

**Request for Renewal of
Religion 150: Introduction to the World's Major Religions
as an FG course**

**Leeward Community College
Spring 2007**

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RELIGION 150: INTRODUCTION TO THE WORLD'S MAJOR RELIGIONS (3)

AA/FGC

3 hours of lecture per week.

Course Description

A survey of the origins, teachings, practices, and present-day situation of the world's great religions through lectures, slides, videotapes, discussion, and field trips. Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity, Islam. (FG) Prerequisite: ENG 22 with a grade of C or better or equivalent.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of REL 150, the student will have had the opportunity to:

[Study of Religion]

- identify reasons for the academic study of religion.
- distinguish different approaches, definitions and components of religion.
- develop an understanding and sense of appreciation for humanity's traditional and contemporary religious paths, their diversity and commonalty.

[Religious Traditions]

- describe the basic beliefs and practices of the world's major religions.
- understand the historical context for and development of the world's major religions.
- identify the major forms and expressions in each religious tradition.

[Religious Critique]

- Evaluate critically and objectively each tradition in terms of present day realities.

Changes

No significant changes have been made in Religion 150 since the original request for foundations designation was approved.

Assessment

Samples of course materials that illustrate how the course meets the Foundations Hallmarks.

Hallmark 1. Provide students with a large-scale analysis of human development and change over time from prehistory to the present.

As it is stated in the course description, REL 150 surveys the world's major religions in its origins and present day situations. REL 150 covers the people, events, and ideas that have most impacted the development and changes in the world's major religions from prehistory to contemporary times. Samples lessons include:

Class Lecture Topics:

Definitions of Religion:

- Popular and scholarly definitions of religion
- The etymological root of religion

Religion in Antiquity:

- Functions of religion in antiquity
- Religion and the human experience
- Do religions share a common origin?
- Religion as a reflection of the context from which it emerged

Religion in Contemporary Times:

- The appeal of religion
- Religion, politics, and culture
- Is religion more powerful than ever?
- The role of religion in contemporary society
- Religion and violence

Study/Exam Questions:

- What are some of the more influential definitions of religion?
- What insights can be drawn from the etymological root of religion?
- How does the function of religion in the past compare with role religion plays today?
- What are some of the fundamental human experiences that religions address?
- How is religion a reflection of the context from which it emerged?
- Are people more religious today?
- In what ways does religion impact the politics and culture of today??
- Is religion necessary?
- Why do we still have religion?
- Is violence a fundamental component of religion?

Multimedia:

• *Joseph Campbell and the power of myth*: A discussion of the themes and roots of human *myth* which is seen as humanity's attempt to relate to the universe. Starting with various topics Campbell shows both how humans creates their universe and is controlled by the *myth* they have created.

Hallmark 2: Analyze the development of human societies and their cultural traditions through time in different regions (including Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania) from multiple perspectives.

The development of human societies and their cultural traditions through time are explored in the analysis of the major religious traditions in different parts of the world. World religions are examined from anthropological, historical, sociological, and literary perspectives, among others. Sample lessons include:

Class Lecture Topics:

Literary perspective

- Development of scripture and canonical traditions
- Open canon versus closed canon
- Scripture in context; scripture out of context

Historical perspective

- Church councils
- Development of Sunni and Shia traditions
- Rise of Neo-Confucianism

Sociological perspective

- Marriage and divorce
- Holidays and holy days
- Influence of caste system

Anthropological perspective

- Jewish concept of the human body
- Concepts of the human body in Buddhist traditions
- Japanese notions of purity

Study/Exam Questions:

- In what ways do the Hebrew Bible and Old Testament differ?
- What are some of the functions the Quran serves in contemporary Islam?
- What were the issues discussed at the Council of Nicaea?
- What impacted the development of Neo-Confucianism?
- How can marriage be viewed as a product of and impetus for the acquisition of social status?
- How is Holi celebrated in contemporary India?
- How is Japanese food an expression of Shinto notions of purity?
- What fundamental beliefs inform death rituals

Multimedia:

- *Living Your Dying*: Explores the personal journey of the Rev. Dr. Mitsuo Aoki, theologian, minister, college professor, and founder of the University of Hawaii Dept. of Religion, showing others how to experience death as an inseparable part of life. Includes stories of four individuals coping with terminal illness.

Hallmark 3. Offer a broad, integrated analysis of cultural, economic, political, scientific, and/or social development that recognizes the diversity of human societies and their cultural traditions.

The study of religion stands at the crossroads of cultural, economic, political, scientific and social development and all these issues and more come into play in seeking an understanding of religion. Religion is a vibrant expression of the unity and diversity that shape the human condition. Samples lessons include:

Class Lecture Topics:

Crossroads

- Factors that facilitate religious transformation from cult to state religion
- The impact of social status on religious practice
- Religion and consumerism

Diversity

- Describe the political issues surrounding the break between the Catholic and Orthodox churches
- Different strokes for different folks: diversity in cultural interpretations of the Buddha
- Conservative and Liberal expressions of religion

Unity

- Religion and nationalism
- Chinese cultural influences in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam
- Religion as community

Study/Exam Questions:

- How can economic factors impact the pursuit of jnana yoga?
- What were the political, economic, cultural, and social changes Constantine brought upon Christianity?
- Blessed are the rich? Blessed are the poor? How do religions justify each position?
- Describe the political issues surrounding the break between the Catholic and Orthodox churches
- How did the Enlightenment influence the development of Christianity?
- What accounts for the different images of the Buddha in Sri Lanka, India, China, and Japan?
- In what ways was Shinto redefined to support Japan's military agenda?
- How is the feminine principle expressed in Daoism?

Multimedia:

- *Great Religions of the World*: Exams the origins and modern influences of religious belief systems.

Hallmark 4. Examine processes of cross-cultural interaction and exchange that have linked the world's peoples through time while recognizing diversity.

Religion and the study of religion has consistently been a vehicle for cross-cultural interaction and exchange linking the world's peoples through time while recognizing diversity. The rich and varied forms of every world religion is proof of this. REL 150 offers students an ideal means through which to examine the processes of interaction and exchange. Samples lessons include:

Class Lecture Topics:

Interaction

- The religions of India
- The religions of China
- Protestant Reformation; Catholic Reformation

Exchange

- Folk religion and organized religion
- Americanization of Christianity; Christianization of America
- Buddhism and Shinto in Japan: A Dialogue

Processes

- Globalization and local religion
- “High” religion and “Low” religion
- Fundamentalism and modernity

Study /Exam Questions:

- Islam enters India in 711. Compare and contrast Islam and Hinduism
- In what ways can Sikhism be viewed as the result of Hindu-Muslim interaction?
- How have Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism influenced one another?
- Describe Japanese expressions of Chinese Buddhist thought
- Describe the relationship between religious fundamentalism and modernity
- What is globalization? How is
- Is there a distinction between religion and culture? How does one impact the other?
- What are some of the factors that shape American Christianity?

Multimedia:

- *With God on Our Side*: The complex ways in which religion and politics mingle in American life

Hallmark 5. Include at least one component on Hawaiian, Pacific, or Asian societies and their cultural traditions.

REL 150 includes multiple components that study the religious and cultural traditions found in the Asia and Pacific region. Religions in Asia and Hawaii are discussed to provide students with a stronger understanding of the dynamics involved between religion, culture, and change. Sample lessons include:

Class Lecture Topics:

Asia

- Indigenous traditions
- Buddhism in Asia
- Japanese religions
- Chinese religions

Hawaii

- Indigenous traditions
- Buddhism in Hawaii
- Christianity in Hawaii

Study/Exam Questions:

- Describe the interplay between folk religion and organized religion in China and Japan
- Explain some of the major themes in Hawaiian religion
- What are the major gods in Hawaiian religion? How are they venerated in contemporary society?
- Discuss the impact of Christianity on religious traditions in Hawaii
- What are some of the religious trends in contemporary society in Hawaii?
- Delineate some of the similarities and differences between Japanese and Chinese Buddhism. What accounts for these?
- How can Shinto be understood as a reaction to Buddhism?
- Describe the different views regarding the nature of humanity in Confucianism and Daoism

Multimedia:

- *Hawaiian: A Reflecting Spirit*: An exploration of some of the concepts and beliefs that form native Hawaiian cultural values and the challenges, both historical and contemporary, that these values face.

Hallmark 6. Engage students in the study and analysis of writings, narratives, texts, artifacts, and/or practices that represent the perspectives of different societies and cultural traditions.

Examining primary sources is an integral component to understanding the world's major religions. Students in REL 150 gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of different societies and cultural traditions through the study of scripture, myth, and ritual. Sample lessons include:

Class Lecture Topics:

The Word

- The Hebrew Bible and the Talmud
- Old Testament and New Testament
- Quran

The Wheel

- Shruti (Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads) & Smriti (Epics, Sutras, Puranas) scriptural traditions
- Sutras, Vinaya, Abidharma
- Guru Granth Sahib

The Way

- 5 Classics and 4 Books in Confucianism
- Daodejing and Daozang in Daoism
- Kojiki and Nihongi in Shinto

Study/Exam Questions:

- Delineate the three parts of the Hebrew Bible (Tanak[h])
- In what ways can the Talmud be understood as a commentary on the Hebrew Bible?
- How does the Old Testament differ from the Tanak(h)?
- Discuss the canonization process that produced the New Testament
- Describe the form, function, content, and context of the Quran
- What major themes inform the Shruti and Smriti scriptural traditions?
- Delineate the components that define the Tripitaka
- What role did the Guru Granth Sahib have in the development of Sikhism?
- Describe the 5 Classics and the 4 Books and tell of their significance in creating or maintaining a harmonious society
- How do the writings of religious Daoism differ from those in philosophical Daoism?
- How have the Kojiki and Nihongi been manipulated to provide legitimacy to ruling powers?

Multimedia:

- *Decoding the past. Secrets of the Koran:* A look at the origin of the Koran and the spread of Islam and its influence on world history and world civilization.

Sample Writing Assignment:

Religion 150: Religious Group Profile

Construct a religious group profile based on a particular church, temple, mosque, synagogue, or shrine on Oahu. High marks will be given to profiles that combine primary and scholarly sources with personal interviews and student's own observations at a religious group service to produce an insightful and analytical account of religion in Hawaii. A typed hard copy of the profile is due by the end of class on last day of instruction. Late work will be marked down 50%. Profile should utilize the following format:

Name of Religious Group: What is the name of the religious group and how did it come up with the name? Any significance to the name of the church, temple, mosque, synagogue, or shrine?

Religious affiliation: What religion is the group affiliated with or what sect did it emerge from? Delineate some of the main themes of the religion.

(Addresses Hallmark 3)

Organizational structure: How is the group organized in Hawaii i.e. who are its leaders and what positions do they hold? Does the structure resemble those of secular organizations?

(Addresses Hallmark 4)

Membership: How many members does the group claim to have in Hawaii? How many members did you observe at its services? What is the membership makeup (age, gender, ethnicity) and what accounts for this?

(Addresses Hallmarks 1 and 2)

History: When and why was the group formed and under what circumstances? What were its original objectives and are they being met in Hawaii? Has the change in context facilitated a change in content?

(Addresses Hallmark 3)

Social activities: What part does the group play in the community (is it involved in helping the homeless, park beautification projects, etc.)? In what way(s) does it see itself contributing to society? What adjustments has the group made to accommodate the local lifestyle?

(Addressed Hallmark 4)

Distinctive teachings: What distinctive teachings characterize the religious group? How do the group's main beliefs and practices differ from those of other religious groups?

(Addresses Hallmark 3)

Finances: How is the group financed? Is it self-supporting (are members required to make specific donations on a regular basis) or does it receive financial help elsewhere (from its business or denominational affiliations)?

(Addresses Hallmark 4)

Proselytization strategy: How does the group attract and keep its members? Does it engage in door to door campaigns, media advertisements, publications, etc.? Is the strategy effective? Why would a person join this group and not any other?

(Addresses Hallmark 5)

Conclusion: Overall assessment of strengths and weaknesses of religious group in its effort to practice and preach its religion in Hawaii. In your view, what are three major factors that determine or will determine the group's success or struggle? Be sure you have lots of evidence in above sections to support your assessment.

(Addresses Hallmark 6)

Bibliography: At least three sources must be used, including: 1) textbook or other scholarly source, 2) group's own writings,, 3) personal interview. Sources must be cited in paper to receive credit.

Grading:

"A": Profiles that emphasize scholarly analysis and utilize issues discussed in class in addition to requirements stated below.

"B": In addition to requirements stated below, "B" profiles apply the three sources to support ideas.

"C": Profiles that address each of the above sections and utilize the required three sources to state basic facts about the group. Sources must be cited in work.

Be sure your profile:

Addresses all sections thoroughly.

Utilizes at least three sources to provide important information and insight

Contains Strong analysis supported by solid evidence. In other words, it is not simply descriptive.

Provides information that is important, interesting, and insightful

**Religious Group profiles will not be returned unless an extra copy is submitted.*

Leeward Community College
Arts and Humanities Division
Religion 150: Introduction to the World's Major Religions
Sample Course Syllabus

Course Objective

A survey of the origins, teachings, practices, and present-day situation of the world's great religions through lectures, slides, videotapes, discussion, and field trips. Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity, Islam. (FG)
Prerequisite: ENG 22 with a grade of C or better or equivalent.

The primary goal of the course is to help students gain a basic understanding of the various beliefs and practices of the world's major religions. Looking at religions both in their early and contemporary forms will enable students to trace the genesis of, and hence place into their proper contexts, some of the important religious issues that confront us today. The study of religion stands at the crossroads of history and philosophy, sociology and anthropology, linguistics and art and all these disciplines come into play in seeking an understanding of religion. Religion continues to be a vibrant expression in modern society and an interesting sample of the world's religions can be found in the islands. Students are encouraged to visit a temple, church, shrine, synagogue, or mosque; and experience first-hand the diverse religious traditions on the island to gain a more complete understanding of religion.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students will have had the opportunity to:

[Study of Religion]

- identify reasons for the academic study of religion.
- distinguish different approaches, definitions and components of religion.
- develop an understanding and sense of appreciation for humanity's traditional and contemporary religious paths, their diversity and commonalty.

[Religious Traditions]

- describe the basic beliefs and practices of the world's major religions.
- understand the historical context for and development of the world's major religions.
- identify the major forms and expressions in each religious tradition.

[Religious Critique]

- Evaluate critically and objectively each tradition in terms of present day realities.

Course Requirements

**Examinations* : Course grades are based in part on three exams covering material presented in class and textbook. Each exam is worth 200 points. Study guides, review sessions, and textbook questions will be offered to help students do well on the exams.
Note: no make-up exams allowed unless arrangements made PRIOR to scheduled exams.

**Religious Group Profile*: Construct profile detailing the major characteristics of a particular religious group on Oahu. A typed hard copy of the profile is due by the end of class on the last day of instruction. Late work will be marked down 50%.

**Quizzes*: In-class quizzes to help students understand the material and prepare for exams. No make-up quizzes.

Grading

Final course grades are determined by standard scale and class curve and based on the following: Exams (65%), Profile (25%), Quizzes (10%).

Textbook Required

John Bowker (ed.), *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Religions*

Class Schedule

INTRODUCTION

Week 1 Syllabus. Approaches to Study of Religion
Definitions of Religion
Symbols of Religion

JUDAISM (*read* Bowker pp. 180-213)

Week 2 Hebrew Bible. Talmud
Abraham, Moses, and David
Exile and the Maccabean Revolt

Week 3 Rituals and Holidays
Jewish beliefs
Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative Judaism

CHRISTIANITY (*read* Bowker pp. 230-269)

Week 4 Old Testament. New Testament.
Teachings of Jesus
Sacraments and Holidays

Week 5 Will the true Jesus please rise?
Catholic and Orthodox churches
Protestant churches

EXAM ONE

ISLAM (*read* Bowker pp. 270-303)

Week 6 Quran, Hadith
Muhammad and the rise of Islam
Pillars of Practice (plus 1)

Week 7 Rites of Passage and Holidays
5 Pillars of Faith.
Sunni, Shia, and Sufi Islam

HINDUISM (*read* Bowker pp. 24-53)

Week 8 Shruti and Smriti. Samsara, Karma, Atman, Moksha, Brahman
Ramayana
Yoga

Week 9 Rites of Passage and Holidays

Monotheism or polytheism? Shiva, Vishnu, and Shakti

SIKHISM (read Bowker pp. 64-71)
Week 10 10 Gurus (plus eternal one)
5 Ks

EXAM TWO

BUDDHISM (read Bowker pp. 72-109)
Week 11 *What's a Buddhist? Tripitaka*
Story of the Buddha.
What do Buddhists do?
Week 12 Buddhist holidays
Characteristics of Existence. 4 Noble Truths
Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. Buddhism in Hawaii

CHINESE RELIGION (read Bowker pp. 110-143)
Week 13 5 Classics and 4 Books. Daoist scriptures.
Views up the Yin/Yang
Feng Shui, Divination, Exorcism, and Holidays
Major Beliefs. Contemporary Practice

JAPANESE RELIGION (read Bowker pp. 150-179)
Week 14 A legitimate story of the Kami
Girls' Day, Boys' Day, Yakudoshi
Don't touch me I'm pure.

RELIGION IN HAWAII
Week 15 Gods and Goddesses
Kumulipo
Contemporary religion in Hawaii. PAPER DUE

EXAM THREE