

RP\$ 557-T7 WORLD RELIGIONS\$ PATH\$ TO HEALING

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Tuesdays, March 17 through April 28, 2020

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Individual student meetings by request

Course Materials:

Huston Smith, *The Illustrated World Religions: A Guide to our Wisdom Traditions*

Other Assigned Videos and Readings

Individual visits to religious places of worship and individual interviews with persons from one of the major world religions presented in the course.

Course Description:

The core question that people have asked from the beginning of reflective thought can be summed up in one sentence: What is the meaning or purpose of my life? In a world filled with conflict and war, in a country held bound by consumerism and fear, the answers provided by some of the major world religions can show us ways to live a vibrant life. Pre-supposing a basic Christian grounding of the majority of class participants, we will study the age-old wisdom found in Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism and Islam, with emphasis on how this knowledge can energize us to become peacemakers and healers of our global home.

Course Objectives:

- Students will learn the basic, classic beliefs of at least the five world religions noted above.
- Students will be exposed to current practices and beliefs through credible sources online, in readings and through local resources.
- Students will enter into written and verbal dialogue regarding the classic and modern religious practices, in relation to their own religious beliefs and the call to peaceful healing of our global home.
- Students will approach the course content using open and appropriate critical thinking techniques.
- Student writing will use language that is clear, fluent, and consistent with conventions of Standard English.
- Students will use and document sources properly.

Expectations of Students:

- That students will carefully read the primary Huston Smith Text and will view all other assignments in light of his presentation of core religious beliefs.
- That students will complete assignments carefully, and in light of key life questions listed below.
- That students will participate fully during the class meetings, through active participation as well as respectful listening and reflective thinking.

- Since this is a course based on an adult learning model, with fewer actual class meetings, students will be prepared to spend extensive time each week on the class assignments as well as any Blackboard discussions and will be present at each class meeting.
- Students will be respectful of other beliefs and professorial and student presentations.
- Students will follow the Mount's Academic Honesty Policy: Students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the Mount's Academic Honesty Policy. This policy is found at <http://registrar.msje.edu/undergraduate-catalog/rights-policies/academic-policies/academic-honesty/>. We will follow the Mount's undergraduate policy.
- **Disability Policy:**
- *In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Mount St. Joseph University provides academic adjustments and auxiliary aids for students with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit or restrict one or more major life activities such as walking, seeing, hearing, or learning. Students with disabilities should contact the Learning Center at 513-244-4202, located in room Seton 156, to present documentation and develop individualized accommodation plans. Further questions can be directed to the University's Acting 504 Coordinator, Heather Crabbe, J.D., Associate Provost for Academic Support at 513-244-4631 or at heather.crabbe@msje.edu. Students who have already registered with MSJ Disability Services are encouraged to discuss their accommodations with their course faculty at the beginning of each semester. Additional information can be found at <http://www.msje.edu/academics/disability-services/>.*
- **Incomplete Grades:** An "I" grade is only assigned by an instructor for a student who has made significant academic progress in the course, but for a serious reason has not fulfilled all requirements. A student must initiate a request for an "I" (incomplete) grade with the instructor by the last week of classes. The completed form must be submitted by the student to the Office of the Registrar prior to exam week. The student's petition may be approved or denied by the instructor. Please consult the MSJ Catalog for complete details.

We will look at each of the World's Religions; we study in light of the following Life Questions:

- What is the meaning of life? Why are we here?
- What is the meaning of suffering? Why do we suffer?
- What does the particular religion believe about a Divine Being (God)?
- What are the primary virtues and values of this religion?
- What is true happiness and peace and how does one achieve it?
- What is their belief about death and beyond (after) death?
- How might this understanding help to contribute to world peace and healing?

Use these questions as you study each of the religions presented through this class.

Pre-Assignment:

In the Huston Smith text, read the Preface, Chapter I: Point of Departure, and Chapter X: A Final Examination. Summarize Smith's overview of what he hopes the text will accomplish in this course. Be sure to cite passages in Smith to support your answer.

Read Chapter VIII in Smith on Christianity. Answer in depth the seven major life questions listed above, in light of this Chapter. Please cite Smith to support your answers. At the end of each answer you may express your own beliefs if they differ or expand what you have written, but make it clear that these are your beliefs.

Please come prepared with a printed copy of this pre-assignment which will be shared in class and handed in to the professor at the close of class.

We will use the Mount's Blackboard system as appropriate. TBD at the first class meeting.

TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

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| March 17 | Overview of Course and Introductions
Pre-Assignment
Pre-lecture Hinduism |
| Assignment: | Smith on Hinduism and Life Questions
Youtube.com: Bill Moyers and Huston Smith, <i>The Wisdom of Faith</i> , Hinduism
Also BBC.com Culture: How India's Ancient Faiths Are Being
Rewritten
Write a brief reflective Essay on Smith and the Life Questions (site sources) with
a final paragraph on the BBC India today insights. Note if there are
differences between Smith and the BBC insights. |
| March 24 | Smith on Hinduism and Life Questions (including Moyer's interview)
Information on India Today
Pre-lecture Buddhism |
| Assignment: | Smith on Buddhism and Life Questions
Youtube.com: Bill Moyers and Huston Smith on Buddhism
Essay: What have you learned about Hinduism and Buddhism which surprised
you? How do their beliefs compare to your own on the Life Questions? |
| March 31 | Smith on Buddhism and Life Questions (including Moyers' interview)
Shared conversations on Essay
Pre-lecture Judaism |
| Assignment: | Smith on Judaism – Connection with the Life Questions
Youtube.com: Yale Center for Faith and Culture – Life Worth Living and the
Jewish Tradition with Rabbi Lord Jonathon Sacks. (Notes on 10-12 key
ideas presented here which surprised you. Explain.)
Youtube.com: CBS News on Jewish Temple shooting in Pittsburgh, PA |

April 7 Smith on Judaism and Life Questions
Yale Center for Faith and Culture key ideas
Pre-lecture Islam
Student two choices for final Presentations

Assignment: Smith on Islam and Life Questions
Youtube.com: BBC Documentary- Inside Islam. The Untold Story of Islam
(1.5 hours. What new insights have you gained from this documentary?)
Yale Center for Faith and Culture: A Life Worth Living with Shaykh Hamza
Yusuf (1 hr. 19 min.). 10-12 Key Ideas which surprised you. Explain.
Youtube.com: Islamic Center of Pittsburgh's response to Jewish Temple shooting
Very brief but important

April 14 **Smith on Islam**
BBC Documentary on Islam and Yale Center for Faith and Culture:
New Insights and responses
Pre-lecture Chinese Religions

Assignment: **Smith on Taoism and the life questions**
Find one or two credible sources which explain how religion functions
today in China. Take notes on Smith/Life Questions and these
Sources and be prepared to discuss in class.
Find some of the poetic wisdom of the Tao Te Ching (online or library source)
and come prepared to share one or two which strike you.

April 21	Taoism as above Possible class guest Final Presentation group work
Assignment:	Prepare Final Presentations: Explanations, Questions and More

April 28 **Final Presentations**
Class Conclusions

FINAL PRESENTATIONS due April 28th – In writing and in class presentation
Students will visit a local Temple, Mosque, Meditation Center OR will conduct an in depth interview with a credible representative of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam or Taoism using the Major Life Questions and questions regarding how their faith is lived today.

Grade Assessment will be based on the following:	
Pre-assignment	20%
Class Assignments	40%
Final Presentation	20%

Intelligent Class Presentation and Presence 20%