

## SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

**Voyage:** Spring 2014

**Discipline:** Religious Studies

**RELG 1559-501 and 502:** Religions of the World (Sections 1 and 2)

**Division:** Lower Division

**Faculty Name:** Grant Hardy

**Pre-requisites:**

None

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an introduction to the major religions of the world. Throughout history, religion has been one of the primary ways that people have answered the big questions of life: What is the meaning of my existence? Is there more to the world than what is readily observable? Is there anything permanent beyond our ever-changing circumstances? What happens after death? Is there a god or gods? How then should we live? We will examine and compare not only the beliefs of various faiths, but also other elements of religion such as scripture, ritual, ethics, art and architecture, life-cycle stages, sacredness, community cohesion, social boundaries, and identity formation in individuals. By its nature, religious studies is multi-disciplinary and multi-faceted. In fact, even the definition of the term “religion” is debated. In this course, book-learning will be supplemented by site visits to East Asia, Southeast Asia, India, and Africa—all places where religious structures and customs will be immediately evident. Through a semester of study, experience, and reflection on diverse faith traditions such as Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Christianity, Shinto, and Islam, students will come to better understand the lives and perspectives of people around the globe.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Students will gain a familiarity with the basic beliefs, practices, and histories of world religions
- They will be able to intelligently compare and contrast major religious traditions
- They will gain a greater appreciation for the variety of religions and their roles in people’s lives
- They will learn to see religion as a way of living rather than simply a collection of beliefs
- They will have opportunities to apply this knowledge “in the field” when encountering other cultures

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

**AUTHOR:** Michael Molloy

**TITLE:** *Experiencing the World’s Religions*

**PUBLISHER:** McGraw Hill

**ISBN #:** 9780078038273

**DATE/EDITION:** 2013, 6th ed.

**AUTHOR:** Robert E. Van Voorst

**TITLE:** *Anthology of World Scriptures*

**PUBLISHER:** Wadsworth

ISBN #: 9781133934448

DATE/EDITION: 2013, 8th ed.

### **TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE**

- 1 – Introduction; Molloy, ch. 1; Van Voorst, ch. 1
- 2 – Indigenous Religions; Molloy, ch. 2
- 3 – Tradition and modernization; *Koran By Heart*
- 4 – Buddhism; Molloy, ch. 4
- 5 – Buddhism; Van Voorst, ch. 3
- 6 – Shinto; Molloy, ch. 7; Van Voorst, ch. 8
- 7 – Daoism and Confucianism; Molloy, ch. 6
- 8 – Daoism and Confucianism; Van Voorst, ch. 6-7
- 9 – Hinduism; Molloy, ch. 3
- 10 – Hinduism; Van Voorst, ch. 2
- 11 – Midterm Exam
- 12 – Jainism and Sikhism; Molloy, ch. 5
- 13 – Jainism and Sikhism; Van Voorst, ch. 4-5
- 14 – Judaism; Molloy, ch. 8
- 15 – Judaism; Van Voorst, ch. 10
- 16 – Christianity; Molloy, ch. 9
- 17 – Christianity; Van Voorst, ch. 11
- 18 – Islam; Molloy, ch. 10
- 19 – Islam; Van Voorst, ch. 12
- 20 – Zoroastrianism; Van Voorst, ch. 9
- 21 – Alternative Paths; Molloy, ch. 11
- 22 – New Religious Movements; Van Voorst, ch. 13
- 23 – The Modern Search; Molloy, ch. 12
- 24 – Final Exam

There will be one short paper (3 pp) of primary source analysis, as well as a field lab report (4-5 pp) and a field research paper (5-6 pp). You must attend at least three Insight lectures; show Mr. McGrath your notes to get credit. You may attend up to three Language Bootcamps and two more Insight Lectures for extra credit.

### **FIELD WORK**

***FIELD LAB*** (At least 20 percent of the contact hours for each course, to be led by the instructor.)

Students will participate in one of the two field lab opportunities for the course—one in Rangoon and the other in Cochin. They will then write a field lab report of 4-5 pp. comparing at least two of the places of worship that we visited.

### ***FIELD ASSIGNMENTS***

Students will keep a journal of their experiences at places of worship at sites throughout the voyage. They will write a paper of 5-6 pp. on one of the major religions based on their field notes and reasearch.

## **METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC**

Participation – 10% (attendance and contributions to class discussions)

Primary source analysis and quizzes – 10%

Midterm – 20%

Field lab – 20%

Field research paper – 20%

Final Exam – 20%

## **RESERVE LIBRARY LIST**

AUTHOR: Stuart M. Matlins

TITLE: *How to Be a Perfect Stranger: The Essential Religious Etiquette Handbook*

PUBLISHER: Skylight Paths

ISBN #: 9781594731402

DATE/EDITION: 2006, 4th ed.

## **ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS**

Larissa MacFarquhar. "Last Call: A Buddhist Monk Confronts Japan's Suicide Culture." *New Yorker*, June 24, 2013.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

*The Hajj: One American's Pilgrimage to Mecca*. DVD. ABC Nightline, April 18, 1997. Orland Park, IL: MPI Home Video, 2004.

*Koran By Heart*. DVD. Directed by Greg Barker. New York: HBO Documentary Films, 2011.

*Wheel of Time*. DVD. Directed by Werner Herzog. New York: Fox Lorber, 2005.

## **RELEVANT FEATURE FILMS**

*Asoka* (2001), *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2001), *Gandhi* (2007), *Kundun* (1998), *Little Buddha* (1995), *The Message* (2005), *Princess Mononoke* (1999), *Spirited Away* (2003)

## **HONOR CODE**

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed]."

(1/14/14)