JEFFERSON COLLEGE

Course Syllabus

PHL201

WORLD RELIGIONS

3 Credit Hours

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by
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Arts and Science Education
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PHL201 WORLD RELIGIONS

I. CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

Prerequisite: None
3 semester hours credit

World Religions is a comparative religions course which considers the major faiths of the
world: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism.
World Religions will partially fulfill the humanities requirement for the associate degree.
(F,S)

II. GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

A. Demonstrate knowledge of the history, beliefs, and practices of the major world
   religions.

B. Cite similarities and differences among the major religions.

C. Describe how each religion functions productively within the cultures of peoples
   practicing the religion.

III. COURSE OUTLINE (Course content will be drawn from this.)

A. Characteristics of World Religions

B. Hinduism

C. Confucianism

D. Daoism

E. Buddhism

F. Judaism

G. Christianity

H. Islam

IV. UNIT OBJECTIVES
A. Characteristics of World Religions
   1. Be able to list the features which are fundamental to all religions.
   2. Define myth and doctrine and give examples.
   3. Be able to explain the functions which religions serve in human existence.

B. Hinduism
   1. State the basic world view of Hinduism.
   2. Describe the chief deities of Hinduism.
   3. Discuss the caste system and karma.
   4. List and describe the four stages of life.
   5. Describe typical Hindu religious practices.
   6. Discuss Hindu scriptures, covering the Vedas, Upanishads, epics, and Bhagavad-Gita.
   7. Summarize the history of Hinduism.

C. Confucianism
   1. Know important biographical information concerning Confucius.
   2. Discuss essential elements of Confucianism, including its conservative outlook, the rectification of names, ren, li, the "superior man," and the five primary relationships in society.
   3. Explain how Confucianism developed from a social philosophy into a religion, and the elevation of Confucius to godhood.

D. Daoism
   1. Provide important biographical details concerning Lao-Dz.
   2. Identify Dao Te Ching.
   3. Describe Daoism, covering the principle of the Dao, Wu-Wei, Yang-Yin, the role of magic and divination in Daoism.

E. Buddhism
   1. Narrate the events leading to the enlightenment of Siddhartha Gautama.
   2. Discuss the Middle Way, the Four Noble Truths, and the Eightfold Path.
   3. Explain reincarnation, Anatman, and Nirvana in Buddhism.
   4. Describe the roles of the samgha, the ten prohibitions, and the Three Refuges.
   5. Discuss differences between Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism.
   6. Describe Pure Land Buddhism.
   7. Summarize the essentials of Zen Buddhism and the role of koans.

F. Judaism
1. Identify key events in the history of Judaism.
2. Discuss the roles of Abraham, Moses, and the prophets.
3. Describe the Torah, Talmud, and Midrash.
4. Summarize important beliefs of Jews and basic features of worship.

G. Christianity

1. Summarize the life of Jesus by listing significant events.
2. State the major themes in Jesus' teachings.
3. Describe the roles of Peter and Paul in early Christianity and explain how Christianity developed and eventually prevailed in the Roman Empire.
4. Discuss the scriptures of Christianity.
5. Compare and contrast the three main divisions of Christianity: Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant.

H. Islam

1. State important biographical details concerning Muhammad.
2. Describe the spread of Islam.
3. Show knowledge of Islamic beliefs and the Five Pillars of Islam.
4. Discuss the Koran.

V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

A. Lectures

B. Class discussions, including ungraded oral quizzes

C. Video presentations

D. Reading of textbook

E. Writing of two research papers

VI. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK


VII. REQUIRED MATERIALS (STUDENT)

A. Textbook
B. Access to a typewriter/word processor

VIII. SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCES

A. Library collection
B. Writing Center
C. Internet access

IX. METHODS OF EVALUATION

A. Tests and final exam
B. Written papers
C. Class participation
D. Attendance

The grading scale is as follows:
90-100 = A
80-89  = B
70-79  = C
60-69  = D
Below 60 = F