



ST ANDREW'S THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE (SATC)

COURSE NAME: INTRODUCTION TO WORLD RELIGIONS

COURSE CODE: WR200

COURSE CREDIT: 3

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course looks at five of the major World Religions in an effort to appreciate the religion of the “Other”. This course introduces the study of religion and the world religions of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity. The course examines the history, doctrines, beliefs, practices, and institutions of these religions. Thus as far as possible, each of these religions is being looked at from the perspective of the scholar/theologian/believer of the particular religious tradition.

AIM:

- To examine some of the major religions of the world (Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity) with a view that would result in knowing and appreciating them.
- To engage the “other” religions as possible holders of truth in pursuit of Truth itself.
- To explore the concept of ‘truth’
- To provide the opportunity to build civil and peaceful society
- To enable students to develop an appropriate response in the context of other world religions

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will be able to:

- Become acquainted with the many facets of religious phenomena.
- Appreciate a broad introduction to the world’s major religions.
- Become familiar with central figures, basic history, beliefs, culture and practices of the religious traditions of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity.
- Understand how these religions respond to the nature of the universe and the divine, human condition and identity, and human behaviour.
- Critically evaluate how these religions relate to modernity and the role and status of women.
- Think empathetically and critically about conflicting religious claims.

COURSE CONTENT:

- **Hinduism:**
- A History of Hinduism that includes:-
- The Pre-Vedic Period
- The Vedic Period
- The Classical Period
- The Medieval Period
- The Modern Period



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- Hindu Gods
- Literature of Hinduism
- The Castes
- Death and Rebirth
- Religious Designations
- Contemporary Forms of Hinduism:-
 - Absolutistic Hinduism
 - Theistic Hinduism
 - Activistic Hinduism (Militant)
 - **Islam**
- General Introduction
- Unity and Diversity within the Islamic Tradition
- Ethnic and Cultural Groups within Islam
- The Spread and Demographic Growth of Islam
- Islam as Religion:-
 - Private and Public aspects of Islam
 - Man and Woman
 - Islamic Practices and Institutions
 - The Doctrines and Beliefs of Islam
 - Teachings of Sufism
 - **Buddhism**
- General Introduction (History)
- Defining Buddhism
- Buddhism and Orthodoxy/Orthopraxy
- The Doctrinal Forms of Buddhism
- Buddhism in the World Today
- Buddhism and Science
- The Meaning of Emptiness
- **Judaism**
- A History of Judaism
- Who is a Jew/Jewish Ethnicity
- The Geographical Demograph of Judaism
- The Relationship of the Ethnic and Religions in Judaism
- The Problem of Diversity and Defining Judaism
- The Formation of Judaism
- The Judaism of Holocaust and Redemption
- The Power of Judaism and its Success

COURSE TEXTS:

National Geographic Book Survey. (1971). *Great Religions of the World*. Washington: National Geographic Society.

Oxtoby, W.G. (Ed.). (2002). *World Religions : Eastern traditions*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Oxtoby, W.G. (Ed.). (2002) *World Religions : Western traditions*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Sharma, A. E. (1993). *Our religions*. NY: Harper Collins.



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OTHER READINGS:

HINDUISM:

Brockinton, J .L. (1980). *The sacred thread: Hinduism in its continuity and diversity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Dowson, J. (1982). *A Classical dictionary of Hindu mythology and religion*. Calcutta, Allahabad, Bombay and New Delhi: Rupa & Co.

Hopkins, T.J. (1971). *The Hindu religious tradition*. Belmont. CA: Dickenson Publishing Co.

Kanitkar, H. (1994). *The Hindu scriptures*. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann.

Kinsley, D.R.(1982). *Hinduism*. New Jersey: Prentice – Hall.

Shinn L.D (1987). *The dark Lord. Cult images and the Hare Krishnas in America*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.

Watson, F. (1974). *A Concise history of India*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Zaehner R.C. (1966). *Hinduism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

JUDAISM:

Alexander, P.S. (1984). *Textual sources for the study of Judaism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

De Lange, N. (1986). *Judaism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Epstein, I. (1959). *Judaism: A historical presentation*. London: Penguin.

Neusner, J. (1996). *Rabbinic Judaism: An historical introduction* . Minneapolis: Fortress.

Ucko, H. (1994). *Common roots: New horizons*. Geneva: World Council of Churches.

Zuidema,W. (1987). *God's partner: An encounter with Judaism*. London: SCM Press.

BUDDHISM:

A Short history of Buddhism (1960). (S. Webb-Boin Trans.). Bombay: Chetana Ltd..

Bombay, H. (1976). *Buddhism in the modern world*. NY: Macmillan.

Conze, E. (1959). *Buddhism: Its essence and development* New York: Harper & Brothers.

Harvey, P. (1980). *An Introduction to Buddhism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Robinson, R.H. & Johnson, W.L. (1982). *The Buddhist Religion*. MA: Wadsworth.

ISLAM:

Burckhardt, T. (1990). *An introduction to Sufism*. Wellingborough: Aquarian Press.

Danner, V. (1988). *The Islamic tradition: An introduction*. New York: Amity House.

Guillaume, A. (1983). *Islam*. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd.

Lings, M. 1988). *Muhammed: His life based on the earliest sources*. London: Allen and Unwin.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Lectures

Discussions

‘Modern comments’ and the students’ response are encouraged.

In terms of a methodology, students present a draft proposal of a topic of interest that is critiqued by the rest of the students and the facilitator.

This is worked and reworked. The entire process requires ‘thinking.’



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COURSE ASSESSMENT:

Attendance & Participation	10%
Research Paper	40%
Exam (written)	25%
Final Exam (written)	25%
TOTAL	100%