

## **Religion and Culture ANTH 234 Syllabus**

### **Religion and Culture**

### **ANTH 234**

### **Syllabus**

### **Winter 2010**

ANTH& 234                      Religion & Culture • 5 CR  
5084  
Section: A                      MW      5:30p-7:40p                      D101

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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 have manifested themselves in world history?
- The Social Scientific Perspective: How are religious beliefs and practices are 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 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.

### **Readings**

World Religions Today

Third Edition

John L. Esposito, Darrell J. Fasching and Todd Lew

Oxford University Press

2) A series of short articles and chapters are also provided to complement the assigned book and the audio-visual materials.

**Grading** — Total of 1000 points

Class Discussion and Participation: 100 points total - 10% of total grade.

Ten Weekly Feedbacks: 150 points total - 15% of total grade

Five Bi-Weekly Quizzes: 250 points total – 25% of total grade.

Final Exam: 200 points — 20% of total grade.

Research Project: 300 points — 30% to total grade.

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

Class Discussion Participation and Feedbacks include:

1. Posting a detailed, comprehensive and well cited discussions and feedbacks regarding the assigned materials of each week.
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 specific religion or religious tradition in a specific geographical location or country in a specific historical period, preferably in its contemporary context.

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 six pages, excluding bibliography. The report should show the progress of the research process during the quarter and your thinking behind it.

**The report should show the progress of the research process during the quarter and your thinking behind it.**

Research Projects Report should include the following :

- 1) The historical context
- 2) The ideological, religious or worldview-related aspects
- 3) The socio-economic class aspects
- 4) The socialization/enculturation or learning aspects

- 5) The communicative, symbolic or linguistic aspects
- 6) The gender-related, family-related, kinship-related or generation-related aspects
- 7) The communal identity (racial, ethnic, national, ethno-religious, ...) aspects
- 8) Power-related or political aspects
- 9) Global or globalization-related aspects
- 10) Proper citation and bibliography

For Each unit YOU WILL NEED TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Critically Read and Study the assigned materials.
2. Be involved in Discussions in the class and with your fellow students on related topics
3. Get ready for the quizzes to demonstrate what you have learned.
4. Show progress in working on your research project.

## **Class Content**

**Unit ONE:** What is Religion and how is it studied?

Definitions of Religion

Aspects of Religion

Culture, Language, Ideology and Religion

Theology, Mysticism and Religion

Philosophy and Religion

Comparative Religion

Religious Studies

History of Religions

Psychology and Religion

Sociology and Religion

Anthropology and Religion

Globalization and Religion

Religion and Gender

Religion and Communal Identity

Religion and Violence/Non-Violence

Text Book – Chapter 1. Introduction

Globalization: World Religions in Everyone's Hometown

Understanding Religious Experience and Its Expressions

The Great Transition: From Tribal Life to Urban Life and the Emergence of World Religions

The Great Religious Stories of the World

Modernization in Global Perspective

Modern Colonialism, the Socialist Challenge, and the End of Modernity

Postmodern Trends in a Postcolonial World

Conclusion: We Are All Heretics in the Postmodern Situation

## **Unit Two: Indigenous Religions and Anthropology of Religion**

Anthropological Theories and Religion

Human Evolution and Religion

Indigenous Religions, Religion in non-state communities

The World Religions

The Axial Age and The World Religions

Contemporary Globalization and World Religions

Contemporary Practices of Indigenous Religions

Text Book - Chapter 2. Indigenous Religions

Origins of Homo Religious: Prehistory

Indigenous Religious Traditions: Soul Belief and Afterlife

Indigenous Religions Today

## **Unit Three: Judaism**

Abrahamic Religions

Judaism

Early Hebrews

The Prophets

Rabbinical Judaism

Globalization and Modern Transformations of Abrahamic Religions.

Contemporary Practices of Judaism

Text Book – Chapter 3. The Many Stories of Judaism: Sacred and Secular

Encounter with Modernity: Modern Judaisms and the Challenge of Ultra-Orthodoxy

Premodern Judaism: The Formative Era

Premodern Judaism: The Classical Era

Judaism and Modernity

Judaism and Postmodern Trends in a Postcolonial World

## **Unit Four: Christianity**

Life of Jesus

The Gospels

Early Christianity

Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Developments

Globalization and Christianity

Contemporary Practices of Christianity

Text Book – Chapter 4. Christian Diversity and the Road to Modernity

Encounter with Modernity: The Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy

Premodern Christianity: The Formative Era

Premodern Christianity: The Classical Era

Christianity and Modernity

Christianity and Postmodern Trends in a Postcolonial World

## **Unit Five: Islam**

The Arabian Setting

Life of Muhammad

The Qur'an

The Islamic Tradition  
The Axial Age and the Expansion of Islamic Civilization  
Globalization and Islam  
Contemporary Practices of Islam

Text Book – Chapter 5. Islam: The Many Faces of the Muslim Experience  
Encounter with Modernity: The Challenge of Western Colonialism  
Premodern Islam: The Formative Era  
Premodern Islam: The Classical Era  
Islam and Modernity  
Islam and Postmodern Trends in a Postcolonial World  
Islam: Postmodern Challenges

**Unit Six: Hinduism**

Pre-Vedic origins  
Vedic Religions  
The Upanishads and the Axial Age  
Globalizations and Hinduism  
Contemporary Practices of Hinduism

Other Religions of Indian Origin

Jainism

Sikhism

Globalization and Modern Indian Religious Transformations  
Contemporary Practices of Non-Hindu Religions of Indian Origin

Text Book – Chapter 6. Hinduism

Encountering Modernity: Hindu Challenges to India as a Secular State  
Premodern Hinduism: The Formative Era  
Premodern Hinduism: The Classical Era (180 BCE-900 CE)  
Premodern Hinduism: The Postclassical Era (900 CE-1500 CE)  
Hinduism and Modernity  
Hinduism and Postmodern Trends in a Postcolonial World  
Hindu Festival Practices  
The Religious Institutions of Contemporary Hinduism

**Unit Seven: Buddhism**

Beginnings of Buddhism

The Life of Buddha

Dharma

Theravada

Mahayana

Vajrayana

Zen

Contemporary Practices of Buddhism

Text Book - Chapter 7 - Buddhism: Ways to Nirvana

Encounter with Modernity: Socially Engaged Buddhism

Premodern Buddhism: The Formative Era

Premodern Buddhism: The Classical Era  
The Core Doctrines  
Premodern Buddhism: Buddhist Expansion  
Buddhism and Postmodern Trends in a Postcolonial World

**Unit Eight** : Religions of Chinese and Japanese Origin  
Early Chinese philosophy  
Taoism  
Confucianism  
Japanese Shinto  
Globalization and Religions of Chinese and Japanese Origin  
Contemporary Practices of Religions of Chinese and Japanese Origin

Text Book – Chapter 8. East Asian Religions: Traditions of Human Cultivation and Natural Harmony  
Encounter with Modernity: Postcolonial Confucian Economics  
East Asian Religions in the Premodern Era  
East Asian Religions in the Early Modern Era  
East Asian Religions and Postmodern Trends in a Postcolonial World

**Unit Nine:** Religion, Modernity and Globalization  
New Religious Movements  
Modernity, Science, and Secularism  
The Future of Religion  
Ethno-religious Identity and Conflict  
Nationalism and Religion  
Globalization and Religion  
Religion, Ecumenism and Peace

Text Book – Chapter Nine. Globalization: From New to New Age Religions  
New Religions  
New Age Religions  
East Goes West: Transcendental Meditation  
West Goes East: The Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon and the Aum Shinrikyo Movement  
Religious Postmodernism and Global Ethics  
The Challenge of Postmodern Secular Relativism  
The Future of Religion in an Age of Globalization

## **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.

## **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

As your instructor, I have the responsibility to:

- provide a comprehensive syllabus and course weekly assignments calendar which displays all due dates for readings, assignments, and exams
- grade or otherwise respond to all submitted materials within a timely manner.
- monitor your group participation in the online classroom weekly and occasionally comment on it
- inform you of your current grade and relative class standing upon request
- respond to any e-mail and answer all appropriate questions in a timely manner
- behave professionally, respecting you as an individual of intelligence and sensitivity

As students, you have the responsibility to:

- behave to all others in the class in a professional manner, being especially careful in e-mail and other electronic communications 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

## **The Disability Resource Center**

<http://bellevuecollege.edu/drc/faculty.html#syllabus>

**The Disability Resource Center serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. Please visit the DRC if you have any questions about classroom accommodations whether you are a student or a faculty member.**

**If you are a student who has a disability or a learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact the DRC staff as soon as possible.**

**The DRC office is located in B132 or you can call our reception desk at 425-564-2498. Deaf students can reach us by video phone at 425-440-2025 or by TTY at 425-564-4110. Please visit our website for application information into our program and other helpful links at [www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc](http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc)**

**Remember if you are someone who has either an apparent or non apparent disability and requires assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc, please meet with your individual instructors to develop a safety plan within the first week of the quarter.**