**PHIL2070: WORLD RELIGIONS**

**SYLLABUS, SPRING 2024**

Location: SAGE 356

Meeting Times: M/W 2:00 – 3:20PM

Instructor: Dr. David Utsler

Email: [David.Utsler@unt.edu](mailto:David.Utsler@unt.edu)

Office: ENV 225D

Office Hours: M/W 11:00 – 12:00

Philosophy & Religion Dept. Phone: 940-565-2266

**Course Description and Objectives:**

PHIL2070 provides a survey of many of the religions of the world, considering their philosophical, practical, social, and political aspects. We will study things such as devotional practices, major tenets, community aspects, and how various religions compare—i.e. what is common in religious experience amongst diverse traditions and what differs.

By the end of this course, you will have an understanding of the history and development of different religious traditions, their tenets and major beliefs and associated practices, and their social-political significance. You will understand be able to articulate the philosophical aspects of various religions. The several writing assignments will equip you to communicate these various aspects of the course with clarity.

**Required Text:**

Fisher, M. & Rinehart, R. *Living Religions* (10th edition)*.* Pearson, 2017. ISBN: 978-0-13-416897-5.

**Attendance and Participation:**

This is a face-to-face course. Attendance is expected and mandatory. I permit 4 absences without consequence to your final grade. Each absence in excess of 4 will result in a deduction of 5 points from the final grade. Exceptions for reasonable cause will be considered on a case-by-case basis. I do not grade on in-class participation, but I do take it into account on the final grade. For example, if by the end of term you fall short a few points of the next letter grade up, I am likely to bump you up to the next letter grade if you were diligent in attendance and made contributions to class discussions.

**Class Etiquette:**

* At all times courtesy and respect is expected, both to me your instructor and to your peers. A course such as this covers a number of diverse ideas and belief systems. Not everyone will have the same understanding or views of the content we cover. Such diversity is a good thing. We can and will discuss ideas, but attacking people or religious traditions will not be tolerated.
* Be in class on time. By “on time” I mean a few minutes before class is scheduled to start, so we can begin right away. If you have an impediment to being on time (e.g. coming from work or a class in another building), just communicate that to me. I am always happy to work with a student who communicates with me. But I can’t work with you if you do not communicate. The same applies to leaving early.

**Grading and Evaluation:**

12 Discussion Boards (on Canvas) 25 points each: 300 pts.

2 Exams (on Canvas) 75 points each: 150 pts.

1 Final Paper: 100 pts.

Total points for the course: 550 pts.

A = 495 – 550; B = 440 – 494; C = 385 – 439; D = 330 – 384; F = 329 or below.

*Policy on late assignments: all assignments are expected to be completed by the due date. Each assignment will remain open for a grace period of three days, after which the assignment will no longer be accessible.*

**Academic Integrity:**

* Students are responsible for reading, understanding and knowing UNT's Academic Dishonesty Policy that can be found at: <https://vpaa.unt.edu/news/new-academic-integrity-policy>.
* My particular policy is as follows:
  + The point of taking classes is to learn. You cannot truly learn if you engage in any form of academic dishonesty. All your work in this class must be your own. The most common forms of academic dishonesty that I see are plagiarism and the use of Artificial Intelligence. In the case of plagiarism, you are taking information from someone else and presenting it as your own. Plagiarism can be copying direct quotes from elsewhere (a book or the internet) but is not necessarily word for word. Plagiarism also occurs if you take ideas of others and reword them presenting them as your own thoughts. Philosophical texts can be difficult to understand, so students will often go to various internet sites to try to understand something better. Even without intending plagiarism, a student will try to put what they saw online in their own words. This is still plagiarism. The use of Artificial Intelligence is typically ChatGPT or similar tools. Using ChatGPT is no different from having another person write your paper or assignment for you. In both cases, YOU did not do the assignment.
  + How I handle plagiarism, the use of artificial intelligence, or any form of academic dishonesty is as follows: The first instance will result in receiving a “0” for the assignment. Do not ask me to redo the assignment. I have already read your assignment once, I am not going to create more work for myself to read and grade another. A second instance of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of “F” for the course. If it is still prior to the last withdrawal date, you can withdraw with a “W” to avoid the “F.” I make no exceptions to this policy.
  + Students engage in academic dishonesty for different reasons. Sometimes the student is struggling with the material or has burdens in their personal life. Other times, a student is just lazy and doesn’t want to do the work. In either case, I can’t give you a grade for work you didn’t do yourself. But if you are struggling, communicate with me. I’m here to help! I am always willing to work with a student who communicates with me.

**Student Responsibility for Learning:**

* My role as your professor is not to deposit information into passive minds. You have an active role in your learning. Come to class prepared. Read the material ahead of time and be prepared to ask questions or contribute to discussions.
* You are responsible for knowing due dates and keeping up on assignments.
* You are responsible for communicating with me regarding difficulties you are having with the material. If you don’t communicate with me, I can’t help you and I am here to help you succeed in this course.

**Additional Information:**

**Statement from the ODA**

* The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 - The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

**Last Day to Withdraw**

* Drop/Withdrawal Information, and other important Academic Dates can be found at <http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/schedule/scheduleclass.html>

**Schedule of Reading and Assignments:**

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| DATE | READING AND LECTURE TOPIC | ASSIGNMENT |
|  | **Do all readings BEFORE class!!** |  |
| *Week 1* |  |  |
| Jan 17 | Welcome and Introduction to the Course |  |
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| *Week 2* |  |  |
| Jan 22/24 | Chapter 1: Religious Responses  Read pages 1 – 27. | Response and Reflection Discussion Board on Canvas. Due Jan 31. |
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| *Week 3* |  |  |
| Jan 29/31 | Chapter 2: Indigenous Sacred Ways  Read pages 33 – 51; 53; 56 – 59; 62 – 64; 66, 67. | Response and Reflection Discussion Board on Canvas. Due Feb 7. |
| *Week 4* |  |  |
| Feb 5/7 | Chapter 3: Hinduism  Read pages 72 – 74; 76 – 93; 95; 97 – 99; 101 – 103; 105 – 109; 111 – 115. | Response and Reflection Discussion Board on Canvas. Due Feb 14. |
| *Week 5* |  |  |
| Feb 12/14 | Chapter 4: Jainism  Read pages 119 – 130; 132 – 133. | Response and Reflection Discussion Board on Canvas. Due Feb 21. |
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| *Week 6* |  |  |
| Feb 19/21 | Chapter 5: Buddhism  Read pages 136 – 164; 166, 168 170 – 173; 176 – 182. | Response and Reflection Discussion Board on Canvas. Due Feb 28. |
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| *Week 7* |  |  |
| Feb 26/28 | Chapter 6: Daoism and Confucianism  Read pages 187 – 200; 202 – 210; 211 – 217. | Response and Reflection Discussion Board on Canvas. Due Mar 6. |
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| *Week 8* |  |  |
| Mar 4/6 | Chapter 7: Shinto and Zoroastrianism  Read pages 222 – 226; 228 -231; 233 – 238; 242 – 247.  Midterm Exam Review | **Midterm Exam on Canvas!!!**  **Due March 20 by midnight!!!**  **No Discussion Board** |
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|  | **SPRING BREAK MARCH 11 – 17**  **CAMPUS CLOSED!!!** |  |
| *Week 9* |  |  |
| Mar 18/20 | Chapter 8: Judaism  Read pages 250 – 277; 279 – 281; 283 – 295; 298, 299. | Response and Reflection Discussion Board on Canvas. Due Mar 27. |
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| *Week 10* |  |  |
| Mar 25/27 | Chapter 9: Christianity  Read pages 305 – 311; 313 – 331; 333 – 363; 365 – 368. | Response and Reflection Discussion Board on Canvas. Due Apr 3. |
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| *Week 11* |  |  |
| Apr 1/3 | Chapter 10: Islam  Read pages 374 – 387; 389, 390; 392; 394 – 425. | Response and Reflection Discussion Board on Canvas. Due Apr 10. |
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| *Week 12* |  |  |
| Apr 8/10 | Chapter 11: Sikhism  Read pages 432 – 444; 446, 447; 449, 450; 452. | Response and Reflection Discussion Board on Canvas. Due Apr 17. |
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| *Week 13* |  |  |
| Apr 15/17 | Chapter 12: New Religious Movements  Read pages 456 – 466; 468 – 489. | Response and Reflection Discussion Board on Canvas. Due Apr 24. |
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| *Week 14* |  |  |
| Apr 22/24 | Chapter 13: Religion in the Twenty-First Century  Read pages 494 – 516. | Response and Reflection Discussion Board on Canvas. Due May 1 |
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| *Week 15* |  |  |
| Apr 29/May 1 | Final Exam Review |  |
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| *Week 16* | **Final Exam on Canvas!!!**  **Due May 10 by midnight!!!** |  |
|  | **Final Paper Due May 8!!! Submit on Canvas. See Canvas for final paper instructions.** |  |
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