

**C-580: WORLD RELIGIONS—
AN INTRODUCTION**

Spring 2012 (Thursdays 2:15–5:00 PM; *FBB Home, *not* CTS Room 158)

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Course Description

In this course we explore the features and histories of several religions that have had a major impact on human life and that Christians encounter today in many parts of the world—including (increasingly) North America. We attempt to understand these different traditions in themselves and to reflect, as well, on how they interact with one another, both in the present and in the past. Because Christianity is studied extensively in other courses offered at CTS, we will not examine Christianity separately, although it will provide a basis for comparisons.

Religions are embodied not only in ideas and texts but also in rituals, architecture, and other arts. They are also embodied in people and institutions. You are encouraged to attend to visit religious settings and to attend religious events in the area. We will also take advantage of electronic media.

Due to increased world-wide interest in Islam, we begin with Islam, after introducing religion(s) and spirituality more generally. Next we take up Hinduism (with which Islam has had much interaction). Then we move on to Buddhism and, briefly, East Asian traditions. In the end, we return to the “West” for Judaism, with which Christianity and Islam share a heritage as “children of Abraham.”

Assigned Books

Breuilly, O’Brien, Palmer, *Religions of the World* (basic, clear, with many illustrations)

English & Feng, trans., *Tao Te Ching* (selections to be assigned)

B. Stoler Miller, trans. *Bhagavad-Gita* (selections tba)

W. Oxtoby & A. Segal, *World Religions: A Concise Introduction* (in one volume)

Other

Internet and other media resources as identified in class and online (InsideCTS)

Materials placed on reserve in the CTS library

***Location**

Due to recent Achilles tendon surgery, the professor has permission from Dean Holly Heaton to meet this class in his home, as needed. Until further notice, please find your way on time to 5022 Melbourne Rd, Indianapolis 46288. Home phone: (317) 298-8682. Only ten minutes from CTS, off North Kessler (38th St. exit), turning west (left) on 48th street for five blocks to Melbourne Rd, then north (right) for 1.5 blks. House on left in middle of second block of Melbourne Rd. See Mapquest.

Requirements

- (1) Careful reading of all course material by the date for which it is assigned
- (2) Active participation in class
- (3) One formal paper (with notes), approximately 8-10 pages in length, double spaced, on topic approved by your professor; or some alternative consistent with the aims of the course.
- (4) Three Term Exams
- (5) Final Exam

Grades

Class Participation	10%
Paper	15%
Three Term Exams	60%
Final Exam	20%

An “A” will be given for outstanding work; a “B” for work that is commendable overall; a “C” for work that is fair but deficient in some important respect(s); a “D” for work that is marred by serious flaws; an “F” for work that falls far below acceptable standards for graduate work. Please keep in mind that all professors at CTS are encouraged to guard against “grade inflation.”

Late Work

Late work is penalized at the rate of five points per day. If you need an extension, you must have a good reason and must talk with the professor—preferably ahead of time. *No grade will be given for work handed in after the end of the semester*, apart from work done to satisfy an official incomplete.

Absences

A class such as this one depends on continuity within the group. That is possible only when attendance is regular. This class follows the CTS attendance policy.

Incompletes

A grade of “incomplete” is given only when there is an emergency or serious illness; any incomplete must be approved by the Dean’s Office.

Plagiarism and Multiple Submissions

Work for this class must be done in conformity with CTS policies on plagiarism. If you have questions about whether something is plagiarism, ask the professor. In any case, consult standard guidelines. Permission is required if you wish to submit written work that makes use of material also submitted for a grade in another class.

Electronic/Digital Devices

We follow CTS policy. No use of cell phones or other digital media in class except as specifically approved (as in taking class notes or reading assignments with e-books).

COURSE OUTLINE (subject to revision)

For each religion, first read the brief chapter in *Religions of the World* (ed. Breuilly et al) and at least the 1st half of the chapter in *World Religions* (ed. Oxtoby & Segal), to be finished before the second session on that religion.

Jan. 19	Introduction: Religions in and out of this world. For this class please read in advance Chapter 1 in Oxtoby and Segal, <i>World Religions</i>: “The Nature of Religion.”
Jan. 26	Islam, cont.
Feb. 2	Islam, cont.
Feb. 9	Exam One. Followed by video on Islam
Feb. 16	Hinduism, cont.
Feb. 23	Hinduism, cont; Bhagavad-Gita, selections tba
March 1	READING WEEK (no class)
March 8	Hinduism, concl.
March 15	Exam Two. Buddhism: Beginning (Video in Class)
March 22	Buddhism, cont.
March 29	Buddhism and Taoism (Tao Te Ching, selections tba)
April 5	EASTER RECESS
April 12	Exam Three. Judaism
April 19	Judaism
April 26*	Judaism, concl. *PAPERS DUE
May 3	Final Exam