesses. The goal of understanding each religious system is to be better prepared to dialog with those of other religions and to communicate the Gospel to them. This will require familiarity with each religion's basic world-view and teachings as well as an understanding of the more popular mindsets and daily practices that may be typical of people who practice it.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

Satisfactory completion of this course will include mastery of the following goals:

- A. Familiarity with basic historical, ideological, and cultural characteristics of each non-Christian world religion studied and a comparison to a biblical worldview.
- B. An understanding of some important vocabulary and specialized terms related to each of these religions.
- C. A sensitivity to current events as they relate to the religions we will study.
- D. Ability to apply this knowledge of world religions by opening up dialogues with the followers of each religion.
- E. In-depth research and analysis of one religion that has personal interest for a student or that may be related to a future cross-cultural ministry.

III. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

- A. The student will write a three page essay answering the question, "Do all religions lead to the same god?"

- B. A one page written summary and response to a news story relating to a world religion. Students first need to read a news story relating to a non-Christian world religion. Students then need to summarize this news story (and provide an attached copy of the article) and make a brief response to it in one or two paragraphs in a one page double-spaced typed report. Responses can include such things as a discussion of what the story teaches us about the religion being covered or how the events described in the news story might affect Christianity.
- C. Students will be graded on the content and quality of their participation and contributions during class discussions and visits with leaders from various religious groups.
- D. Final ten page research paper: Each student will need to choose a particular world religion and research it in greater depth. The fruits of this research will be displayed in a paper presentation that includes the religion's historical, ideological, or cultural characteristics, and will conclude with a focus on points of similarity and dissimilarity with the Christian faith.

IV. Course Evaluation

The Final Grade for this course will be based on the following percentages.

Essay:	30%
Current event summary:	10%
Discussion points:	10%
Research paper:	50%

V. Course Schedule

June 18-20: 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. each day.
The final research paper is due August 3, 2009.

VI. Grading Scale

The instructor includes subjective factors when determining the final grade. Such factors will include attitude, attendance, punctuality and class participation.

A	95-100	C	77-79
A-	92-94	C-	74-76
B+	89-91	D+	71-73
B	86-88	D	68-70
B-	83-85	D-	65-67
C+	80-82	F	0-64

VII. Attendance Policy

Due to the brevity of class time, this three-day course requires full attendance.

VIII. Academic Integrity

Students enrolled in this course are expected to practice honesty and consideration for the rights of others in all their academic work. Collaboration and exchange of information between students is encouraged as they read, research, and study inside and outside of class. However, all written assignments and exams must represent the student's own words, ideas, and knowledge.

IX. Required Text

Smith, Huston. The World's Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions. New York: Harper Collins, 1991.

X. Course Outline

A. Introduction:

1. An overview of worldview thinking
2. An overview of a Christian worldview
3. An evaluation of the following questions, "Are all religions basically the same? Do all religions lead to one god? Is sincerity of belief the grounds for acceptance before God?"
4. The following religions will be compared to a Christian worldview

B. Judaism:

1. History of Judaism
2. Common Beliefs and Practices
3. Types of Judaism

C. Islam:

1. History of Islam
2. Common Beliefs and Practices
3. Types of Islam

D. Hinduism:

1. History of Hinduism
2. Common Beliefs and Practices
3. Types of Hinduism

E. Buddhism:

1. History of Buddhism
2. Common Beliefs and Practices
3. Types of Buddhism

F. Confucianism and Daoism:

1. History of Confucianism and Daoism
2. Common Beliefs and Practices
3. Types of Confucianism and Daoism

G. Roman Catholicism

1. History of Roman Catholicism
2. Common Beliefs and Practices

H. Greek Orthodox

I. Protestantism

J. Mormonism and Jehovah Witnesses

K. Discussion of essay, “Do all religions lead to the same god?”

L. Preparation for research paper

XI. Course Bibliography

Anderson, Sir Norman, Ed. The World's Religions. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

Anderson, Sir Norman. Christianity and World Religions. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1984.

Corduan, Winfried. A Tapestry of Faiths: The Common Threads Between Christianity & World Religions. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002.

Corduan, Winfried Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions Downers Grove, IVP, 1988.

Eerdman's Handbook To World Religions, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982.

Fisher, Mary Pat. Living Religions. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005.

Lewis, James F. and William G. Travis. Religious Traditions Of The World. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1991.

McDowell, Josh and Don Stewart. Handbook of Today's Religions. Campus Crusade for Christ, 1983.

Additional Sources:

Braswell, George W., Jr. Understanding World Religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Islam. USA: Broadman & Holman, 1994.

Hopfe, Lewis M. and Mark R. Woodward. Religions of the World. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003.

Toropov, Brandon and Father Luke Buckles, O.P. The Complete Idiots Guide To World Religions. New York, NY, Alpha Books, 1997.