



## COURSE OUTLINE

**Course Number:** REL-102      **Course Title:** Living World Religions      **Credits:** 3  
**Course Length:** 15 Weeks      **Co- or Pre-requisite:** None      **Implementation sem/year:** Spring 2010

**Catalogue description:** A comparative study of the world's major religions, through a critical study of the essential teachings and practices in historical and cultural context of religions such as Hinduism, Buddhist, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Daoism, Confucianism among others, including pre- and post-colonial African and American traditions.

**Is course New, Revised, or Modified? [Modified courses are those which have a new prefix or course number]:** Revised

**Required texts/other materials:**      The World's Religions: Worldviews and Contemporary Issues, William A. Young, 3rd edition, Prentice Hall, 2010, ISBN:9780205675111

**Recommended texts/other materials:** The World's Religions, Huston Smith, 2009, HarperOne, ISBN: 9780061660184  
The Case for God, Karen Armstrong, 2009, Knopf, ISBN: 9780307397430  
Studying Religion, Gary Kessler, 3rd edition, McGraw Hill, 2008, ISBN:9780073386591

**Optional materials:**      Copies of additional materials not contained in digital or handout libraries to be supplied by/to the philosophy coordinator prior to the beginning of any term of instruction.  
*Must include at least five primary source reading passages made available to students via handouts or digitally, with at least two of these three readings coming from the works of Vedas, Mahabharata, Dhammapada, Buddhist Nikayas, Torah, Bible, Koran, Daodejing, The Analects, Agamas, Book of Mormon, etc.; or perhaps one of from a 'commentary/supplementary-type' or more contemporary work, such as the Zohar or Hadith, works from Augustine, Aquinas, Tillich, Whitehead, etc.*  
Other materials per the section instructor.

**Information Resources:** Fisher, Mary Pat. Living Religions.  
Fisher, Mary Pat and Lee W. Bailey (eds.) An Anthology of Living Religions  
Bronislaw Malinowski, Magic, Science, and Religion  
Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion  
Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy  
Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life  
Sigmund Freud, The Future of an Illusion  
William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience  
Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures  
Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane

Robert Bellah, Beyond Belief  
John F. Haught, What is Religion?

**Revision date:** 7/29/09      **Course Coordinator:** Ken Howarth, 570-3809, howarthk@mccc.edu

**Additional resources:** The College library's text and NetLibrary and ebrary electronic resources, accessible through [http://www.mccc.edu/student\\_library.shtml](http://www.mccc.edu/student_library.shtml), as well as the Library Resource page (under development) provide a wide range of philosophical reference and topic specific texts. The Philosophy Repository on the College online course platform, Angel, contains specific auxiliary readings accessible for all sections that utilize Angel as at least a 'shell' resource for even classroom-based sections. A library of targeted readings handouts is also available in the Coordinator's office.

**Learning Center Resources:** There are no tutors or study groups through the Learning Center for philosophy topics, though there are tutors for writing. Professor Howarth is available to meet with students for tutoring to augment students meeting with their class professors.

**Course Competencies/Goals [to be listed on each course syllabi]:**

If the student does the work assigned for this course, s/he will be able to:

1. Define, summarize, and analyze the major similarities and differences between various major religious worldviews and practices;
2. Use critical thinking methods appropriate to the interpretation and appraisal of religious ideas to analyze and evaluate the ways in which various religions approach life and its problems;
3. Examine the relationships between religion and other aspects of human culture such as science, philosophy, art, and politics;
4. Critically describe, explain, interpret, and compare the differing religiosities of individuals and groups as expressed traditionally, formally, textually and in actual practice, including factoring the issues of respect and rights
5. State and support their own views on religious issues, both orally and in writing, and with logical and critical precision, clarity, and rigor.

Each goal or outcome relates to "religious studies literacy" with respect to content knowledge and to the "discipline-specific methodologies" of the study of religion with respect to relevant content material. Other learning goals may be specified in particular sections by the instructor with the course coordinator's approval in addition to but not as a replacement for the above listed goals.

**Course-specific General Education Knowledge Goals and Core Skills.**

**General Education Knowledge Goals for this course:**

Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

Goal 5. Social Science. Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.

Goal. 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

Goal 7. History. Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.

Goal 8. Diversity. Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

MCCC Core Skills for this course:

Goal A. Written and Oral Communication in English. Students will communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.

Goal B. Critical Thinking and Problem-solving. Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.

Goal C. Ethical Decision-Making. Students will recognize, analyze and assess ethical issues and situations.

Goal D. Information Literacy. Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

Goal F. Collaboration and Cooperation. Students will develop the interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.

Goal G. Intra-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Responsibility. Students will demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.

**Units of study**

Unit 1 – Studying Religion and Religions

Unit 2 – A World of Religions

Unit 3 – Religion and Ethics in the World

The general plan for this course is broadly the study of religion in its various manifestations across the spectrum of myriad religions. This REL102 course is our “comparative religion” offering; REL-101 focuses on the study of religion more than the study of religions, even while through the examination of cases, religions do wind up being the means of studying religion. As such, the structure of this course generally reflects its attentive survey nature. The first unit serves as a primer of religious studies approaches, dealing with definitions, stances, etc.; while Unit 2 is outsized, by design to minimize (though probably not avoid, viz. assessing) the often overused and arbitrary groupings of religions (western, polytheistic, etc.), wherein students are introduced to and explore major religious traditions in detail. In Unit 3, some ethical issues are framed in religious ethics terms, but due care is needed here to not conflate religion and ethics, or let the idea of a necessary relationship between the two go unexamined. The interplay between religion and the wider world of understanding the fundamental human issues of the self and others is studied, including inter-religious issues.

Units of Study in Detail

Unit One: Studying Religion and Religions

Learning Objectives - The student will be able to...

- Identify reasons for studying religion and different religions  
(Course Competencies 1, 2; General Education Goals 1, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A,B,G.)
- Distinguish between the major areas of religious studies and their central concerns, including the role of

reason, evidence and judgments

(Course Competencies 1, 2; General Education Goals 1, 6, 7, 9; Core Skills A,B,C,G.)

- Explain key religious concepts, elements, practices and traditions from both internal and external perspectives (Course Competencies 1, 2; General Education Goals 1, 6, 7, 9; Core Skills A,B,C,G.)
- Critically distinguish different definitions, histories and roles of major world religions (Course Competencies 1, 2, 3; General Education Goals 6,9; Core Skills A,B,C,G.)

## Unit 2: A World of Religions

Learning Objectives - The student will be able to...

- Identify common features of the major religions such as: Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, and indigenous and emerging traditions, (Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A, B, E, F, G)
- Critically distinguish between and relate different religious traditions' practices and beliefs regarding common religious features and functions, including applying categories & methods from sociological, anthropological, psychological and other fields (Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A, B, C, D, E, F, G)
- Analytically compare different major religious traditions' internal and external narratives, commitments and histories, employing studied examples and case study techniques (Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A, B, C, D, E, F, G)

## Unit 3: Religion and Ethics in the World

Learning Objectives - The student will be able to...

- Identify & critically distinguish different and shared features of major religious traditions accounts of good and evil, suffering and success, and the human condition and ways of living (Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A, B, C, D, E, F, G)
- Critically distinguish between different religious traditions' grounds and practices regarding individual ethical beliefs and actions, applying examples, case studies, and categories & methods from philosophical and scientific fields (Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A, B, C, D, E, F, G)
- Critically compare and contrast different religious traditions' grounds and practices regarding family, community and societal political, economic and other cultural contexts, organizational authorities, structures and actions, applying examples, case studies, and categories & methods from philosophical and scientific fields (Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A,B, C, D, E, F, G)
- Identify & critically distinguish different and shared features of emerging religious traditions accounts of good and evil, suffering and success, and the human condition and ways of living (Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; General Education Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8; Core Skills A, B, C, D, E, F, G)

### **Evaluation of student learning:**

Citizenship: Course-long assessment of how students demonstrate philosophical literacy and practice through their contributions to the class learning environment, that may include such factors as attendance, the amount and manner of class participation, helpfulness to other students' understanding, oral presentations (may be broken out as a separate grading category), etc.

- Homework: 6 or more short assignments aimed at having the student demonstrate that they did the assigned reading assignment and can address the issues covered in their own words.
- Quizzes: 2 or more brief assessments to allow students to demonstrate philosophical literacy in a specific unit of instruction
- Tests: 1 or more class-length assessments to allow students to demonstrate philosophical literacy in covered units of instruction
- Examinations: 1 or more class-length assessments to allow students to demonstrate philosophical practices (and literacy) as applied to units of instruction; includes one comprehensive in class final exam during the exam period after classes end.
- Essays: 1 or more assessments to allow students to demonstrate philosophical literacy and practices as applied to units of instruction. Well-argued papers are the first goal here, as a demonstration of philosophical reasoning, though assigning and assessing, in part a research dimension to the assignment is fitting, especially for 200-level courses.

Course Grade Breakdown:

Citizenship	10-15% (not more than this) (includes 'participation')
Homework	10-15% (key to encouraging regular preparation)
Quizzes	5-10%(key to encouraging regular preparation)
Tests/Exams	30-50% (no one test/exam worth more than 20%) (Within our PHI/REL circle, I'd like to differentiate tests from exams, with tests being assessments of content knowledge/discipline literacy, and exams being assessments of discipline practice & methodology, e.g. critically relating reasons to sustaining evinced arguments, etc.
<u>Essays</u>	<u>30-50%</u> (no one paper worth more than 25%)
Course =	100%

The particular grading breakdown is to be determined by each instructor and listed clearly in her/his syllabus.

**Academic Integrity Statement:** [As found @ <http://mlink.mccc.edu/omb/OMB210.pdf>]

MCCC

OMB 210

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Mercer County Community College is committed to Academic Integrity -- the honest, fair and continuing pursuit of knowledge, free from fraud or deception. This implies that students are expected to be responsible for their own work, and that faculty and academic support services staff members will take reasonable precautions to prevent the opportunity for academic dishonesty.

The college recognizes the following general categories of violations of Academic Integrity, with representative examples of each. Academic Integrity is violated whenever a student:

**A. Uses or obtains unauthorized assistance in any academic work.**

- copying from another student's exam.
- using notes, books, electronic devices or other aids of any kind during an exam when prohibited.
- stealing an exam or possessing a stolen copy of an exam.

**B. Gives fraudulent assistance to another student.**

- completing a graded academic activity or taking an exam for someone else.
- giving answers to or sharing answers with another student before, during or after an exam or other graded academic activity.
- sharing answers during an exam by using a system of signals.

**C. Knowingly represents the work of others as his/her own, or represents previously completed academic work as current.**

- submitting a paper or other academic work for credit which includes words, ideas, data or creative work of others without acknowledging the source.
- using another author's words without enclosing them in quotation marks, without paraphrasing them or without citing the source appropriately.
- presenting another individual's work as one's own.
- submitting the same paper or academic assignment to another class without the permission of the instructor.
- falsifying bibliographic entries.
- submitting any academic assignment which contains falsified or fabricated data or results.

**D. Inappropriately or unethically uses technological means to gain academic advantage.**

- inappropriately or unethically acquiring material via the Internet or by any other means.
  - using any electronic or hidden devices for communication during an exam.
- Each instructor and academic support service area is authorized to establish specific guidelines consistent with this policy.

**Consequences for Violations of Academic Integrity**

For a single violation, the faculty member will determine the course of action to be followed. This may include assigning a lower grade on the assignment, assigning a lower final course grade, failing the student in the course, or other penalty appropriate to the violation. In all cases, the instructor shall notify the Chair of the Academic Integrity Committee of the violation and the penalty imposed.

When two (or more) violations of academic integrity are reported on a student, the Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) may impose disciplinary penalties beyond those imposed by the course instructors. The student shall have the right to a hearing before the AIC or a designated AIC subcommittee.

**Appeals**

The student has a right to appeal the decision of the instructor or the Academic Integrity Committee. Judicial procedures governing violations of Academic Integrity are contained in the Student Handbook.

Approved: Board of Trustees May 19, 1983

Revised: May 18, 2000, March 18, 2004

**Students with Disabilities:**

Any student in this class who has special needs because of a disability is entitled to receive accommodations. Eligible students at Mercer County Community College are assured services under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you believe you are eligible for services, please contact Arlene Stinson, the Director of Academic Support Services at LB221, (609) 570-3525, [stinsona@mccc.edu](mailto:stinsona@mccc.edu).

*Also please note in a way you choose to my role as the philosophy coordinator and my office number (LA-119) as a backup to seeing you outside of class in the first place, which is plainly preferable (since I am around campus more than you are and we don't have a specific to philosophy tutoring resources). Please also include the philosophy home page for Mercer: <http://www.mccc.edu/~howarthk/MainPage.htm>, the location of the Philosophy Bulletin Board between rooms LA-124 and LA-125 on the first floor of the Liberal Arts Building, and that The Philosophy S.P.A. Club has forum, movie and meeting announcements posted, and that there are club officer positions open for those who want to pad their transfer applications.*