



University of International Business and Economics International Summer School

HIS 140/REL 130 World History: World Religions in Historical Perspective

Term: July 2 – August 2, 2018

Instructor: Ian Coller

Home Institution: University of California, Irvine

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Class Hours: Monday through Thursday, 120 minutes each day

Office Hours: TBD

Credit: 4 units

Course Description:

This class will introduce students to a number of the world's major religious traditions in both their classical formulations and their contemporary significance. Our focus will be not so much on religious doctrine as it will be on the ways in which the historical trajectory of any religion reflects as well as shapes the myths, symbols, ethical practices, and world view of the culture and people from which it grew. We will investigate how and why these religious traditions spread so far beyond their origins and shaped world history, using key works of critical scholarship.

By the end of the course, students will be able to describe several major global religious traditions and will have gained an understanding of the diversity and commonalities of religious life in various cultures and historical periods, as well as how and why people and societies manifest religious belief in these particular ways. The first part of the class will consider questions around the nature of religion and the method of historical study, and investigate religious traditions emerging in Asia (Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism). The second part will investigate the three monotheistic faiths of the Abrahamic tradition: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, with an emphasis on their historical interaction.

Required Textbook:

All students are expected to have purchased the following text by the first day of class.
Michael Malloy. *Experiencing the World's Religions*. McGraw Hill, 2009. 6th Edition.

Readings in Critical Theory and Method:

Students will read one excerpt each week from key scholarly works on religion, from the classic sociological work of Weber and Durkheim, and the psychoanalytic approach of Freud, to contemporary anthropological, philosophical and historical approaches.

Academic Honesty:

Exams and quizzes contain a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions. Looking at a fellow student's exam is a form of cheating and is unacceptable. Any student caught doing so will receive a failing grade for the exam or quiz. Short answer questions are to be completed in a student's own words. At no time should any text be copied from other sources, including the web, unless this is

clearly indicated by a citation. Reproducing text with close similarity to unattributed sources will be treated as plagiarism. Citations should be to authoritative published works. Your continued enrollment in this class constitutes your acceptance of these conditions.

Grading Policy:

Course grades will be based on attendance* and participation (10%), weekly quizzes (20%), a mid-term exam (35%), and a final exam (35%)

*All students are allowed two unexcused absences. Four unexcused absences will reduce your course grade by half a grade (e.g. B to B-). Eight unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the course.

Grading Scale:

Assignments and examinations will be graded according to the following grade scale:

A	90-100	C+	72-74
A-	85-89	C	68-71
B+	82-84	C-	64-67
B	78-81	D	60-63
B-	75-77	F	below 60

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Early Religions/Hinduism:

Lectures:

- ✧ Course Introduction, What is Religion?
- ✧ Origins of Religion and Indigenous Spiritualities
- ✧ Hindu Visions of the Cosmos
- ✧ The Historical Spread of Hinduism/ Quiz

Readings:

Emil Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (excerpt)
Molloy, Chapters 1, 2, and 3

Week 2: Critical Method/Buddhism/Daoism and Confucianism

Lectures:

- ✧ Critical Theory and Method in Historical Study of Religion
- ✧ Siddhartha Gautama and the Origins of Buddhism
- ✧ Buddhism after Buddha, Divergent traditions
- ✧ Daoism and Confucianism/ Quiz

Readings:

Max Weber, *The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism* (excerpt)
Molloy, Chapters 4 and 6

Week 3: From Judaism to Christianity

Lectures:

- ✧ Babylon, Exodus and Rabbinic Judaism
- ✧ Elements of Jewish Faith, Judaism Today
- ✧ Jesus the Jew
- ✧ Mid-term Exam

Readings:



Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (excerpt)
Molloy, Chapter 8

Week 4. Catholic Christianity and its Challenges

Lectures:

- ✧ Jews, Romans and Christians
- ✧ The Medieval Church and the Crusades
- ✧ Reformation and Counter-Reformation
- ✧ The Enlightenment and Secularization/Quiz

Readings:

Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God* (excerpt)
Molloy, Chapter 9

Week 5. The Spread of Islam

Lectures:

- ✧ Origins of Islam-- the Prophet Muhammad
- ✧ The Koran, and the Five Pillars
- ✧ Islamic Empires, Islamic Law
- ✧ Final exam

Readings:

Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam?* (excerpt)
Molloy, Chapter 10