Class Time:  TR 9:30 – 10:45 a.m.
Classroom:  Paul L. Boynton Building 212 (BO 212)

Dr. Owen M. Smith
Professor of Philosophy and Classical Studies
OFFICE:  Paul L. Boynton Building 208B (BO 208B)
OFFICE HOURS:
  T  11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon (OFFICE) and 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. (OFFICE)
  W  3:00 - 4:00 p.m. (OFFICE) and 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. (ONLINE via Zoom)
  R  11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon (OFFICE) and 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. (ONLINE via Zoom)
and by appointment
E-MAIL ADDRESS:  omsmith@sfasu.edu
OFFICE PHONE:  (936) 468-2367

Prerequisites for Course:  None

Course Description:
A comparative study of the philosophical, ethical, and social dimensions of the religions of the world. Focuses on major religions as well as lesser known ones. The course will emphasize the diversity of religious experience and traditions.

Course Credit Hours Justification
Introduction to World Religion (PHIL 1304) is a three-credit (= 3 semester hour) course. This course will meet twice per week (Tuesday/Thursday) for 75-minute segments for 15 weeks. There is also a 2-hour final examination. Students have significant weekly reading assignments and are required to complete three examinations and to participate in one online course discussion. These activities average at a minimum 6 hours of work each week to prepare outside of classroom hours.

Required Textbook:
Recommended Textbook:

General Education Core Curriculum
The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six core learning objectives: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives.

By enrolling in PHIL 1304, you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the Personal Responsibility requirement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>How the Core Objective Will Be Addressed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
<td>To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.</td>
<td>Online Discussion</td>
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Program Learning Outcomes:
This is an introductory level interdisciplinary course and no specific program learning outcomes are addressed in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes:
1. Students will describe the histories, beliefs, practices, and cultural products of indigenous religions and major world religions.
2. Students will analyze primary religious texts.
3. Students will compare and contrast the beliefs and practices of world religions.
4. Students will communicate ways of living in a world full of different belief systems.

Course Requirements:
First Examination - Foundations and Indigenous Sacred Ways: 30% of final course grade
Second Examination - Western Religious Traditions: 30% of final course grade
Third Examination - Eastern Religious Traditions: 30% of final course grade
Online Discussion - 10% of final course grade
Course Policies:
1. Attendance and Student Conduct
   a. Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (cf. Student Conduct Code, Policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on course requirements may be referred to the iCare: Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.
   b. Attendance will be taken each class session. Each student is responsible for making sure that his/her attendance has been recorded for each class session. Attendance at a class session may be recorded only during that session.
   c. A student who accumulates more than six (6) absences during the semester is subject to receiving a variety of penalties up to and including a failing final course grade. Students are responsible for keeping track of their own attendance record and recognizing when their final course grade is endangered by excessive absences. Students who miss class sessions owing to late registration will not be charged with these absences provided that they meet with the instructor in the first three weeks of the semester to discuss the syllabus and review missed material.
   d. Students are responsible for all material addressed and all exercises performed in class regardless of their attendance record. Students who miss class are encouraged to obtain notes from a classmate and review these notes with the instructor.
2. Office Hours
   a. The instructor is available to meet with students either in his office (BO 208B) or online via Zoom. Students can also meet with the instructor during office hours by using the instant message function on the university's Desire2Learn (D2L) website.
   b. Students who wish to meet with the instructor in his office during regularly scheduled office hours do not need to make an appointment; the instructor will meet with students on a first come, first served basis.
   c. Students who wish to meet with the instructor in his office outside of regularly scheduled office hours must make an appointment with the instructor ahead of time. Appointments can be made by email at the instructor's university email address (omsmith@sfasu.edu) or by telephone at the instructor's office phone number (936-468-2367).
3. Examinations
   a. Periodically through the semester, students will be required to complete examinations focusing on the course material addressed during the semester. Each examination will have two components: an online quiz concerning the course material and a set of reflective essay topics.
   b. The quiz component of each examination of multiple choice and true/false questions. This component of the examinations will be available through the Course Tools menu on the D2L website for the course.
   c. The focus of the essay topics will be comparison/contrast among the views of the particular religious traditions addressed in class as well as the influence of these religious traditions upon each other. Students will have a choice among essay topics in this component of the examinations.
   d. The essay component of the final examination will take place during the examination period at the end of the semester.
4. Online Discussion
   a. During the course of the semester, students will be required to participate in one online discussion to explore the course material in greater detail. The online discussion will be available through the Course Tools menu on the D2L website for the course.
   b. The instructor will post an assignment sheet for the online discussion; this assignment sheet will contain the instructions for the discussion as well as the discussion questions. Student participation in issue discussions will be graded on a ten (10) point scale. Students will be graded on the clarity, thoughtfulness, and collegiality of their discussion posts as well as on the number of their discussion posts and their distribution throughout the discussion period. In their posts, students must demonstrate their understanding of the theoretical material covered during the course. In general, each student must post a minimum of four substantial (reflective) on-topic posts, including at least three that respond directly to posts made by classmates.
   c. Students may increase their score on online exercises by posting more frequently, more thoughtfully, and more collegially (i.e., demonstrating a consideration for the ideas of classmates in constructing a position).
d. Permissible responses include agreements and disagreements with classmates’ posts, provided that the responses include the reasoning behind these agreements and disagreements, elaboration of one’s own ideas or ideas presented by others, and posts that include properly credited ideas drawn from a variety of sources, including life experiences, material learned in other courses, and concepts encountered outside of class while reading or viewing a variety of media.

e. Impermissible responses include simple agreements or disagreements with classmates’ posts without justification or expansion, irrelevant responses, responses that attack or mock classmates, and responses that contain expletives or other offensive language.

f. Because student contributions to online discussions must be made in a timely manner, no extensions will be granted by the instructor regarding participation in the online discussion.

5. Academic Integrity

a. Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

b. Definition of Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were one’s own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at <http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp>.

c. Students are required to be familiar with all items they submit in fulfillment of course requirements. If in the instructor’s opinion, a student does not demonstrate sufficient familiarity with any such item, the instructor may reject the item and assign the student a score of zero (0.0) for that item.

d. Students in this course are required to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. Any student who commits an act of cheating or plagiarism in this course may receive a final course grade of “F.” Moreover, the student will be required to meet with the instructor to discuss the incident, and a formal Report of Academic Dishonesty will be submitted to the student’s personal file.

6. Accommodations: To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to <http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/>.

7. Grading Policy

a. As course requirements are graded, the instructor will publish student grades to the D2L site for the course; if a grade has not been published on the D2L site for the course, the grade is not yet available. The instructor does not generally respond to requests to specify the date by which a particular course requirement will be graded, to provide ungraded grades to students, or compute current course averages for students.

b. Withheld Grades: Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

c. Final course grades will be assigned according to the following schedule:
   • A: 90.0 - 100.0
   • B: 80.0 - 89.9
   • C: 70.0 - 79.9
   • D: 60.0 - 69.9
   • F: 59.9 and below
8. **Use of the Zoom Application**
   a. Zoom flexibility is intended to support students in many situations. Especially now, in our virtual learning space, with many children learning from home and schools facing sudden closures, I expect children to be present during Zoom sessions such as office hours or other meetings from time to time. I also understand that students may be caring for other family members who need assistance, such as siblings or parents.
   b. There is no requirement for any student to be visible during Zoom office hours or other Zoom meetings related to the class, and students do not need to state a reason for preferring to turn off their video.
   c. Breastfeeding babies and children of all ages are welcome during office hours and other meetings and may be visible on screen even when other students are present. Alternatively, parents and caregivers may turn the camera off when more privacy is required.
   d. Stepping away momentarily for family care reasons is completely understandable and expected. Simply mute and/or turn off your camera as necessary and rejoin when you are able.
   e. Students are prohibited from recording any still images, audio, or video of any children on screen. Students who do so are subject to censure.
   f. All students participating in a Zoom session are encouraged to support and respect caregivers as they mute and/or turn off their video and use the chat function as needed.
   g. Please consider disclosing your student-caregiver status to me. This is the first step in my being able to accommodate any special needs that arise. While I maintain the same high expectations for all students in my classes, I am happy to discuss challenges with you in a way that supports you as you strive for school-caregiver balance.

**Tentative Course Calendar:**

- **Week 1 (August 23-27):** Orientation; The Religious Response I
- **Week 2 (August 20 - September 03):** The Religious Response II
- **Week 3 (September 06-10):** Indigenous Sacred Ways I
- **Week 4 (September 13-17):** Indigenous Sacred Ways II; FIRST EXAMINATION
- **Week 5 (September 20-24):** Judaism I
- **Week 6 (September 27-October 01):** Judaism II
- **Week 7 (October 04-08):** Christianity I
- **Week 8 (October 11-15):** Christianity II
- **Week 9 (October 18-22):** Islam I
- **Week 10 (October 25-29):** Islam II; SECOND EXAMINATION
- **Week 11 (November 01-05):** Hinduism I
- **Week 12 (November 08 -12):** Hinduism II
- **Week 13 (November 15-19):** Buddhism I; ONLINE DISCUSSION BEGINS
- **Week 14 (November 22-26):** NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING BREAK
- **Week 15 (November 29-December 03):** Buddhism II; ONLINE DISCUSSION ENDS
- **Week 16 (Thursday, December 09, 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.):** FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD

**Student Resources**

a. SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

b. **On-campus Resources:**
   - SFASU Counseling Services
     - [www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices](http://www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices)
     - 3rd Floor Rusk Building
     - 936-468-2401
   - SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic
     - [www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp)
     - Human Services Room 202
     - 936-468-1041

c. **Crisis Resources:**
   - Burke 24-hour Crisis Line: 1(800) 392-8343
   - Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)
   - Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741