

Colorado Women's College of the University of Denver

Exploring Religion: AHUM 1716

Spring 2016: Saturdays 1:30-5:20 p.m.

Location: Chambers Center (room TBD)



Instructor: Dr. Anne Allen

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I will respond to email or voicemail messages within 48 hours.

PREREQUISITES:

There are no prerequisites for this course

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores major world religions which have had a global reach and have shaped the American religious landscape. In addition to examining the origins, beliefs and practice of these religions we will explore the cultural contexts which inform modern day interpretations. The course will also examine the changing religious landscape in America and the contribution of world religions to American social and political life.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students will gain knowledge about world religions and their place in the American religious landscape
 - a. Students will become knowledgeable about the socio-political and cultural contexts that gave rise to some of the world's major religions.
2. Students will obtain the skills to critically examine the origins, beliefs and development of the major world religions
 - a. Students will learn to identify the roles of media, social movements and religious debates in the construction of gender stereotypes and their influence on women's leadership.
3. Students will develop an understanding and appreciation for feminist contributions to the study of religion and its impact on women.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will gain knowledge about the origins, beliefs and practices of world religions

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE: Diversity, Inclusiveness, Respect

CWC has a core commitment to fostering a diverse learning community that is inclusive and respectful. Our diversity is reflected by differences in race, culture, age, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and myriad other social identities and life experiences. The goal of inclusiveness, in a diverse community, encourages and appreciates expressions of different ideas, opinions, and beliefs, so that conversations and interactions that could potentially be divisive turn instead into opportunities for intellectual and personal enrichment.

A dedication to inclusiveness requires respecting what others say, their right to say it, and the thoughtful consideration of others' communication. Both speaking up AND listening are valuable tools for furthering thoughtful, enlightening dialogue. Respecting one another's individual differences is critical in transforming a collection of diverse individuals into an inclusive, collaborative and excellent learning community. Our core commitment shapes our core expectation for behavior inside and outside of the classroom.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Women's College fully endorses the University of Denver's Honor Code and the procedures put forth by the Office of Citizenship and Community Standards. Academic dishonesty—including plagiarism, cheating, and falsification of data and research—is in violation of the code and will result in a failing grade for the assignment or for the course.

As student members of a community committed to academic integrity and honesty, it is your responsibility to become familiar with the DU Honor Code and its procedures (www.du.edu/honorcode).

COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS: REQUIRED TEXTS

This is an Electronic Book. Access the book through Penrose Library.

You do not need to purchase a hard-copy

Neusner, Jacob. *Introduction To World Religions : Communities And Cultures*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 2010.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Print a copy of the syllabus posted in Canvas at the beginning of the term.
Bring a hard copy to class.**

Informed participation in class is contingent upon completing the assigned readings. The course includes in-class and online activities including lectures, blogs, class presentations and papers. In addition, students are encouraged to bring their life experiences, professional and personal insights to the discussion and the readings.

1. In-Class Participation: 24 pts

- a. Students must be present for all class sessions and must fully engage all in-class activities and readings in a thoughtful and respectful manner.
- b. Students must log into Blackboard throughout the week and access all course related materials, documentaries and supplemental sources posted in the folders for each session.
- c. Students are responsible for resolving any technical issues with the appropriate staff and must complete the assignments on the due date.
- a. All assigned readings must be completed before class. Each class session will begin with a brief overview of the previous session.
- b. **Students who miss more than two class sessions or two assignments must schedule a time to meet with the instructor.**

2. Course Log: 15 pts (5 points per log)

Summary: Students will provide a 1 page summary of their own insights about the readings.

- Students will clearly identify each insight
- Describe how and why this is significant

Submit your log in Canvas before the beginning of class.

3. Course Blog: 30 pts (3 blogs)

A blog serves as a great platform to exchange ideas, thoughts and reflect on a number of topics, experiences and situations. Integrating blogs into the classroom gives students the chance to explore and engage with fellow students considering the lessons and discussions of the classroom and with the material. For instructors using a blog helps provide a forum for rich dialogue sorted by multiple topics.

The course blog will be an open communication tool for students to interact with. As a student, you will be required to post a series of blog entries. The content will represent your personal ideas and thoughts on course related material. It can be a personal place to reflect, outlet to the course material or related stories and topics in the news, all of which your fellow classmates will be able to view and comment on. The blog for this course will represent a history of your thinking and reflect on your progress and cannot be made up.

- Each blog post will include the following components that will inform your responses:
 - Course Reading/Talks
 - Students will be required to draw supplementary materials pertaining to the topic in an effort to facilitate informed participation.
 - **Student Posts:** Posts must be submitted by due date **(2 page max)**
 - **Peer Responses:** Comment on a minimum of two students from your small group

4. Final Paper Topics (1 page summary):

Students will identify one religion they would like to explore. Identify a specific area of interest within that religion and the significance of your study. Write a one-page summary and include a short bibliography.

5. Final Paper (8-10 pages excluding cover page, abstract, reference pages): 15 pts

Your final project is a research paper and will expand on your chosen religion/topic. This paper involves critical thinking. The student will bring their knowledge from the course readings about religion, culture and its impact on women to the assignment. Students must use a minimum of 3 scholarly sources in addition to your course readings. The final paper must be typed, double-spaced, with appropriate citations. Students will present their final papers in class. See Below. The paper must include a section comparing/contrasting your chosen religion with the other religions studied in the course. Further instructions will be discussed in class

6. Presentations: 10 pts

Students will give a 15 min **formal presentation** of the final paper in class (time assigned may be changed based on the number of students). Plan for a 5 min Q and A following your presentation. This assignment is intended to be thought-provoking and students are encouraged to bring their critical thinking to the paper.

GRADING RUBRIC

Attendance and Participation	24
Course Log: Summary of Assigned Reading	15
Course Blog Online Session	30
Final Paper Topics	Written Summary: 3 Class Presentation: 3
Final Paper	15
Final Paper Presentation	10
	100

Percentage	Grade
95-100	A
90-94	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-78	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
60-63	D-
0-59	F

GRADING RUBRIC

Attendance is mandatory in all class sessions. Active participation in class and online discussions is also required and will be a determiner in a student's final grade. An absence, for any reason, will result in forfeiting points for in-class student presentations. These may not be made up in another class session. If an emergency arises, it is the student's responsibility to contact her instructor.

A grade of incomplete will not be granted under any circumstances.

<http://www.du.edu/registrar/records/incompletepolicy.html>

TECHNOLOGY USE IN THE CLASSROOM

In order to create and maintain an optimal learning environment in the classroom, students should use technology appropriately as directed by the instructor for the purposes of the course. Work done on laptops, cell phones, and other devices that is not relevant to the class can hinder the process of communication and shared discussion of ideas that require full engagement by all participants.

ADA ACCOMMODATIONS

Students who require accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act must contact the instructor to discuss their needs. Failure to notify the instructor immediately may hinder the college's ability to accommodate accordingly. Students with learning disabilities should also contact the University Disability Services Program at <http://www.du.edu/studentlife/disability/>. University Disability Services houses the Learning Effectiveness Program (LEP) and the Disability Services Program (DSP).

OBSERVATION OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Students wishing to observe a religious holiday not celebrated on the academic calendar may do so provided advanced written notice is given the instructor during the first two weeks of the quarter. With advanced written notice, the absence will be considered an excused absence. For additional information, contact DU's Center for Religious Services (<http://www.du.edu/crs/>).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Readings and assignments for March 26, 2016 must be completed prior to the first class session. Students are responsible for all supplemental readings/articles posted in Blackboard for each week.

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
3/26/16	Introduction to the course	Neusner: Introduction	
	Lecture: Defining Religion Film: America's New Religious Landscape		
4/2/16	Lecture: Hinduism	Neusner: Hinduism Chapter 4	Course Log1
4/9/16	Online	Documentary: Goddess Remembered	Blog 1
4/16/16	Lecture: Buddhism	Neusner: Buddhism Chapter 5	Course Log 2
4/23/16	Online	Documentary: A Song for Tibet	Blog 2
4/30/16	Lecture: Islam Short Film: Hijab	Neusner: Islam Chapter 3	Course Log 3
5/7/16	Online	Documentary: Inside Islam	Blog 3
5/14/16	Lecture: Final Paper Topics	Articles: Jainism, Sikhism, Bahai	Final Paper Topics
5/21/16	Lecture: New Religions	New Religions	
5/28/16	Final Paper Presentations		Final Paper

In-Class

Online