

SYLLABUS--REL 2033E RELIGIONS IN THE WORLD MARKET

Spring 2010, Block I (January 7 – February 4)

Dr. Barry R. Sang

Office: 304 Administration Building. My hours are posted on my door, and sometimes need to be rearranged. However, I will try to be here on Monday and Thursday afternoons (except for supper time!). Please feel free to come visit. Office Phone: 637-4354. Home Phone: 856-8513 (please don't call after 9 p.m., unless it's absolutely necessary). E-mail: bsang@catawba.edu or bsang@carolina.rr.com (home).

Course Summary, Goals, and Means of Assessment

There is no longer justification for ignorance of the world's major religious traditions. World-wide physical and electronic mobility have made next-door neighbors of Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Confucians, and the like. The West has conducted business for centuries with non-Judeo-Christian traditions, and the fact of religious pluralism in America is now a commonplace: world religions are no longer "over there;" they are "right here!" Therefore, a better understanding of these major religious traditions is necessary if only to help us better understand the people around us. However, there might be even more compelling reasons for understanding these traditions. Religion, as the search for and response to that which is experienced as Sacred/Holy, is a search for ultimate meaning; it is about what is fundamentally important to humans. The major religious traditions represent the most influential patterns in humanity's quest for meaning. To ignore these versions of the quest would be to ignore much of what humanity, in its brief presence on this planet, has valued above all things; it would miss some of the most profound searching and influential ideas of human history. Thus, in understanding these traditions better we come to understand better what humanity is, and, therefore, who we as individuals might be.

There are several ways to approach the study of major religious traditions. Some scholars group them geographically while others group them according to theological similarities. The organizing principle I have chosen for this course is essentially immediate usefulness; i.e., I have chosen for our consideration those major religious traditions with which you, as persons involved in the business enterprise, will most likely come in contact. Of course, you will meet persons from religious traditions other than these, but you are most likely to do business with people from these three religions. Christianity has been omitted from this list because most Americans have at least a vague (though often misinformed) sense of basic Christian faith and morality.

The **GOALS** of REL 2033E are that each student will:

- 1) Be able to describe in writing the salient history, theology, rituals, and moral structures of Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Shinto;
- 2) Demonstrate analytical reasoning;

3) Distinguish the meaning and significance of the alternative world views represented in the religious traditions studied.

The **MEANS employed to ASSESS these goals** are as follows:

- a). Two, in-class examinations ("objective" and essay questions);
- b). Two Reaction Papers (see end of *Syllabus*)
- c). Final examination (cumulative).

Textbook

- **DVD-ROM:** *Revealing World Religions*, Cynthia Eller, Version 3.3. Thinking Strings, 2009. **NOTE:** This DVD contains modules for both near eastern and far eastern religions. This "text" is available through Catawba's Bookstore, or you may order the DVD online from www.thinkingstrings.com.
- **Very Important:** If you will ever be reading this text at a computer other than your personal computer on which you have already installed *Revealing World Religions*, you must purchase a USB flash/jump/thumbdrive. I'll explain why in class.
- If you own a laptop computer, you might decide to bring it to class to refer to Eller's book. However, I will be displaying on screen the pages we discuss in class.

Attendance Policy

As in any School of Evening and Graduate Studies class, your attendance is crucial to your success in class. We also need your questions and insights to help us learn. For your own sake you need to be in class as often as possible. Even though I do not have an attendance policy, **it is highly unlikely that you can pass this course if you miss more than two sessions**. Also, please avoid frequent tardiness as it is disrespectful to the members of the class. Missed Tests can be made up **ONLY** if you present to me on the day of your return to class a justifiable and verifiable excuse. Papers turned in late without a justifiable and verifiable excuse will be penalized 10 points for each day they are late.

Please try to do your toileting during breaks. It interrupts class flow to have people running hither and yon.

Food Policy

Please feel free to bring non-alcoholic beverages ☺ to class. However, please eat your meals and snacks only during breaks. If you have a medical need to eat during class, please see me.

Summary of Grade Distribution

(2) Tests:	50%
(2) Reaction Papers	30%
Final Exam:	20%

Grading Scale:

100-92:	A	Clearly superior college level achievement
91-90:	A-	
89-87:	B+	
86-83:	B	Above average college level performance
82-80:	B-	
79-77:	C+	
76-73:	C	Average college level performance
72-70:	C-	
69-67:	D+	
66-63:	D	Below average college level performance
62-60:	D-	
≤ 59:	F	Failure to achieve minimum competency

TOPICS AND PREPARATIONS

Note: Because I encourage class discussion, the schedule given below is approximate. It is therefore the responsibility of each student to keep up with the class's progress. Your absence from class does not excuse you from this responsibility.

ALSO NOTE: All preparations, unless otherwise indicated, refer to chapters or sections in your text (Eller) that go by that assignment name.

PART I: INTRODUCTION AND BEGINNINGS: Thursday, January 7

Preparation: Exploring Religion

- A. Introduction to the Course and Syllabus
- B. The Phenomenon We Call "Religion:" Definitions and Characteristics
- C. The Nature of Monotheistic Religions

PART II: JUDAISM: January 7, 11, 14, 21

Preparation: Judaism

- A. Sacred Story and Historical Context
- B. Jewish Worlds of Meaning
- C. Jewish Ritual and Morality

January 21

EXAM #1

PART III: ISLAM: January 21, 23, 28

January 23 ***JUDAISM REACTION PAPER DUE***

Preparation: Islam

- A. Sacred Story and Historical Context
- B. Muslim Worlds of Meaning
- C. Muslim Ritual and Morality

January 28 ***EXAM #2***

PART IV: BUDDHISM AND SHINTO: January 25, 28; February 1, 4

February 1 ***ISLAM REACTION PAPER DUE***

Preparation: Buddhism; Shinto

- A. The Buddhist Sacred Story and Historical Context
- B. Buddhist Worlds of Meaning
- C. Buddhist Ritual and Morality
- D. Japan: Buddhism and Shinto

February 4: Wrap-Ups and *FINAL EXAMINATION*
BUDDHISM/SHINTO REACTION PAPERS DUE

REACTION PAPERS

You are to write a reaction paper to **TWO** of the three Abrahamic religions discussed in this course. The purpose of these papers is to encourage you to reflect in an organized fashion on your encounter with the chosen religious traditions. The two basic questions which must be addressed in this paper are as follows:

- What did I find meaningful in this religion's theology, ritual, or morality? Of course, explain why.
- With what did I disagree most in this religion's theology, ritual, or morality? Of course, explain why.

In short, carefully explain what you liked and why, and what you didn't like and why. And, when you react to a particular ritual or practice, don't react only to the particular actions, but react to the meanings behind those actions as well. It is possible that you may agree with the principle behind something, but not with the practice of it (or, vice versa!). I do not expect your responses to these questions to be balanced, i.e., that your positive reactions will equal your negative reactions. However, both topics must be broached seriously. This is not to be a description of the new things you learned about the religion. It should be your reactions to those things. As resources you should use: 1) Personal experience; 2) Class notes; 3) Notes from Eller's "book." I want **your** words and **your** reactions. Do not paraphrase or quote Eller, although you may surely refer to some of the religions' sacred texts. **Do NOT simply compare and contrast your own religion with the religion you are reacting to. I need more reasons for your reactions than merely that the religion in question is similar to or different from the religion you currently profess. Also, do NOT react to the religion's history.** *Please speak with me if you have any questions about my expectations here. The burden of understanding is on your shoulders.* Your papers must be type-written, double-spaced, and should be 3-4 pages long. They will be **due precisely ONE WEEK after that unit has been completed. The only exception to this is Islam, in which case your paper will be due no later than the last day of regular class sessions.** Please use standard fonts. Your paper must also conform to the following Paper Policy:

Paper Policy

The papers submitted in this course are expected to reflect those qualities epitomized by a liberal arts education. *Your grade will be directly affected by grammar, syntax and spelling. After determining your paper's grade, I will deduct 2 points for each grammatical error, and 1 point for each spelling and punctuation error. The greatest total penalty, however, will only be 10 points (i.e., one letter grade).* The simplest way to avoid such penalties is to have a reliable friend proofread your paper before submitting it for a grade. For detailed information on plagiarism and the

Honor Code consult the appropriate pages in the *Catawba College Catalog*. However, the following list of “thou shalt nots” should prove to be generally useful:

Some of the Most Common Types of Plagiarism

1. Failing to identify direct or word-for-word quotations by use of appropriate symbols and reference to the source.
2. Restating in your own words the work (ideas, conclusions, words) of another without reference to the source.
3. Presenting as your own the creative work (for instance, music or photographs or, of course, written work) of another without proper acknowledgment.

Rule of thumb: When in doubt, document.

Special Instructions for Submitting Papers

It is a requirement of this course that you submit your papers to me via *Blackboard*. You must follow the following instructions carefully:

1. Compose your paper in **WORD (not in WORKS)**.
2. The paper must be titled and must conform to all of the paper requirements stated above.
3. **Write the following at the top of the first page: Your name; and, also at the top of your paper, type your email address. If it is not there, I will deduct five points from your paper's grade.**
4. Save the paper in WORD, noting where you saved it. (Of course, always back up your paper to a thumb drive or some similar, secure storage device.)
5. Log in to Blackboard **USING WINDOWS EXPLORER**. This process may not work with Firefox.
6. Go to this course and click on the *Assignments* link.
7. Find the assignment for which your paper has been written, and click on the hyper-link for that assignment.
8. To attach your file, use this sequence of commands:
 1. Browse; Choose File; Open; Submit (don't forget this one)

You will receive a day and time receipt window for your submission. You **MUST** copy and print that window and save it. If there is some question about your paper being submitted on time, this is the only proof you will have that you did so.

**Religions in the World Market
Daily Schedule
Spring Session I, 2010**

Class #1: Thursday, January 7

- I. Introduction and Beginnings
- II. Movie: *Judaism: The Religion of a People*
- III. Judaism

Class #2: Monday, January 11

Judaism Continued

Class #3: Thursday, January 14

Judaism Continued

NOTE: Monday, January 18: NO CLASS: Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

Class #4: Thursday, January 21

1. Judaism Exam
2. Movie: *Living Islam: Vol. 1: Foundations*
3. Introduction to Islam

Class #5: Saturday, January 23

Islam Continued

Judaism Reaction Paper Due

Class #6: Monday, January 25

1. Movie: Selections on Buddhism & Shinto
2. Introduction to Buddhism

Class #7: Thursday, January 28

1. Islam Exam
2. Buddhism Continued

Class #8: Monday, February 1

1. Shinto and Japanese Buddhism
2. Review For Final Examination

Islam Reaction Paper Due

Class #9: Thursday, February 4

Final Examination & Toga Party ☺