


<p style="text-align: center;"><b>REL 117</b>  <b><i>Intro. to World Religions</i></b>  <b>Spring Term 2009</b>  <b>TR 10-11:30 a.m.</b>  <b>Draper 310</b></p>		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dr. Jeffrey L. Richey</b>  <b>Berea College</b>  <b>x 3186</b>  <a href="mailto:richeyj@berea.edu">richeyj@berea.edu</a>  <b>Draper 204-C</b></p>
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## ***COURSE DESCRIPTION***

*Were one asked to characterize the life of religion in the broadest and most general terms possible, one might say that it consists of the belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto.*

-- William James (1842-1910)

Religious traditions are a lot like languages: we can learn them from birth, we can acquire them as teenagers or adults, or we can spend our lives in ignorance and isolation, only able to understand one – which means that we will understand none. By introducing you to representative writings from the world's religious traditions, this course invites you to explore multiple, distinct and influential ways in which human beings have conceptualized “unseen order” and developed practices for living in harmony with it.

Prerequisite: GSTR 110

Fulfills: International (Non-Western) and Religion Perspectives

## ***COURSE MATERIALS***

**It is your responsibility to have copies of assigned materials with you in class.**

1. James Fieser and John Powers, eds., *Scriptures of the World's Religions*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008) [*SWR*]
2. Online resources and handouts from instructor (specified in course calendar)

## ***COURSE REQUIREMENTS***

1. **Prepared participation in all class sessions.** The instructor reserves the right to reduce the final grade of any student who misses class. Excuses for absences should be sought in advance, but may not necessarily be granted.

2. **Submission of 11 reading responses** (= 25% of final grade). By 8 a.m. on each Thursday indicated in the course calendar (pp. 2-4), email comments and questions (not summaries) related to that week's material to the instructor. Responses should consist of no fewer than 250 words of error-free English prose. Responses will be graded pass/fail and cannot be made up.
3. **Completion of 3 examinations** (each = 25% of final grade). These examinations are written in format and will be given in class on 3/5, 4/9, and 5/20, as indicated in the course calendar. Examinations will be letter-graded.

Any student who has a disability that may prevent him/her from fully demonstrating his/her abilities should contact Carol Barnett, PhD, LCSW, the Disability Services Coordinator at (859) 985-3212 to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure his/her full participation in this course.

## ***COURSE CALENDAR***

### **I. COSMOLOGY**

T 2/10

Introductory session – no preparation required

R 2/12

*READING RESPONSE #1 DUE BY 8 A.M.!*

Read:

- Excerpts from the *Enuma Elish* ([http://faculty.berea.edu/richeyj/enuma\\_elish.html](http://faculty.berea.edu/richeyj/enuma_elish.html))

T 2/17

Read:

- Genesis 1:1-2:3 (<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=genesis%201:1-2:3;&version=31> or any New International Version translation)

R 2/19

*READING RESPONSE #2 DUE BY 8 A.M.!*

Read:

- *Rig Veda* 10:90 (*SWR* 11-12)

T 2/24

Read:

- *Nihongi* 1 (*SWR* 225-226)

R 2/26

*READING RESPONSE #3 DUE BY 8 A.M.!*

Read:

- *Yasna* 30:3-10 (*SWR* 248-249)

T 3/3

Video (in class):

- *When Faith Meets Physics* (Hutchins Library reserve Video 215.3 R382)

**R 3/5**

**EXAMINATION #1 (in class)**

## **II. ANTHROPOLOGY**

T 3/10

Read:

- Excerpt from *Viveka-cūdāmani* (SWR 26-28)

R 3/12

**READING RESPONSE #4 DUE BY 8 A.M.!**

Read:

- *Milinda-pañha* 2:25-28 (SWR 102-103)

T 3/17

Read:

- Excerpts from *Mèngzǐ* and *Xúnzǐ* (SWR 172-174)

R 3/19

**READING RESPONSE #5 DUE BY 8 A.M.!**

Read:

- Excerpts from *Zhuāngzǐ* (SWR 204-205, 208)

T 3/24

Read:

- *Bundahishn* 30 (SWR 261-263)

R 3/26

**READING RESPONSE #6 DUE BY 8 A.M.!**

Read:

- 1 Corinthians 15:12-28, 35-37 (SWR 370-372)

**3/28-4/5: SPRING VACATION – NO CLASS SESSIONS**

T 4/7

Read:

- *Qur'an* 22:5-10, 23:12-22 (SWR 431-432)

**R 4/9**

**EXAMINATION #2 (in class)**

## **III. ETHICS**

T 4/14

Read:

- Excerpt from *Bhagavad-Gita* (SWR 43-46)

R 4/16

*READING RESPONSE #7 DUE BY 8 A.M.!*

Read:

- Matthew 5-7 (SWR 349-354)

**T 4/21**

**NO CLASS SESSION – LABOR DAY**

R 4/23

*READING RESPONSE #8 DUE BY 8 A.M.!*

Read:

- Excerpts from *Śikṣāmuccaya* and Śantideva, *Bodhicaryāvatra* (SWR 108-109, 116)

T 4/28

Read:

- Excerpts from *Qur'an* and *hadith* (SWR 443-444, 451-452)

**R 4/30**

*READING RESPONSE #9 DUE BY 8 A.M.!*

**NO CLASS SESSION**

**Attend Convocation: “Darfur and Beyond: What You Can Do To Stop Genocide”**

**Mr. Mark Hanis (Founder and Executive Director, Genocide Intervention Network)**

**Phelps-Stokes Chapel, 3 p.m.**

T 5/5

Read:

- “The First Contacts of Crusaders and Turks” (provided by instructor)

R 5/7

*READING RESPONSE #10 DUE BY 8 A.M.!*

Read:

- Excerpts from *Westminster Confession* (SWR 400-402)

T 5/12

Read:

- Excerpts from Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Is Come* (SWR 507-509)

R 5/14

*READING RESPONSE #11 DUE BY 8 A.M.!*

Read:

- Mohandas K. Gandhi, “Remarks on Religion” (<http://www.mkgandhi.org/religionmk.htm>)

**W 5/20 (10-11:50 A.M.)**

**EXAMINATION #3**

<p><i>All students will be asked to complete Instructor Evaluation Questionnaires (IEQs) electronically at the end of the term. You are expected to participate in this process.</i></p>
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