

Religion and Culture Online Course Syllabus

ANTH 234

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In this course we study the 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, in studying “the religious.”

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?
- 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 come to the class prepared, work on your and others' research projects, share and actively participate in the class's learning process, and critically reflect on what they hear, read or see.

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 goal of this course is therefore to become sensitive to religious/spiritual beliefs differences and at the same time 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.

Text book :

Esposito, John, Fasching, Darell, Lewis Todd. 2009. World Religions Today.

3rd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Course binder: This is useful to organize all the course material: syllabus, calendar and weekly assignments.

Software: Please make sure your software is compatible with VISTA by performing the browser check on the opening page.

The Dates for Quizzes and the Final Exam and the Research Project Report are on the class calendar.

Grading -- Total of 1000 points

Class Discussion Participation: 250 points – 25 points per weekly unit

Quizzes: 250 points (Five Quizzes)

Final Exam: 250

Final Project: 250 points

Total points possible: 1000 points

A 4.0 92-100%

A- 3.7 90-91%

B+ 3.3 88-89%

B 3.0 82-87%

B- 2.7 80-81%

C+ 2.3 78-79%

C 2.0 72-77%

C- 1.7 70 - 71 %

D+ 1.3 68-69 %

D 1.0 50-67%

F 0 < 50%

For information on BC grading policies please read the official grade information online.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND MEANS OF ASSESSMENT

Class Discussion Participation and Feedbacks include:

1. Posting a detailed, comprehensive and well cited answers to discussion questions on the discussion board for each week, and at least two additional well-thought messages (or feedbacks) in reply to other students' answers or replies.
2. Clearly contributing information to further understanding of the concepts involved in the readings.
3. Derive information only from the course texts or other assigned or academic sources and properly cite source (author and title) and page, table or figure numbers if available.
4. Exhibit a correct and comprehensive understanding of the issues (given that later messages can revise earlier ones).
5. Be courteous 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 problems in subjects studied. By fully participating in the week's discussion, you will be prepared for the questions in the exams.

Research Project

The focus of the research project is the study of an aspect of a religion in its specific geographical, social and cultural contexts.

Students choose the focus of their research project by the second week of the quarter.

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

Length of Research Report– Minimum of four pages, excluding bibliography. The report should show the progress of the research process during the quarter and your thinking behind it. The project report is due on the day of the final exam.

For Each unit YOU WILL NEED TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Critically Read and Study the assigned Textual material
 2. Be involved in Discussions in the class and with your fellow students on related topics
 4. Get ready for the tests to demonstrate what you have learned.
 5. Show progress in working on your research project.
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“EQUIPMENT AND SKILLS REQUIREMENTS

Taking an online course requires basic computer literacy and a little more. You must be proficient in navigating the World Wide Web (the Web) and may have to be able to download and install plug-ins. An online course often requires accessing the Web on a regular basis. You need a reliable ISP that seldom responds to your call with a busy signal. You need to be able to write English on a word processor, save documents and organize the resulting files, copy documents into your clipboard and paste them into another application, and attach documents to e-mail and retrieve them.

COURSE ASSUMPTIONS

All humans learn and all humans teach. Humans learn and teach in communities, and communities embody more knowledge than any one individual possesses. These characteristics have been fundamental first to human biological evolution, and then to the origin and evolution of cultures. Formal education takes place in a special community -- the learning community. The more cohesive the learning community and the more focused it is on shared goals, the more intense is the learning experience.

In the best of learning communities, both "instructor" and "students" are learners. The instructor takes responsibility for the overall goals and direction of the course, the materials, pacing, lessons, and assessment. But students must take responsibility for their own learning. They must bring questions to the table, and act critically upon the materials of the course. Learning cannot be passive; it's hard work.

Certainly it's useful and rewarding, but like long distance running, it hurts a lot while you are doing it and feels great when you stop.

Online courses are in many ways more focused and intensive learning communities than those encountered in the classroom ("on the ground"). You will be reading a lot and writing a lot, and communicating intensively with your fellow class members. You will need to put in about 15 hours of study a week, and you should log into the classroom at least five times a week to receive the week's schedule, read your e-mail, post commentaries and other assignments, and read and discuss the work of others. It's assumed that we are all there to learn some anthropology, to develop and exercise critical thinking skills, and to stretch ourselves creatively in the exploration of ideas. But above all we are all there to discover ways the tools of anthropology can illuminate our daily lives and current problems of the human condition around the globe.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As students, you have the responsibility to:

- relate to all others in the class in a professional manner, being especially careful to avoid personal attacks, harsh criticisms, and objectionable language
- keep up with the course work and submit your work in on time
- support your class members to establish a genuine learning community