INTRODUCTION TO WORLD RELIGION
PHIL 1304.640
Fall 2023

Class Time: TBA
Classroom: NONE
This course is designated as a hybrid course, which means that I will be employing two major modes of instruction. The primary method for providing instructional content will be a set of written course lectures that will be available through the Brightspace/D2L site for the course; to assist you in understanding the material, the secondary method is a Zoom meeting once per week to review the course lectures assigned for that week. I have sent each student an online poll regarding possible times for our Zoom meetings. Once this poll is complete, I will notify everyone of the scheduled time of our Zoom meetings.

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OFFICE HOURS:
TBA
and by appointment
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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.

Required Textbook:

Recommended Textbook:
Course Requirements:
• Unit Quizzes - Seven (7) unit quizzes, of which the lowest grade will be dropped; each of the remaining six (6) unit quizzes will be worth 15% of final course grade, for a total of 90% of final course grade
• Online Discussion - 10% of final course grade

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 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. Students have significant weekly reading assignments and are required to complete seven online quizzes 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.

General Education Core Curriculum
Introduction to World Religion (PHIL 1304) is part of the university's Core Curriculum. As such, the work assigned in this course recognizes the general goals of the core and the specific objectives attached to those classes designated for inclusion in the Language, Philosophy, and Culture Foundational Component Area as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

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 1301, you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the Personal Responsibility requirement. The chart below indicates: (a) the core objective(s) required to be taught in this course per the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and (b) how the required core objectives will be addressed.
Course Policies:
1. Class Attendance and Conduct
   a. Since this class has been designated as a hybrid course, there will be no required class
      sessions. There will be weekly Zoom sessions to review the written course lectures that have
      been posted on the Brightspace/D2L site for the course and address student questions and
      concerns. Students who are unable to attend these Zoom sessions are strongly encouraged to
      meet with the instructor regularly during office hours to complete these tasks.

   b. Classroom behavior during the Zoom sessions should not interfere with the instructor’s ability
      to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program.
      Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning
      environment may be excluded from the Zoom sessions and may be subject to judicial, academic
      or other penalties. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/
      inappropriate during the Zoom sessions. Students who do not attend Zoom sessions regularly or
      who perform poorly on unit quizzes may be referred to a student assistance program that
      provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help
      SFA students succeed.

2. Contact Information
   a. The instructor is available to meet with students in his office (LA410B). 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.
      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. During office hours, students
      may also contact the instructor remotely by making use of the Pager function of the Brightspace
      (D2L) website for the course.

<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 Responisibility</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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b. The instructor will also hold regularly scheduled office hours online via the Zoom application. Information concerning online office hours, including the specific invitation information for the Zoom sessions, will be available on the Brightspace/D2L site for the course.

c. Students can also contact the instructor by email either through the Brightspace (D2L) website for the course or by using the instructor’s university email address (omsmith@sfasu.edu).

d. Students can also reach the instructor through his university telephone number (936-468-2367); if the instructor is not available, please leave a message and he will return your call.

e. Students are encouraged to ask questions of general student interest by making a post to the Open Question Forum discussion available on Brightspace/D2L site for the course.

3. Unit Quizzes
a. Following each unit of the course, students will be required to take an online quiz emphasizing complex, higher-order thinking skills to demonstrate understanding of the material contained in the textbook readings, supplemental readings, and course lectures. Quiz questions will consist of true/false and multiple choice questions. Owing to differences in the length of each unit, the precise point value of the unit quizzes may vary.

b. The unit quizzes will be available through the Course Tools menu on the D2L website for the course. Students may attempt each unit quiz a maximum of two (2) times. A student’s grade on this quiz will the the higher of the two scores earned on these attempts.

c. The lowest of each student’s seven quiz scores will be dropped. Altogether, the remaining quizzes will be worth 90% of a student’s final course grade (15% per unit quiz).

d. At his discretion, the instructor may grant an extension to a student who cannot take a unit quiz during the designated period owing to technical (internet) limitations, serious illness or another similarly compelling reason. Any student who wishes an extension on a unit quiz must submit a written request to the instructor and provide some form of credible written documentation for the reason cited by the student for missing the deadline for the quiz.

4. Online Course 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. 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/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

6. Academic Integrity

a. The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity ([https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/policies/10.4.pdf](https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/policies/10.4.pdf)) outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

b. Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation.

c. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole
or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

d. Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

e. Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

f. Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

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 unpublished 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.
d. In accordance with university policy, students will be assigned a midterm grade in this course. This grade will be based upon all course requirements completed prior to midterm. A student’s midterm grade is no guarantee of the student’s final course grade. A student with a passing midterm grade may still fail the course; a student with a failing midterm grade may still pass the course.

**Tentative Course Schedule:**

Week 1 (August 28 - September 01): Orientation; Foundations I  
Week 2 (September 04 - September 08): Foundations II  
Week 3 (September 11 - September 15): Primal (Tribal) Religions I  
Week 4 (September 18 - September 22): Primal (Tribal) Religions II  
Week 5 (September 25 - September 30): Judaism I  
Week 6 (October 02 - October 06): Judaism II  
Week 7 (October 09 - October 13): Christianity I  
Week 8 (October 16 - October 20): Christianity II  
Week 9 (October 23 - October 27): Islam I  
Week 10 (October 30 - November 03): Islam II  
Week 11 (November 13 - November 17): Hinduism I  
Week 12 (November 20 - November 24): NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY  
Week 13 (November 20 - November 24): Hinduism II  
Week 14 (November 27 - December 01): Buddhism I  
Week 15 (December 04 - December 08): Buddhism II  

**THERE WILL BE NO FINAL EXAMINATION IN THIS CLASS.  
THE COURSE DISCUSSION WILL EXTEND INTO THE FINAL WEEK OF CLASSES (DEAD WEEK) AND EXAM WEEK.**

**Mental Health and Fitness**

1. 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.

2. On-campus Resources:  
a. SFASU Counseling Services  
   www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices  
   Health and Wellness Hub (corner of E. College and Raguet)  
   936-468-2401

   b. SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic  
      www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp  
      Human Services Room 202  
      936-468-1041
3. Crisis Resources:
   a. Burke 24-hour Crisis Line: 1(800) 392-8343
   b. National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
   c. Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)
   d. Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741