INTRODUCTION TO WORLD RELIGION
PHIL 1304.001
Spring 2024

Class Time: MW 2:30 - 3:45 p.m.
Classroom: T.E. Ferguson Liberal Arts Building 375 (F 375)

Dr. Owen M. Smith
Professor of Philosophy and Classical Studies
OFFICE: Vera Dugas Liberal Arts Building North 410B (LAN 410B)
OFFICE HOURS:
  o Mondays 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. (OFFICE) and 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. (ONLINE via Zoom)
  o Tuesdays 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. (OFFICE)
  o Wednesdays 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. (OFFICE)
  o Thursdays 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. (OFFICE)
and by appointment
E-MAIL ADDRESS: omsmith@sfasu.edu
OFFICE PHONE: (936) 468-2367
ZOOM Invitation to online office hours:
https://sfasu.zoom.us/j/95701782976?pwd=UXc5VWN1OUdxVWJiZUdSaktwRVJNUT09
Meeting ID: 957 0178 2976

Passcode: 078752

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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>How the Core Objective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Respo</td>
<td>To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to</td>
<td>Online Discussion</td>
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Course Policies:

1. **Class Attendance and Conduct**

   a. Since in-class exercises and discussions of course material are an essential part of the course work, each student is required to attend every class session. Students are required to be punctual in their attendance and to remain in class until the end of each class session, with the exception of breaks announced by the instructor.

   b. Classroom behavior that is disrespectful to the instructor or to other students is not acceptable during class. Student 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 class projects/exams may be referred to the an early-alert student assistance program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

   c. Attendance will be taken each class session either verbally or in the form of an attendance sheet to be signed by each student. 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.

   d. Students are not permitted to use cell phones or other electronic devices such as laptop computers during class or to have cellphones on their desks or laps during class sessions; during all class sessions, including examinations, these devices must be turned off and placed out of sight. The instructor may also require students to remove
their personal possessions, such as backpacks, from their desktops during class. A penalty of one (1) partial absence will be assessed for each violation of this policy.

e. Excessive absences will result in a failing course grade. Students who arrive late to class or leave class early are assigned partial absences; for every two (2) partial absences, one (1) full absence will be assessed against a student's attendance record. A student who accumulates more than six (6) absences during the semester are subject to receiving a variety of penalties up to and including a final course grade of “F.” 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.

f. 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 and Contact Information

a. The instructor is available to meet with students in his office during his regularly scheduled office hours. 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.

b. 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.

c. Students can contact the instructor outside of regularly scheduled office hours by email at the instructor's university email address (omsmith@sfasu.edu), by telephone at the instructor's office phone number (936-468-2367), or by using the email function or the instant message function on the university's Desire2Learn (D2L) website.

d. 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. Near the end 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) 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:** NO SCHEDULED CLASS
- **Week 2 (January 22 and January 24):** Orientation; Foundations I
- **Week 3 (January 29 and January 31):** Foundations II
- **Week 4 (February 05 and February 07):** Primal (Tribal) Religions I
- **Week 5 (February 12 and February 14):** Primal (Tribal) Religions II
- **Week 6 (February 19 and February 21):** Judaism I
- **Week 7 (February 26 and February 28):** Judaism II
- **Week 8 (March 04 and March 06):** Christianity I
- **Week 9 (March 11 and March 13):** NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
- **Week 10 (March 18 and March 20):** Christianity II
- **Week 11 (March 25 and March 27):** Islam I
- **Week 12 (April 01 and April 03):** Islam II
• Week 13 (April 08 and April 10): Hinduism I
• Week 14 (April 15 and April 17): Hinduism II
• Week 15 (April 22 and April 24): Buddhism I
• Week 16 (April 29 and May 01): 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.

Student Wellness and Well-Being

1. SFASU values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seek help. 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. The Dean of Students office
   Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby
   (936) 468-7249
   www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents
dos@sfasu.edu
   b. SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic
   Human Services Building 202
   (936) 468-1041
c. Health and Wellness Hub ("The Hub")
Corner of East College and Raguet St.

936-468-4008
www.sfasu.edu/thehub
thehub@sfasu.edu

To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person -- mind, body and spirit.

Services include:

• Health Services
• Counseling Services
• Student Outreach and Support
• Food Pantry
• Wellness Coaching
• Alcohol and Other Drug Education

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