

World Religions

Course Description

We live in a multi-cultural world where understanding religious difference and common ground is a necessary part of maintaining a free and diverse world. This class explores the world's major spiritual traditions. The class will investigate the origin of each religion and their historical development, along with the ideas, values, and experiences that make each a significant way of life in our world today. Inquiry will be made into each tradition's approach to reality, human nature, the world, ethics, birth and death. The class looks at these through the writings, art, dance, music and spiritual practices which form each tradition. Guest speakers will meet with the class to share their ideas and spiritual practices. Students write three essays, complete a substantial research paper, and present their research to the class.

Course Topics

Indigenous
Hinduism
Judaism
Christianity
Islam
Confucianism
Taoism
Buddhism

Material and Assignments

You will need to keep a notebook specifically used for just this course. It will be turned in at the end of the course. A three ring binder is best. The notebook will be for collecting and organizing the numerous handouts and some note taking done in class and occasional homework. It is important you bring this to class each day.

There will be no exams, three substantial essays, a large research project and a presentation of that research as a final exam this semester.

The essays will be one way to assess your knowledge and thinking about the topics encountered.

There will be some films watched, music listened to, art looked at and practices to experience, with attention to discussion and written response.

Classroom discussion is a central element in this course. To share your astute insights and ask important questions is of crucial value in the class. Patience and listening skills are vital.

Evaluation

Your final grade will come from:

40% Essays

30% Research project

10% Research Presentation

10% Notebook (handouts & notes)

10% In class participation and discussion