



WORLD RELIGIONS: A CASE FOR JUSTICE & PEACE

(RELG 305) Morgan State University

Department of Philosophy & Religious Studies, Spring 2018

Dr. Morales

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In your emails, please include: your name & the course & section number.

Office: Holmes Hall Room 302 | MWF 9-10am, 12-1pm, & by appointment.

Course Description

This course will introduce you to the dynamic and influential world religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. We will approach these traditions as fields of inquiry within the academic study of religion by focusing on their mythical, ritual, doctrinal, ethical, experiential, institutional, and material dimensions. Additionally, we will explore how these religious traditions have presented challenges to but also contributed to justice and peace. We will engage the Baltimore Mural Project in order to explore complex relations between religion, art, and social inequities within the city. The purpose of this course is therefore to provide you with a set of analytical tools and an introductory understanding of world religions in order to become better informed citizens of multi-religious societies and to critically explore and develop new avenues for justice and peace.

Course Goals - Upon Successful Completion of the Course, students should be able to:

- Clearly describe the diversity that exists within 5 world religions by using historically specific examples.
- Describe, assess, and develop arguments/thesis regarding religion and society.
- Analyze religious phenomena through the lenses of philosophy, history, anthropology, sociology, political science, architecture, and urban planning.
- Describe and apply religious studies concepts and categories to contemporary issues.

Required Texts

Understanding World Religions: A Road Map for Justice and Peace, Second Edition. By David Smith & Elizabeth Burr.

Other materials will be provided through <https://morgan.blackboard.com> for you to download and print.

Grading

Students will receive letter grades for this class based on the following:

1. Quizzes (450pts):

You will have 15 weekly quizzes worth 30pts each. Each quiz will consist of 10 multiple choice & True or False questions. You will have 7min to complete each quiz - make sure to complete the reading before starting the quizzes or you will not have enough time to do well on the quizzes. The weekly quizzes will be available between noon on Fridays until 11:59pm on Sundays.

2. Baltimore Mural Project (350pts):

The Baltimore Mural Project (BMP) at Morgan State University seeks to connect Art Infused Learning to community engagement in local, national and global issues by focusing on mural art in Baltimore. For resources and photo examples, see <http://baltimoremuralproject.blogspot.com/>. Though the BMP will be conducted in small groups, 3-4 people, each member will submit their own unique reports and presentations. The BMP steps include: [1] assess various definitions of religion; [2] find, photograph, analyze and upload murals that have religious or spiritual significance; [3] research the area; [4] research the production (who & why) and reception (use either existing archives or interview using the BMP survey) of one of the photographed murals. [5] Create

a proposal for the production of a new mural (include a mural site, mock rendition, & written statement of the proposed mural's purpose). Each step is worth 70 pts. Click here for [a detail list on the BMP assignment steps](#).

3. Attendance & Participation (200pts):

Students are to do the assigned readings in advance, attend each course lecture, actively participate in class, and to **take 1pg of notes per lecture in a journal (title each page with the date of the lecture; journals will be collected at the end of each section)**. Punctual and full **attendance** is required and necessary for successful completion of the course. You have 2 allowed absences, *excused or unexcused*. **You will lose 10 course points per absence** after the second, *excused or unexcused* (3 additional absences may be excused by attending approved lectures or site visits) - see exceptions below for students with documented disability and student athletes.

Total Grade Rubric: 900-1,000=A 800-899=B 700-799=C 600-699=D below 600=F

Policies

- During lectures or sections, all cell phones (including smart phones), laptops and tablets must be turned off, unless instructed otherwise.
- Critical and lively discussions are encouraged; Courteous and civil engagement is required.
- Please familiarize yourself with and refer to the Morgan State University code of Student Conduct (<http://www.morgan.edu/Documents/constituent/CurrentStudents/Code-StudentConduct.pdf>) and the Academic Integrity policies and procedures, including those regarding plagiarism (https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B__JmjFwhOJbRVI4cnpDSEtDa2M/view?usp=sharing).
- Assignment due dates are firm, cannot be made up and will be based on assigned readings and all materials covered in class sessions, including lectures, discussions & videos. If you will be absent the day of an exam or assignment: notify me by Email & attach the assignment before it is due.
- If you require an accommodation due to a disability, please contact the Office of Student Disability Support Services (SDSS) to register. More information regarding the intake procedure can be found on the SDSS website: <http://www.morgan.edu/SDSS>. It is your responsibility to request an accommodation from SDSS before or at the beginning of the semester.
- Failure to follow these class policies may result in a lower or failing grade for the course.

Schedule of Topics & Readings

This is a rough & flexible outline of our course schedule: Exact due dates & reading assignments will be announced in class. Students are expected to read the assigned readings before beginning course quizzes.

Intro to World Religions and the Baltimore Mural Project at Morgan (Jan 23)

1. Hindu Religions

ch. 1 Hindu Worldviews - Read for Quizzes 1-3

BMP Step1 - **Presentations TBA; Final Draft Due TBA**

2. Buddhist Religions

ch. 2 Buddhist Worldviews - Read for Quizzes 4-6

BMP Step2 - **SmartThinking Darft Due TBA; Final Draft Due TBA**

3. Jewish Religions

ch. 3 Jewish Worldviews - Read for Quizzes 7-9

Mandatory BMP Annotated Bibliography workshop - **TBA** (during regular class hour)

Mandatory BMP visit to [the Maryland Historical Society](#) (\$10 fee) - **TBA**

BMP Step3 - **Presentations TBA; Final Draft Due TBA**

4. Christian Religions

ch. 4 Christian Worldviews - Read for Quizzes 10-12

BMP Step4 - **SmartThinking Draft Due TBA;** **Final Draft Due TBA**

5. Islamic Religions

ch. 5 Muslim Worldviews - Read for Quizzes 13-15

BMP Step5 - **SmartThinking Draft Due TBA;**

Final Draft Due day of Final Exam: TBA

Quiz Readings

Use the descriptions provided in parenthesis instead of page numbers if using the digital text.

On UWR Ch1 - Hindu Traditions

Q1 - Read our course syllabus & read UWR (Understanding World Religions), p29-32 - **Due TBA**

Q2 - UWR p32 (from "Doctrinal...Dimension") - p39 (to "Issues for Justice and Peace") - **Due TBA**

Q3 - UWR p39 ("Issues for Justice and Peace") - p49 (to End) - **Due TBA**

On UWR Ch2 - Buddhist Traditions

Q4 - UWR p.52 (from Beg.) - p61 (to "Ethical & Legal Dimension") - **Due TBA**

Q5 - UWR: p61 (from "Ethical & Legal Dimension") - p68 (to "Spokespersons for Justice & Peace") - **TBA**

Q6 - UWR: from "Spokespersons for Justice & Peace" on p68 - to END on p76 - **Due TBA**

On UWR Ch3 - Jewish Traditions

Q7 - UWR p79 (from " Beg) - p91 (to "Legal Dimension") - **Due TBA**

Q8 - UWR p91 (from "Ethical & Legal Dimension") - p97 (up to "Issues for Justice & Peace") - **Due TBA**

Q9 - UWR p97 (from "Issues for Justice & Peace") - p107 (to END) - **Due TBA**

On UWR Ch4 - Christian Traditions

Q10 - UWR p110 (from the Beg of the Christianity chapter) - p121 (to "Practical & Ritual Dimension) - **TBA**

Q11 - UWR p121 (from "Practical and Ritual Dimension") - p129 (to "Issues for Justice & Peace") **Due TBA**

Q12 - UWR p129 (starting "Issues for Justice & Peace") - p140 (to End) - **Due TBA**

On UWR Ch5 - Islamic Traditions

Q13 - UWR p141 (from: "Beg") - p150 (to: "ritual dimension") - **Due TBA**

Q14 - UWR p150 (from: "Ritual Dimension") - p159 (to "Crusades") - **Due TBA**

Q15 - UWR p.159 (from "Crusades") - p168 (to End) - **Due TBA**