

Introduction to Religious Studies

Class Prospectus

Term: Winter 2010
Course Title: Introduction to Religious Studies
CRN: 34630
Course Number: R101
Class Location: BC-244
Class Times: Monday/Wednesday 12:00-1:20

How to Get Ahold of Me.

Instructor: Jon Goman
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Office Location: My office is at 2615 NW Arnold Way on the corner of Arnold Way, 26th St and Monroe St. It's across 26th from the Monroe St. Beanery in a blue shake single story house with a large red door, porch swing and picnic table in the front yard.

Office Hours: To be determined in class during the first class session.

You are welcome to drop in at my office at other times. If I am there I can usually make time for you. If I cannot, we can certainly arrange a time for you to come back. (Call first if you want to make sure I'm there.) **I do reserve a number of hours a week besides regular office hours for conversation/ tutoring/ answering questions with LBCC students. Don't hesitate to make an appointment.** Times are available in the evenings and on weekends.

The Purposes of the Class

1. To give you a working knowledge of the terms and ideas used in the academic study of religions.
2. To become acquainted with some of the methods used in the study of religion.
3. To acquaint you with a few of the major issues confronting scholars in the field of religious

studies.

Text-Books:

Your basic textbook is a Xerox copy of selections from John Magee's Religion and Modern Man

(This text was written before sexist language had become an issue. Were John to rewrite the text today I'm sure it would be Religion and Modern Humanity.) The next cheapest text I wanted to use cost \$75.00 for a glued spine paperback that would fall apart before the end of the term. I thought you'd prefer the cheaper book even if it is a bit dated.

You will be asked to read several supplementary texts. Copies of these are available for reading in several places:

1. At the Benton Center *Learning and Career Center*.
2. At my office
3. Almost all of them are also available at OSU's Valley Library.
4. Some of these documents are available on the Internet

Most of the supplementary readings are fairly short and arrangements can be made to Xerox copies for you if it is too inconvenient to read them in *The Learning and Career Center* or at my office or the Valley Library. You are responsible for the costs of Xeroxing.

Grading:

1. A quiz is possible at any time. Any quiz will cover matters of fact from your text book: the meanings of words, or concepts, identification of person mentioned and so forth. Quizzes will count for one-quarter or less of your grade.

2. Written assignments. Several written assignments are mentioned in the calendar section of this prospectus. Written assignments may count for up to 50% of your grade. The following conditions apply:

A. If I can read your handwriting, I do not object to handwritten papers.

B. If your written work has substandard grammar and/or spelling you may either do it over or accept a failing grade. There will be no late work penalty for papers done over for grammar/spelling problems so long as they are corrected and handed back to me within a week of my telling you the paper is unsatisfactory.

Extra Credit

Extra Credit is possible. Contact me if interested. But remember that there is no substitute for doing a competent job on assigned tasks.

Reading and Writing Assignments

Class Calendar: Readings and Assignments

January 4 and 6

Reading Assignment: Magee Chapter 2 What Religion Is
Chapter 3 Religions in Space and Time

Writing Assignment:

On the 13th there will be a quiz over CHAPTER 2 & 3. Make sure you know, especially, the four functions religion fills.

Be prepared to either attack or defend Tillich's understanding of religion as Ultimate Concern. We will have some public debate in class on Wednesday.

January 11 and 13

Reading Assignment: Magee Chapter 4 Hinduism and the Bhagavad-Gita
5 Buddhism and the Dhammapada
6 Taoism and the Tao Te Ching

Read **one** of these chapters and the text which goes along with it: the Bhagavad-Gita with chapter 4, the Dhammapada with chapter 5, or the **Tao Te Ching** with chapter 6. Copies of the texts are on reserve either at my office or at the Learning Center. Be prepared to discuss the following questions based on your reading of the text.

1. What does your text believe to be the main problem with which human beings must contend?
2. What does your text have to say about the elements of the good life?
3. How does each reading envision the goal of human existence?
4. How does each reading envision the ultimate?

Note: Copies of the Gita, Dhammapada and Tao Te Ching are readily available on the Internet. For the Bagavad-Gita check the following:

www.fordham.edu/halsall/india/indiasbook.html The Indian section of Halsall's *Internet History Sourcebooks Project*.) **Scroll down to "The Formation of Religious Tradition" and then to "Mahabharata" the first link is the best, but feel free to explore the others.**

www.Sacred-Texts.com/hin/index.htm

For the Tao Te Ching see: <http://www.taoteching.org/> or <http://www.sacred-texts.com/tao/taote.htm>

For the Dhammapada see: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/> (Scroll down to Dhammapada)
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/index.html> (Go to Tipitaka and hit "Sutta name"
then scroll down to *dhammapada*. See also the Fordham address above.
Scroll down to "Theravada/Hinayana Texts"

January 20th (Benton Center closed Jan. 18)

Reading Assignment: Magee Chapter 7 Modern Scholarship and the Bible
8 The Literature and Faith of the Old Testament

January 25 and 27

9 The Literature and Faith of the New Testament
10 The Authority and Significance of the Bible

Be prepared for a quiz on the content of chapters 7-10 on Feb 1.

February 1 and 3

Reading Assignment: Magee Chapter 11 The Mind of the Modern West
12 Religion Takes account of Modernity

Readings on Reserve: Poetry *Dover Beach* Matthew Arnold
More Sonnets on Christmas Alan Tate
Epistle to be Left in the Earth Archibald McLeish

Writing Assignment: Select one of the 3 poems which are reserve readings. Relate the poem to points in your assigned readings in Magee (Chapters 11-12. No more than three pages, please.

Due February 10

February 8 and 10

Readings Assignment: Magee Chapter 15 Religion and Society
16 Religion and Personality

February 17 (LBCC is closed February 15)

Reading Assignment: Magee chapter 17 The Ethics of Divine-Human Dialogue
18 the Responsible Person

February 22 and 24

19 The responsible Society
20 World Religions in Dialogue

Readings on Reserve:

Required: *Eruption of Truth: An Interview with Raimon Panikkar*

Optional: *God Has Many Names* John Hick chapters 4 and 6

Christian Theology in an Asian Setting Douglas Elwood

Buddhism and Christianity as Complimentary John Cobb

Assignment: Read one of the readings on reserve. What are the author's ideas about genuine religious dialogue? What do we have to agree on before we can talk to each other? **Due March 3**

March 1 and 3

Reading Assignment: Magee Chapter 21 The Logic of Religious Language

22 Science and Religion

23 The nature of Religious Knowledge

readings on reserve: Reinhold Niebuhr *The Truth in Myths* from The Nature of Religious Experience: Essays in honor of Clyde Macintosh

On Evolution: Walter Lippmann *Four Dialogues* from American Inquisitors: A Commentary on Dayton and Chicago

William Jennings Bryan *God and Evolution* New York Times February 26, 1922

Harry Emerson Fosdick *A Reply to Mr. Bryan in the Name of Religion* New York Times, March 12, 1922

Your assignment is summarize the position for evolution and that against it. You are not to decide who is right. You are to present the positions on either side. **Due March 10.**

March 8 and 10

Reading Assignment: Magee Chapter 24 the Knowledge of God

Chapter 25 The Problem of Evil

Reading on Reserve: Negative on the Existence of God

Bertrand Russell Why I am Not a Christian

Alan Isaacs The Survival of God in the Scientific Age

Positive on the Existence of God

William James The Will to Believe

C.S. Lewis "The Basis of Moral Law" extract from Mere Christianity

You will be divided into teams and each team will be assigned one set of readings, either for or against the existence of God. You will then summarize the reading and debate the issue with another team which has read the readings from the opposite side of the question.

March 17

Final Discussion, Clean up of unfinished presentations.