

Peru State College
Sociology 322 The World's Religions
Syllabus—Summer, 2007

Instructor: Dr. Joel Lundak, Professor of Psychology

Office Hours: Virtual office hours are daily Monday through Friday, so that if you email a question it should be answered no later than the next morning, and usually will be answered the same day.

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Required Textbook: The World's Religions by Huston Smith, Harper San Francisco; ISBN 0-06-250811-3

Course Description and Objectives

This course provides an introduction to the world's major religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity.

Its objectives are to teach an understanding of each faith, especially in relation to:

- Location and history of the origins of the faith, especially in relation to world history;
- Where each fits on the continuum of philosophy—religion;
- Its basic theological or philosophical concepts; and
- Its social teachings.

Prerequisite: None. Students are encouraged to take this course after they have completed English composition courses because this class will require significant writing.

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Understand the origin and history of the world's major religions;
- Understand the major philosophical or theological concepts of the world's major religions;
- Read and understand current events which reflect contemporary influence and interfaith tensions;
- Demonstrate their ability to conduct e-library research and state their opinions, supporting their opinion with facts.
- Express verbally and in writing their knowledge of relevant information about the world's major religions.

Expectations and Instructional Approach

Assignments will be structured to (1) take the student into the textbook, first reading through the pages assigned without a specific assignment; (2) take the student into the textbook, completing “fill in the blank” assignment guiding the student through important textbook passages; (3) take the student into the material by asking essay questions which will facilitate the student’s assimilating information from different resources, exercising value judgments, suggesting real life applications of philosophical and religious concepts, and discussing social teachings; and (4) provide a Discussion Board through which students and the instructor can exchange ideas, knowledge, and experiences. There will be one research/term paper. The successful student will be expected to enter assignments the week they are due. Assignments entered more than one week late without prior approval by the instructor because of extenuating circumstances risk having half of their earned points forfeited as a penalty for being late. The goal of this policy is to encourage students to enter the course on time, begin assignments and enter them on a timely scale, and to stay current with the class and its Discussion Board conversations.

Grading Policy

Points will be assigned for each assignment. The class grade will be based on the total number of points earned as a percentage of the total number of points possible, and applied to this percentage equivalent of the letter grade: 90-100 = A; 85-89 = B+; 80-84 = B; 75-79 = C+; 70-74 = C; 65-69 = D+; 60-64 = D; Below 60 = F.

Please notice the Incomplete Policy as stated in the PSC Catalog: “a majority of the classwork must be completed in order for the instructor to consider an Incomplete Contract. Extenuating circumstances include serious illness, hardship, death in the immediate family, or military service.”

Academic Work, Research, and Academic Honesty

Every assignment must be completed by the student actually registered for the course.

The term paper will be 6-8 pages (of content) in length, plus the title page and the references pages. It will be written in APA format. The topic must relate to this course, and be approved in advance by the instructor. **The final draft is due on Monday morning following the fifth week of class.**

The student must do his/her own research, compose and write the paper himself/herself, and must not plagiarize or otherwise appropriate from internet or personal sources academic work not one's own.

Academic dishonesty will result in accordance with the college's disciplinary policy and may result in loss of credit for the assignment involved, and other disciplinary consequences.

Students with special needs, such as learning disabilities, are encouraged to make them known to the instructor during the first week of class, and to start the official process of special needs recognition, which begins with contact Ms. Marie Meland in the Academic Resource Center (ARC).

The instructor reserves the right to modify any aspect of the course syllabus or content. Any modifications will be communicated to the students in advance. The tentative course schedule will be printed separately.

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<u>Week</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
1	<p>Hinduism textbook pages 12-81</p> <p>“What people really want. Four paths to the goal. The way to god through knowledge, love, work, psychophysical experiences. The stages of life, the stations of life. The world—welcome and farewell. Many paths to the same summit. Appendix on Sikhism.”</p>
2	<p>Buddhism textbook pages 82-153 <i>Term Paper Topic due this week.</i></p> <p>The four noble truths. The eightfold path. Basic Buddhist concepts. The secret of the flower. The diamond thunderbolt. The image of the crossing. The confluence of Buddhism and Hinduism in India.</p>
3	<p>Confucianism textbook pages 154—195 and Taoism textbook pages 196-221</p> <p>The first teacher. The problem Confucius faced. Rival answers, Confucius’ answer. The content of deliberate tradition. The Confucian project. Ethics or religion? Impact on China. The three meanings of Tao. Three approaches to power and the Taoisms that follow. Efficient power: philosophical Taoism. Augmented power: Taoist Hygiene and Yoga. Vicarious power: Religious Taoism. The mingling of the powers. Creative Quietude. Other Taoist Values.</p>
4	<p>Islam textbook pages 222-271</p> <p>Background. The Seal of the Prophets. The migration that led to victory. The standing miracle. Basic theological concepts. The five pillars. Social teachings. Sufism.</p>
5	<p>Islam textbook, continued. Selected research articles. Islam in the modern world, the Theology of Hate, Islam in the United States</p>
6	<p>Judaism textbook pages 271-317; <i>Last draft of Term Paper due this week.</i></p> <p>Meaning in God, in Creation, in Human Existence, in History, in Morality, in Justice, in Suffering, in Messianism. The hallowing of life. Revelation. The Chosen People. Israel.</p>
7.	<p>Christianity textbook pages 317-364</p> <p>The historical Jesus. The Christ of faith. The end and the beginning. The good news. The mystical body of Christ. The mind of the church. Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism.</p>
8.	<p>Wrapping Up: textbook pages 384-392 Discussion Board sharing of Term Paper summaries with student responses.</p>