

<p>Professor: Terry D. Bilhartz</p> <p>Office: AB4 Room 441A</p> <p>Email: his_tdb@shsu.edu</p> <p>Office Phone: 936-294-1483</p> <p>Office Hours: MWF 10:00am-11:00am and by appointment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">HIS333: Religion in World History</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CID: 3497</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Class Time: TT, 11-12:30 MWF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Location: AB4 - 307</p>
--	--	--

Welcome to the web page for HIS333: Religion in World History for the Spring 2008 semester. Read over the entire syllabus, and then print it for further viewing. Please note that you are responsible for understanding all of the policies explained in this syllabus.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This is a three credit-hour course that surveys the origins, development, and modern manifestations of the major living world religions. It will discuss the peoples, times and places of the founders of each tradition, the classical literature within each tradition, and the significant groups within the religion that have influenced major events in world history. Students will attend lectures, complete assignments over primary and secondary source readings, and take three exams, including the final. Regular attendance is expected. All course materials, requirements, and policies are outlined below.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course is designed to provide students with a concise overview of the central teachings that are contained in the Hebrew *Bible*, the *New Testament*, the *Qur'an*, the *Upanishads*, the Buddhist *Pali Canon*, the Confucian *Five Classics*, the *Dao-de-jing* and the other classic texts that have shaped the courses of Western and Eastern civilizations. Sometimes we are reluctant to approach these sacred texts, not because we believe them to be irrelevant, but because we fear that they will be incomprehensible to our modern eyes. It is true that readers without expertise in the original languages and without a specialized knowledge of the ancient cultures will not always be able to understand the depth and subtleties of these sacred texts. Nonetheless, this course of readings rests upon the premise that the central teachings of the ancients are approachable and can be comprehended by non-specialized modern readers.

The IDEA Student Objectives for this course include:

Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends) related to the history of world religions

Learning how to find and use resources for answering questions

Developing a clearer understanding of an commitment to personal values

Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view

REQUIRED TEXT:

Terry D. Bilhartz, *Sacred Words: A Source Book on the Great Religions of the World* (McGraw-Hill, 2006). [Note: The PowerWeb supplements in the McGraw-Hill Online Resources also will be used. There is no extra charge for these supplements if a new text is purchased. If you purchase a used text, you may need to purchase the online supplement in addition to the used text.]

OFFICE HOURS: I hold regular office hours on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00 am to 11:00 am. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, I am in classes most of the day, but if you need to meet with me on these days, call me and we will try to arrange a time for an appointment. I strongly encourage you to come see me during these times to discuss any questions you might have about the class, study methods, and history in general. If you have other classes during my office hours, we can set up an appointment for another time. NOTE: The moment you sense that you are falling behind, PLEASE come see me. The sooner we discuss the problem the sooner you can get back on track, and the better you'll do in the class. If you just have a quick question and don't have time to stop by my office, you can always email me at his_tdb@shsu.edu.

EXAMINATIONS: During the semester, we will examine the Great Religions of the West, the Great Religions of the East, and the Great Indigenous Oral Traditions without written scriptures. After we complete our discussion for each group, we will take an in-class exam over the pertinent material. The third and final exam will be comprehensive. Each exam will consist of both objective and essay questions and will be worth 100 points. For every exam, you will need a scantron and a bluebook (or a bluebook scantron).

MAKE-UP EXAMS: If you miss a test due to illness or family emergency, you MUST have documentation of your absence, such as a doctor's note, and then you will make-up the exam(s) during the last week of the semester.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS: Two times during the semester you will turn in homework assignments. Each assignment will be worth 100 points each.

DESCRIPTION OF HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

Create and answer a three part exam over the required readings. You, in short, will act like a teacher and create (and answer) an exam over the material in the textbook.

Part 1: Objective Questions: The first section of the each exam will consist of 10 multiple choice questions from each of the assigned chapters (for 3 chapters, this is 30 multiple choice questions). Every question should include four answer options. The questions and answers should not include "typos" or errors in grammar. After each question you should include a short

paragraph that begins: “The correct answer, which can be found on page(s) ____, is ____.” [In the two blank spaces, fill in the page number or numbers where the answer to your question can be found, plus the correct answer option, i.e., A, B, C or D]. Following this sentence, briefly justify why it is important for students to know the answer to your question.

Part 2: Essay over Primary Sources: Create and answer an essay question that requires students to interpret and analyze the “Sources” sections of the assigned chapters in *Sacred Words*. The question must be comparative, that is, it should require students to contrast and compare what the scriptures of each of the religions in the assigned chapters say about the assigned essay topic. Note that you will be graded both on the quality of your question and on the quality of your answer. Your answer should be around 750 words.

Part 3: Essay (or essays) over Secondary Sources in the PowerWeb supplements: Create and answer one or two essay questions over at least two (preferably more than two) the PowerWeb supplements. Note that at least two PowerWeb articles must be cited, even if you ask a single question. The total word length should be around 600 words (i.e., 300 words per essay if you require two essays or a 600 word essay if you require only a single, comparative essay).

Post your exams on or before the due date in the Discussion Board in Blackboard.

ONLINE DISCUSSION OF HOMEWORK QUESTIONS: At times, you may strongly agree or disagree with the answers and justifications of your classmates. If so, please post your reactions to the assignments of your classmates. I will monitor the BLAKBOARD discussions and will consider participation in these online threads like in-class participation. I recognize that some students are more comfortable making oral comments, while others are more comfortable posting comments. All students, however, are expected to join in the class and online discussions in some way.

GROUP PROJECT: Each student will participate in a group project. The task of each group will be to create a 30 minute PowerPoint or a 20 minute PhotoStory documentary over an approved topic. Students who do not wish to participate in a group project may substitute a 15 page research paper over an approved subject for this assignment. Details regarding this project will be provided later in the semester. This project, which will be worth 100 total points, will be presented to the class during the last two weeks of the semester.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: You are expected to be an active participant in class discussion, and to do so, you must be in class. Emergencies, of course, may arise, so every student is allowed to miss **three** classes without penalty. Excessive absences, however, will result in a lowering of your final grade. Students also may be counted absent for coming in late and for sleeping or distracting other students during class. They may be asked to leave, as well, if this behavior continues. See Course policies at the bottom of the syllabus

GRADING: The total possible points that you can receive for the semester is 600 points (300 points from your exams, 200 points from your two homework assignments, and 100 points from the Group Project). To ensure a grade of A, B, C, or D, you will need to have an overall average, respectively, of 90%, 80%, 70% and 60%. If a class curve is warranted, however, bonus points may be awarded to those students with excellent attendance records.

COURSE GRADING:		GRADING SCALE:	
First Exam:	100 points	A	90%-100%
Second Exam:	100 points	B	80%-89%
Final Exam:	100 points	C	70%-79%
Homework: Religions of the West	100 points	D	60%-69%
Homework: Religions of the East	100 points (max)	F	59%-0%
Group Project	100 points (max)		
Total Possible Points	600 points		

ASSISTANCE WITH LEARNING: Before we go any further, I'd like to encourage you again to contact me and/or the [SAM Center](#) (Student Advising & Mentoring Center) as soon as you find yourself confused by the material we're reading and discussing or if you're falling behind on your work. Some of you may wish to work with the [SAM Center](#) even if you're doing well, but wish to do better. They are "a resource dedicated to helping students adjust to academic life at Sam Houston State University. Services available include career testing, aid with time management and/or study skills," and *much* more. These services are available to you as a student, and I encourage you to take advantage of them. You may contact them to make an appointment at SAMCenter@shsu.edu or by telephone (936) 294-4444.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Week	Lecture Topics	Readings	Assignments and Exams
Week of Jan 14	"Introduction to Course" Review Syllabus	<i>SW, Introduction</i>	Start reading
Week of Jan 21	Introduction to Judaism	<i>SW, Chap 1 Intro – Section 3</i>	
Week of Jan 28	Introduction to Christianity	<i>SW, Chap 2 Intro – Section 3</i>	
Week of Feb 4	Introduction to Islam	<i>SW, Chap 3 Intro – Section 3</i>	
Week of Feb 11	Comparing Western Religions on: Divine Law, Gender, Daily Living	<i>Discuss Part 1: Sections 4-6</i>	

Week of Feb 18	Comparing Western Religions on: Salvation, Worship, Afterlife	<i>Discuss Part 1: Sections 7-9</i>	Homework 1 due Feb 20
Week of Feb 25	Review for exam Exam 1	Study for exam	Exam 1 Feb 28
Week of Mar 3	Introduction to Hinduism	<i>SW, Chap 4</i> <i>Intro – Section 3</i>	
Week of Mar 10	Spring Break		
Week of Mar 17	Introduction to Buddhism	<i>SW, Chap 5</i> <i>Intro – Section 3</i>	
Week of Mar 24	Introduction to Chinese Religions	<i>SW, Chap 6</i> <i>Intro – Section 3</i>	
Week of Mar 31	Comparing Eastern Religions on: Divine Law, Gender and Daily Living	<i>Discuss Part 2: Sections 4-6</i>	Homework 2 due on April 1
Week of Apr 7	Comparing Eastern Religions on: Salvation, Worship and Afterlife Exam 2 – April 10	<i>Discuss Part 2: Sections 7-9</i>	Exam 2 Apr 10
Week of Apr 14	Introduction to Native American Religions	<i>SW, Chap 7</i> <i>Intro – Section 3</i>	
Week of Apr 21	Introduction to Africa and Oceania	<i>SW, Chaps 8 & 9</i> <i>Intro – Section 6</i>	
Week of Apr 28	Group Presentations		
Week of May 5	Group Presentations Review for final (Make up exams will be given during this week. Contact Dr. Bilhartz for the appointed		

	time of the exams.)		
Final Exam	The final exam will be comprehensive		

COURSE POLICIES

NOTE: Student enrollment in this course confirms that you have read and accepted these policies.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on the exam, paper, or project; failure in the course; and/or expulsion from the university. The SHSU Student Guidelines academic honesty policy states:

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

See <http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide.html>

Please read Jules Benjamin's (A Student's Guide to History) [discussion of plagiarism](#) as well.

Classroom Rules of Conduct:

Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. Cellular telephones and pagers must be turned off before class begins. Students are prohibited from using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, talking at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave class. Students who are especially disruptive also may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.

ADA Accommodations

Any student who may require an accommodation under the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the instructor on this matter as soon as possible to ensure a positive learning environment.

Classroom Visitors:

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

Religious Holidays: See University policies on religious holidays from the SHSU website.

Copyright Statement

The materials presented in this syllabus and course are copyrighted. Reproduction of these materials for commercial purposes without the express permission of the copyright holder is prohibited.

This course was designed and is maintained by Terry D. Bilhartz