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342-01/02 World Religions

George Barnard

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THEOLOGY 342 – WORLD RELIGIONS
FALL, 2014
SYLLABUS

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Course Description
The course will introduce the study of world religions, including both methodological and
substantive elements. The main work of the course will be a survey of major world religions,
both Eastern and Western

Course Objectives
Through their participation in this course, students will be able to:
1. Give an account of several approaches to the study of religion
2. Apply at least one such method of study
3. Give an account of the history, teachings, Scriptures, practices, and institutions of the
   religions studied
4. Identify current issues in several of the religions studied
5. Integrate their knowledge of world religions into their own religious and philosophical
   outlook

Texts
The basic required texts for the course are Mary Pat Fisher, Living Religions (9th edition) and

In the course of our studies, you will be expected to consult and refer to other materials.
Wikipedia by itself is not an acceptable resource, to be cited in a paper. However, you may
certainly use Wikipedia to direct you to other resources.

Requirements and Grading
1. Two short tests on units of the work (10% each)
2. Two short papers during the term (10% each)
3. A longer paper (30%)
4. A final exam (30%)
Brief extensions may be granted, upon request, for the short papers. In the absence of an
extension, late assignments will be subject to a half grade (A to A-, A- to B+, etc.) per day
penalty. There will be no retakes of tests or the final exam, and no extensions granted for the
longer paper, except in cases of a documented emergency, such as serious illness or a death in
one’s immediate family.
Plagiarism and Academic Honesty
Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses which violate the “social contract” of the university and undermine the educational enterprise. The university’s policy on academic honesty will be enforced, and any test or assignment found to include the product of cheating or plagiarism will be given a 0.

Xavier University Student Handbook 2.3.9.1. Academic Honesty
The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include but are not limited to cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, and the falsification of research results and material. All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student’s own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another’s efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one’s own. Penalties for violations of this policy may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an “F” in the course, and expulsion from Xavier. The Academic Dean of the college in which the student is enrolled is to be informed in writing of all acts of academic dishonesty, although the faculty member has authority to assign the grade for the assignment, test, or course. If disputes regarding the applicability or enforcement of this policy arise, the student, faculty member and department chair should attempt to resolve the issue. If this is unsatisfactory, the Academic Dean of the college will rule on the matter. As a final appeal, the Provost will call a committee of tenured faculty for the purpose of making a final determination.

Class policies
1. Regular attendance at class is imperative. Students are responsible for all material presented or assigned, whether or not they are present on a given day.
2. No food or drink may be consumed during class.
3. Electronic devices may not be used during class except for laptops or tablets for note taking.

Course Schedule

| M  | Aug. 25 | Introduction to the study of religion (1) |
| W  | Aug. 27 | Introduction to the study of religion (2) (C&K, Introduction and Chapter 1) |
| F  | Aug. 29 | Introduction to the study of religion (3) (C&K, Chapters 2 and 3) |
| M  | Sep. 1  | Labor Day, no classes |
| W  | Sep. 3  | Introduction to the study of religion (4) (C&K, Chapters 4 and 5, Fisher, Chapter 1) |
| F  | Sep. 5  | Indigenous sacred ways (Fisher, Chapter 2) |
| M  | Sep. 8  | Yoruba religion (Nigeria) (C&K, Chapter 6) |
| W  | Sep. 10 | Navajo religion |
| F  | Sep. 12 | Short paper due: The study of religion and one’s personal theology or philosophy of life. Discussion of papers |
M Sep. 15 Hinduism (1): Vedic religion
W Sep. 17 Hinduism (2): The Upanishads and the evolution of Hinduism (Fisher Chapter 3)
F Sep. 19 Hinduism (3): Hinduism today, practices and beliefs
M Sep. 22 Hinduism (4): Current issues in Hinduism
W Sep. 24 Jainism (Fisher, Chapter 4)
F Sep. 26 (pre-recorded lecture) Buddhism (1): Life of Gautama Buddha and the development of Buddhism
M Sep. 29 Buddhism (2): Buddhist Scriptures (Fisher, Chapter 5)
W Oct. 1 Buddhism (3): The Spread of Buddhism
F Oct. 3 Buddhism (4): Buddhism today, practices and beliefs (C&K, Chapter 7)
M Oct. 6 Buddhism (5): Current issues in Buddhism
W Oct. 8 Sikh religion (Fisher, Chapter 11)
F Oct. 10 Fall holiday, no classes
M Oct. 13 Test on the dharmic religions
W Oct. 15 Daoism
F Oct. 17 (pre-recorded lecture) Confucianism (Fisher, Chapter 6)
M Oct. 20 Shinto (Fisher, Chapter 7)
W Oct. 22 Zoroastrianism
F Oct. 24 Judaism (1): Ancient Israelite religion (C&K, Chapter 8)
M Oct. 27 Judaism (2): Rabbinic Judaism (Fisher, Chapter 8)
W Oct. 29 Judaism (3): Medieval and early modern Judaism
F Oct. 31 Judaism (4): Judaism today, practices and beliefs
M Nov. 3 Judaism (5): Current issues in Judaism (C&K, Chapter 9)
W Nov. 5 Christianity (1): Jewish origins and the emergence of Christianity
F Nov. 7 Christianity (2): The development of the Catholic Church (Fisher, Chapter 9)
M Nov. 10 Christianity (3): The fragmentation of Christianity
W Nov. 12 Christianity (4): Christianity today, practices and beliefs
F Nov. 14 Christianity (5): Current issues in Christianity
M Nov. 17 Islam (1): The beginnings of Islam
W Nov. 19 Islam (2): Qur’an, Hadith, and Sha’aria (Fisher, Chapter 10)
F Nov. 21 Islam (3): Islam today, practices and beliefs
M Nov. 24 Short paper due: Visit to a religious institution. Discussion of papers
W Nov. 26 Thanksgiving holiday, no classes
F Nov. 28 Thanksgiving holiday, no classes
M Dec. 1 Islam (4): Current issues in Islam
W Dec. 3 Baha’i faith (Fisher, Chapter 12)
F Dec. 5 Test on the Abrahamic religions
M Dec. 8 New religious movements
W Dec. 10 Religion in the 21st century (Fisher, Chapter 13)
F Dec. 12 Missed topics or review, Long paper due
M Dec. 15 Study day
W Dec. 17 Exam: Section 2
F Dec. 19 Exam: Section 1
Notes on the schedule:

1. The schedule of topics is subject to variation as the course proceeds. Changes in the scheduling of topics will be posted on Canvas.

2. Where possible, adherents of various religions will be invited to speak on the present reality of their religions. Student questions, always welcome, will be especially important during those classes.

3. The class will consider together alternative formats for the unit on Christianity, in order to avoid the anomaly of an instructor who is not a Christian lecturing on Christianity to students in the Department of Theology of a Catholic University.

4. The report on a visit to a religious institution is due before the class covers the Baha’I faith. Students who wish to visit the Baha’I Temple are advised to familiarize themselves somewhat with that religion before making their visits.