REQUIRED READING:

THIS ENTIRE WEBPAGE IS REQUIRED READING. Read it carefully and thoroughly.


RECOMMENDED READING:


John H. Hayes, Introduction to the Bible.

Bruce Metzger and Michael Coogan (eds.), The Oxford Companion to the Bible.

Mary Boyce, Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices.

Paul Kriwaczek, In Search of Zarathustra.

The Qu’ran (Koran).

Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism.

Luther Martin, Hellenistic Religion.

Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, The Contemporary Islamic Revival.


John Hinnells, A New Handbook of Living Religions.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will be a study of the histories, narratives, rituals, and scriptures of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and other traditions from the Middle East, America, and Africa. The course will be divided into eight sections:

1. Approaching the Study of World Religions;
2. Judaism;
3. Christianity;
4. Zoroastrianism;
5. Indigenous Religions of North America;
6. Indigenous Religions of Africa;
7. Islam; and

OUTCOMES

Religion Major (World Religion Track) Mission Statement.

The program in World Religions aims to provide students with an understanding of religion in most of its various historically significant forms. This major provides a valuable perspective for understanding the significance of religion in the context of both world events and individual human life. It requires an appreciation of the role of religion in other educational areas such as sociology, psychology, history, and literature. Its mission is to provide students with a reliable, detailed, but broad exposure to a variety of foreign cultures across human history while requiring them to consider and analyze critically the implications and entailments of religious expression and behavior within those cultures. Reliable information from geography, social and political history, and current events as well as from a wide variety of cultural studies and sacred scriptures must be analyzed in order to achieve these ends.

Religion Major (World Religion Track) Outcomes

- To acquire knowledge of the History of Religions, of global human Culture, and of the Natural World.
- To acquire intellectual and practical skills, including critical and creative thinking, research and analysis, and written and oral communication skills.
- To become practiced in integrative learning, including the synthesis and application of knowledge from a variety of sources and skills from a variety of
disciplinary approaches to unfamiliar and complex situations.

- To acquire a greater understanding of all people, including ourselves, as individuals in a culture comparable with all other human cultures.

Course (REL 171, Religion in the Western World) Outcomes

The general aims of this course are, primarily, to acquire a reliable knowledge and understanding of the history of those religions that have become common in the Western world and to critically consider and understand the implications of that data. However, in order to do so students must acquire an understanding of the current context of Religions in the Western world--the religions among which the Middle-eastern traditions now find themselves and to which they can be compared, knowledge of which can bring considerable insight into the now-dominant monotheistic traditions. The basic research skills of the academic study of religion must thus be acquired and practiced as tools for the construction of relevant and durable opinions about the material. Third, the skills required to communicate those opinions clearly and persuasively will be practiced.

So-the acquisition, the analysis, the assessment, and the articulation of information will all be practiced and evaluated.

All student work should be well-researched, well-reasoned, and well-written.

Successful students in this course will demonstrate their abilities:

- to acquire reliable knowledge of the history of the major religious traditions of the Western World
- to consider critically various theories of Western religious history
- to acquire a critical understanding of Western religions
- to articulate that understanding
- to construct relevant, informed, and durable answers to their own questions about the religions of the Western World
- to articulate and communicate those answers clearly
- to be prepared to discuss those answers graciously with people of differing opinions

Guided Reading: The assigned reading must be done before the classes and class
will involve discussion of the reading as well as explanatory lectures from the professor. Students will be asked to answer guided reading questions before class and to be ready to respond to those questions in class. It is part of the Guided Reading Assignments that students should ASK as well as answer questions in class. Make a note of anything that you do not understand and be prepared to raise those questions in class. See the first week's questions, for example.

**GRADING:**

Grades will be based on a total of 500 possible points:
There will be eight quizzes and eight short (c. 250 words) papers, one on each section of the course. There will be one term paper of approximately 3,000 words, whose topic must be determined by Monday, April 4th. There will be a final examination whose form will be discussed during the course. Attendance to the classes is required, as is participation in class discussions. Attendance and participation will be graded. The grading distribution will be as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Each worth</th>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
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<td>Short Papers</td>
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<td>Term Paper</td>
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<td>Examination</td>
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**Attendance**

You must attend classes. Failure to do so might lose up to 20% of your grade points. NO absences are regarded as "excused." If a student misses class because of sickness or bereavement, or for athletic, employment, or other educational purposes this still **could** damage their progress in the class. All absences will be recorded and after three, all students will have to assure the instructor that their absence was unavoidable, that they have made up for it appropriately, and that their performance in the class has not suffered.

**Academic Integrity**
Westminster College as an institution and I as an individual both pursue a strict policy of academic honesty. **Plagiarism:** leading your reader or listener to believe that what you have written or said is your own work, when, in fact, it is not, will be treated severely. But always remember that while using someone else's work without declaring your source is dishonest, doing the same thing and citing the source is good scholarship! Books *must* be cited in the correct bibliographic style *(see here)* and personal sources can also be cited. Your instructor reserves the right to use the plagiarism software at Turnitin.com.

**SCHEDULE:**
This class will meet MWF 12:50 - 1:50 in Old Main 311. I will be available in my office in Patterson Hall 336 from 2:00 until 3:00 MWF and from 12:30 until 1:30 TTr (and at other times by arrangement).

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<th>Week: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15</th>
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**Week 1: Introduction: Religions in the Modern World.**

**Wed. 1/17** Introduction to the course. Preface and Approaching the Study of World Religions from *Invitation to Western Religion* (hereafter *IWR*) xi - 21. See Guided Reading.

**Fri. 1/19** Religions in the Modern World (21 - 29). See Guided Reading. Here is a useful link for relevant Maps and for various definitions of religion.

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**Week 2. Judaism**
Mon. 1/22 Quiz #1: Invitation to the Study of Western Religion (see the Quiz Guide on D2L).

Wed. 1/24 Reading: The Teachings of Judaism (117 - 128). See Guided Reading. See this website for the texts of the Hebrew Bible.

Fri. 1/26 Reading: The History of Judaism (128 - 137). See Guided Reading. See this website for significant dates in Biblical History.

Week 3. Judaism, continued.

Mon. 1/29 The History of Judaism (137 - 152). See Guided Reading.

Wed. 1/31 Reading: Judaism as a Way of Life (152 - 161). See Guided Reading, and Judaism as a Way of Life (161 - 175). See Guided Reading. Students must post at least one item to the D2L discussions!

Fri. 2/2 Discussion: Reading--See the class handout on D2L about the Documentary Hypothesis for information on the J, E, P, and D traditions. Do the Guided Reading and See here for information on the Hebrew Prophets.

Prepare for Quiz #2: Judaism (on D2L; available from 2:00 p.m. Friday until Midnight Sunday).

Week 4. Christianity.

Be sure to consult the handouts for Weeks Four through Seven on D2L: on the Christian Liturgy, the seasonal year, the Christian symbol of the fish, Christian
Diversity, and the Sacraments.

Mon. 2/5 Reading: The Teachings of Christianity (177 - 187). See Guided Reading.

Wed. 2/7 Reading: The Teachings of Christianity (187 - 197). See Guided Reading.

Fri. 2/9 Reading: The History of Christianity (197 - 209). See Guided Reading.
Begin reading The Eastern Church by Timothy Ware.

Week 5. Christianity, Continued.

Mon. 2/12 Reading: The History of Christianity (209 - 218). See Guided Reading.

Wed. 2/14 Reading: Christianity as a Way of Life (218 - 232). See Guided Reading.
See the handouts for Weeks Four through Seven on D2L: on the Christian Liturgy, the seasonal year, the Christian symbol of the fish, and the Sacraments.
Click here for more information on the priority of the Gospel of Mark and other related information. See Guided Reading.

Fri. 2/16 Today will begin our two-week segment focusing on Eastern Orthodox Christianity. You should have read at least half of The Orthodox Church by Timothy Ware by this time. Discuss The Orthodox Church, 1-52.

Week 6. The Eastern Church.

Mon. 2/19 Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Reading from The Orthodox Church, 52-101.

Wed. 2/21 Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Reading from The Orthodox Church, 102-160.

Fri. 2/23 Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Reading from The Orthodox Church, 160-208.

Week 7. The Eastern Church, continued.

Mon. 2/26 Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Reading from The Orthodox Church. You are required to have finished reading The Orthodox Church by this time. Discuss
The Orthodox Church, 208-273.

Wed. 2/28 Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Discussion, 274-327.

Fri. 3/2 Discuss The Orthodox Church. Quiz #3 (Online): Christianity—including Eastern Orthodoxy.

The quiz will become available at 12:50 p.m. Friday. Once begun, the short question part of the quiz will only be available for 30 minutes. The quiz and the associated dropbox for the essays will be open until midnight on Sunday 11th.

Spring Break March 3rd - 11th

Week 8. Zoroastrianism.

Mon. 3/12 Reading: The Teachings of Zoroastrianism (89 - 96). See Guided Reading.

Wed. 3/14 Reading: The History of Zoroastrianism (97 - 106). See Guided Reading

Fri. 3/16 Reading: Zoroastrianism as a Way of Life (106 - 115). See Guided Reading.

The topic of your term paper must be determined and approved by the professor by this date.

Week 9. Zoroastrianism, continued
and other religions of the Ancient Near East.
Mon. 3/19 Reading: Zoroastrian influence on Christianity? Professor Rennie on Zoroastrianism as the Iranian Roots of Christianity (handout on D2L Week Nine). See Guided Reading.

Wed. 3/21 Reading: Other Religions of the Ancient Near East--Additional reading material for this section of the course is web-based document on Greco-Roman Religions: The Eleusinian Mysteries and the Mysteries of Dionysus and Orpheus. Additional Reading: See Guided Reading.

Fri. 3/23 Some Religions of the Roman Empire: Mithraism and Gnosticism. Additional Reading: Later Religion of the Greco-Roman Empire, See Guided Reading. Also you can see On Gnosticism and Mithraism for some extra background information. Quiz #4: Zoroastrianism and the Ancient Near East.

Week 10. Indigenous Religions of North America.

Monday. 3/26 Reading: The Teachings and History of Indigenous North American Religion (31 - 48). See Guided Reading. You must submit an annotated bibliography for your term paper by today. This should contain at least five appropriate references.

Quiz #5 will be available from 2:00 p.m. Wednesday until Midnight Monday April 2nd.

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Easter Break March 29th - April 2nd

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Week 11. Indigenous Religions of Africa.

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Yoruba Sculpture
Image Courtesy of Brodd, et al,
Invitation to Western Religions

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**Tues. 4/3 Monday Classes meet Tuesday.** Reading: The Teachings of Indigenous African Religions (59 - 71). [See Guided Reading.](#)

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**Wed. 4/4 Reading:** The History of Indigenous African Religions (71 - 75). [See Guided Reading.](#)

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**Fri. 4/6 Reading:** Indigenous African Religions as a Way of Life (75 - 86). [See Guided Reading.](#) Quiz #6: Indigenous Religions of Africa.

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**Week 12. Islam.**

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See [this website](#) for access to the Qur'an and other Muslim resources and [this website](#) for the recitation of the Qu’ran.

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**Mon. 4/9 Reading:** The Teachings of Islam (235 - 254). [See Guided Reading.](#)

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**Wed. 4/11 Reading:** The History of Islam (254 - 262). [See Guided Reading.](#)

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**Fri. 4/13 Reading:** The History of Islam (262 - 272). [See Guided Reading.](#)
Week 13: Islam, continued.

Mon. 4/16 Reading: Islam as a Way of Life (272 - 281). See Guided Reading.

Wed. 4/18 No Class: URAC

Fri. 4/20 Reading: Islam as a Way of Life (281 - 289). See Guided Reading.


Mon. 4/23 Islam in the West: 2002--Karen Armstrong on Contemporary Islam in the Western world. (See handouts on D2L.)

Wed. 4/27 Islam in the West 1972: Seyyed Hossein Nasr on the promise of Sufism.

Fri. 4/27 Quiz #7: Islam.
Today is the last day that you can hand in a draft of your term paper to be checked.


Wed. 5/2 Reading: The Revival of Esoteric And Neo-Pagan Thought (309 - 332). See Guided Reading.

Fri. 5/4 Quiz #8: New Religious Movements.
Final class. Closing Discussion. Instructions for the final examination. Today is the deadline for your term paper.
Finals period May 7th through 10th
Monday through Thursday.

The final will be a take home examination that covers the whole semester's work. All questions will be drawn from the set of questions already posed in the quizzes. The Completed Take-Home Final Examination is due to be submitted to the D2L Dropbox by 10:00 a.m. on Thursday May 10th.

Term ends Friday, May 11th.

SOME NOTES ON THE TERM PAPER.

Students will submit a typewritten or word-processed critical essay of 10-12 pages (double spaced, that is about 3,000 words). This paper is due in on Friday, May 4th.

You are required to obtain the approval of the instructor for your paper topic by Friday, March 16th.

You are required to submit an annotated bibliography for your paper by Monday, March 26th. This should contain at least five appropriate sources with a brief (no more than 50 words) description of the contents of each source. You must have at least as many print sources as you have Internet sources!

Papers cannot be accepted after the due date (Friday, May 4th).

You may hand in a rough draft of your paper to be checked anytime up to Friday April 27th.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY.

These are not reports but argumentative essays: that is to say they are editorialism rather than journalism--your own views are as essential as knowledge of your subject material. The standard of your technical writing as well as your accuracy and argument will be taken into consideration. To that end, here is a short list of common avoidable writing errors which should help you to avoid simple mistakes which will otherwise reduce your grade.

1. Papers must have a title which states the topic of your essay. In order to maintain the focus on Religion in the Western World as the topic of this course
your papers should be entitled "Religion in the Western World: . . . " with your topic or focus following the colon. Papers must submitted as e-mail attachments.

2. You must have a thesis, argument, and a conclusion. "Thesis" is defined as "a proposition laid down or stated, especially as a theme to be discussed or proved" (Oxford English Dictionary). You must explain to your reader why you believe that your thesis is correct, and clearly state the conclusion of your thought. This is mainly to help you to focus your thoughts.

3. The arguments and research which support your thesis should make the main body of the essay.

4. Source material (books, but don't forget articles in journals and encyclopedias, even newspapers and personal interviews) should be integrated into your argument as evidence, example, or illustration. You MUST document the sources of all quotations, statistical information, and paraphrased material.

5. Your conclusions must be clearly stated. They can be negative as well as positive. Don't worry if you find that your original thesis is insupportable. As long as your conclusion is based on your research negative results areas valuable as positive ones. Just re-write your introduction to reflect your results.

6. You must give a separate list of sources (entitled "References" or "Bibliography" or "Works Cited") at the end of your paper. In alphabetical order give the full name of each author, surname first, then first name, followed by the title of the work. Book and journal titles should be italicized (underlining should be avoided and used only if italics are not available, as in hand- or typewritten manuscripts). Article titles should be in quotation marks. Details of publication must be included. For example:


(For Internet sources the minimum required information is author name, URL
--that is the "http://filename/etc.htm"--and the date you took it from the Internet. REMEMBER: You must have at least as many print sources as you have Internet sources!

Your bibliography does not count as part of your length (3,000 words as stated above).

PLEASE ASK ME IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT ANY OF THIS!

brennie@westminster.edu