

JINAN UNIVERSITY

Introduction to Religions

Lecturer: Irene A Wolf

Time: Monday through Friday (June 18, 2018-July 20, 2018)

Teaching hour: 50

Office hours: 2 hours (according to the teaching schedule)

Total Contact Hour: 60 (50 minutes each)

Credit: 4

Location: Huiquan Building

Office: Huiquan Building 518

E-mail: iaw1@psu.edu

Aims and Objectives

This subject aims at providing students with a fundamental understanding of diverse types of religions and religious practices in today's world. At the same time, the course will examine the complex nature of religious phenomena, including religious knowledge and competing truth claims.

Course Objectives

Religion is one of the most widespread and deeply entrenched aspects of human experience. It is also a phenomenon that has proven remarkably resistant to systematic explanation. This course is an introduction to an array of influential approaches to explaining religion and its core aspects – e.g. ritual, religious institutions and belief in the supernatural. Through this course, students will gain a deeper understanding for the diversity and complexity of religion/s as well as a basic understanding of the study of religion. By the end of the course students will possess:

1. Familiarity with the philosophy and doctrines common in many world religions, including the Roman Catholic Church, Judaism and Islam.
2. A greater understanding of the traditions and history of the Roman Catholic

Church.

3. A greater understanding of the traditions and history of Judaism and Islam.
4. An in-depth understanding of the most influential people in the largest and oldest religions, including Jesus and the 12 Apostles (Catholicism), Moses, Abraham (Judaism) and Muhammad (Islam).
5. An understanding of other religions and religious practices in today's world.

Required Textbook

Invitation to World Religions – Authors: Jeffrey Brodd, Layne Little, Bradley Nystrom, Robert Platzner, Richard Shek and Erin Stiles – Oxford University Press

Additional readings and resources will be distributed in class.

Assessment

Your overall course grade will be assigned on the basis of the following components (percentage of overall grade in parenthesis):

- First exam (20%)
- Second exam (20%)
- Final exam (20%).
- Cooperative learning projects (20%)
- Group presentation (20%)

Grading Scale

The instructor will use the grading system as applied by JNU:

Definition	Letter Grade	Score
Excellent	A	90-100
Good	B	80-89
Satisfactory	C	70-79
Poor	D	60-69
Failed	E	Below 60

Course Policies

1. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class.
2. Students are expected to read the required readings prior to the class session in which they are discussed.
3. Class Conduct: Consistent, respectful and informed participation is expected from every student in the course. This includes:
 - Respectful discussion that avoids personal history;
 - No email or Internet usage during class;
 - Cell phones turned off when class begins.
4. I will respond to emails in a timely manner. It is best to make an appointment or speak to me after lecture.
5. It is your responsibility to keep me updated with attendance, email, etc.
6. Please check your email regularly for instructions and readings.

Class Schedule

Week 1:

Mon. Course Overview

Tues. The largest religions of the World: Chap. 1

Wed. Christianity: Chap. 12

Thurs. Christianity continues: Chap. 12.

Fri. First Exam

Week 2:

Mon. Judaism: Chap. 11

Tues. Judaism continues: Chap. 11

Wed. Islam: Chap. 13

Thurs. Islam continues: Chap. 13

Fri. Buddhism: Chap. 5

Week 3:

Mon. Sikhism Chap. 7

Tues. Group presentation work

Wed. Chinese Religions: Chap. 8

Thurs. Shinto: Chap. 9

Fri. Zoroastrianism: Chap. 10

Week 4:

Mon. Second exam

Tues. Hinduism: Chap. 4

Wed. Indigenous Religions of North America: Chap. 2

Thurs. Indigenous Religions of Africa: Chap. 3

Fri. Group work

Week 5:

Mon. New Religious Movements

Tue. The Catholic Church and Pope Francis in today's world

Wed. Group presentations

Thurs. Final Exam

Friday: TBA

NOTICE: To provide students with an interesting and enjoyable educational experience, this syllabus may be changed at the discretion of the instructor at any time with notification.

Academic Honesty

Jinan University defines academic misconduct as any act by a student that misrepresents the students' own academic work or that compromises the academic work of another scholastic misconduct includes (but is not limited to) cheating on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing, i.e. misrepresenting as one's own work any work done by another; submitting the same paper, or substantially similar papers, to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval and consent of the instructors concerned; sabotaging another's work within these general definitions, however, Instructors determine what constitutes academic misconduct in the courses

they teach. Students found guilty of academic misconduct in any portion of the academic work face penalties ranging from lowering of their course grade to awarding a grade of E for the entire course.