

## Religion and Culture Course Syllabus □ ANTH 234

**ANTH 234                      5 CR                      A206**

**5084**

- Section: A
  - M W at 1 2:30pm – 2:40pm
- Instructor: Manouchehr Shiva, Ph.D. □ E-mail: [mshiva@bellevuecollege.edu](mailto:mshiva@bellevuecollege.edu)**

Office Hours: By appt., before or after the class.

**Description** □ This course is

- a) an introduction to anthropological approaches to studying religion and the religious, □ as well as
- b) an introduction to various religions of humankind.

We rely on a Socio-Cultural Anthropological perspective, we also learn about perspectives of other academic fields, particularly Religious Studies, History of Religions, Global Studies and Cultural Studies.

The content of the course will consist of the weaving together of themes growing out of the following three perspectives and the questions they deal with:

- The Historical Perspective: How have religious traditions manifested themselves in world history, particularly in modern world history?

- The Social Scientific Perspective: How are religious beliefs and practices related to their broader social, political and cultural contexts?
- The Contemporary Global-Local Perspective: What are some of the cotemporary global aspects and local practices of world and indigenous religions?

This is an Inter-Active or a Seminar-Like class. Class Participation, Questioning, and Critical Thinking are highly encouraged.

This is also a Research-Oriented class. We practice the process of doing research on religion-related topics.

You are encouraged to take an active part in your learning process. You are asked to join the class prepared, read the assigned material for each unit, work on your unit assignments (postings) and research project, share, give feedback and actively participate in the class's learning process, and critically reflect on what you read, see and hear.

This course is designed to teach students what anthropology offers for a deeper comprehension of our shared human condition. Critical thinking skills are vital not only for a better understanding of this discipline but also importantly for being citizens of an increasingly globalized world.

One of the main goals of this course is to become sensitive to religious/spiritual belief and practice differences, and at the same time become aware of how our own cultural biases can shape our view of the world. The best way to actively combat our own ethnocentrism is to learn about the diversity of human religions/spiritual beliefs and appreciate the diversity of our world.

**Readings: All Readings are free online sources. The course is composed of ten units. There are internet sources assigned for each unit with links in each unit's What to Do document.**

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND MEANS OF ASSESSMENT**

### **Class Discussion Participation and Feedbacks include:**

1. Trying to come up with comprehensive and well cited answers to discussion questions and assignments for each **unit**, and additional well-thought messages (or feedbacks) in reply to other students' answers.
2. Clearly contributing information to further understanding of the concepts involved in the readings.
3. Derive information only from the assigned or other academic sources and properly cite source (author and title) and page.
4. Exhibit a correct and comprehensive understanding of the issues (given that later messages can revise earlier ones).
5. Be courteous."scholarly" and "scientific" in attitude and communication.

The purpose of discussions and feedbacks is to develop a deeper and more complete understanding of specific key concepts and issues in subjects studied. By fully participating

in the discussions, you will also be prepared for the questions in the exams.

**Research Project** □ The focus of the research project is an outline of a preliminary study of a specific religion or religious orientation, or an aspect of a specific religion or religious orientation, in a chosen location and chosen historical period.

**Students choose the topic or focus of their research project by the second unit of the quarter.**

**Project topics** have to do with subjects and information from our readings, class discussions, and your own research and interest.

**Research Project Report**– Minimum four pages (double-spaced), excluding your bibliography. The report is a re-writing of your postings about your research topic during the quarter, based on the feedbacks you have received and your own further research.

**Grading** – Total of 1000 points

**Class Discussion, Assignments, Participation, and Feedback:** 25 points for each unit - total of 250 points – 25% of total grade.

**Quizzes:** – 5 quizzes (one quiz per two units) – 50 points each -

Total of 250 points -

25% of total grade

Quiz One – Oct 1

Quiz Two - Oct 15

Quiz Three – Oct 29

Quiz Four – Nov 12

Quiz Five – Nov 26

**Final Exam:** 250 points – 25% of total grade. Covers all units.

Dec 3

**Final Project Report:** 250 points – 25% of total grade.

**Please see the Class Calendar for the due dates.**

**Unit One** □ Studying Culture and Religion

**Unit Two** □ a) Religion and History □ b) Indigenous

## Religions

**Unit Three**  a) Religion and Gender  b) Hinduism

**Unit Four**  a) Religious Rituals  b) Buddhism

**Unit Five**  a) Sacred Places and Spaces  b) Daoism and Confucianism

**Unit Six**  a) Religion, Stratification, Power and Politics  b) Judaism

**Unit Seven**  a) Religion and Healing  b) Christianity

**Unit Eight**  a) Religious Art  b) Islam

**Unit Nine**  a) Religion and Communal Identity (Ethnicity and Nationalism)  b) Modern Religions and Alternative Paths

**Unit Ten**  Religion, Modernity, Secularism and Globalization