



**University of International Business and Economics  
International Summer School**

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

**Term: July 8 – August 2, 2019**

**Instructor: Thomas Michael**

**Home Institution: Beijing Normal University**

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**Class Hours: Monday through Friday, 15:20-17:20**

**120 minutes each day (2,400 minutes in total)**

**Office Hours: TBD**

**Discussion session: 2 hours each week**

**Total Contact Hours: 64 contact hours (45 minutes each, 48 hours in total)**

**Credit: 4 units**

**Course Description:**

World Religions in Historical Perspective is designed to introduce students to many of the major religious traditions in the world and their distinctive features. It provides students historical, theological, and philosophical familiarity with the belief systems of the most important religions of the world through close readings of their foundational texts. The first half of the course examines the earliest belief systems from the ancient Middle East and the historical development of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim ideas about God. The second half of the course examines the somewhat more mystical and philosophical traditions of Eastern belief systems by studying the fundamental assumptions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism.

**Course Goals:**

Students will be expected to summarize:

1. the belief systems of the Stone Age, Bronze Age, and Iron Age
2. the Jewish and Christian understandings of God and world creation
3. the Christian understanding of Jesus and his death and resurrection
4. the Hindu beliefs about reincarnation, liberation, and yoga
5. the Buddhist beliefs about nirvana and meditation
6. the Daoist and Confucian beliefs about the Dao

**Required Readings will be made available during class.**

**Grading Policy:**

45% Midterm essay

45% Final exam

10% Classroom engagement (attendance, attention, participation in discussions)

**Grading Scale:**

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

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

**Class Rules:**

- Attend all classes and be responsible for all material covered in class and otherwise assigned. Any unexcused absence may impact a student's grade. Complete the day's required reading and assignments before class
- Review the previous day's notes before class; make notes about questions you have about the previous class or the day's reading
- Participate in class discussions and complete required written work on time.
- Refrain from texting, phoning or engaging in computer activities unrelated to class during class. Students who do not do this will be asked to leave the class.
- While class participation is welcome, even required, you are expected to refrain from private conversations during the class period.

**Attendance Policy:**

Summer school is very intense and to be successful, students need to attend every class. Occasionally, due to illness or other unavoidable circumstance, a student may need to miss a class. Academic policy requires a medical certificate to be excused. Any absence may impact on the student's grade. Academic policy also states that a student who has more than 3 absences will fail the course. Arriving late or leaving early will count as a partial absence.

**Course Schedule:**

**Week 1:**

Day 1, Mon: Introduction to course

Day 2, Tues: Stone and Bronze Age Religion	The Goddesses' Mirror: Innana
Day 3, Wed: Iron Age Religion	Enuma Elish, Babylonian Creation
Day 4, Thurs: Iron Age Religion	Enuma Elish, Babylonian Creation
Day 5, Fri: Judaism, Christianity, and the Bible	The Book of Genesis
<b>Week 2:</b>	
Day 6, Mon: Judaism, Christianity, and the Bible	The Book of Genesis and Exodus
Day 7, Tues: Judaism, Christianity, and the Bible	The Book of Exodus
Day 8, Wed: Christianity and the Bible	The Gospel of Matthew
Day 9, Thurs: Christianity and the Bible	The Gospel of John
Day 10, Fri: Course review and mid-term essay assigned	
<b>Week 3:</b>	
Day 11, Mon: Hinduism	The Bhagavad Gita
Day 12, Tues: Hinduism	The Bhagavad Gita
Day 13, Wed: Buddhism	The Dhammapada
Day 14, Thurs: Buddhism	The Dhammapada
Day 15, Fri: Buddhism	The Dhammapada
<b>Week 4:</b>	
Day 16, Mon: Daoism	The Daodejing
Day 17, Tues: Daoism	The Daodejing
Day 18, Wed: Confucianism	The Analects
Day 19, Thurs: Confucianism	The Analects
Day 20, Fri: Course review and final essay assigned	