

**HURON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
COURSE OUTLINE 2010-11**

**RELIGIOUS STUDIES 2130 and 2131E
An Introduction to the Living Religions of the World**

Instructor: Dr. Bill Acres email: bacres@gtu.net ; TA: Olivia Tang email: otang3@uwo.ca

Office: Room V134

Telephone: 438-7224 x 608

Class Schedule: Wednesday, 7-8:50 pm

Room: W12

Office Hours: Wednesday afternoon 3-5, or by appointment on Wed (before class)

Purpose of the Course:

The purpose of the course is to develop students' understanding of the living religions of the world with a major emphasis on their origins, historical development, teachings and practices. The current practices of these religions, both within their region (country) of origin, and abroad, will be discussed.

Religions are not "linear" or logical. Much of the material will be presented in a linear fashion, but there are thematic areas of some complexity—of special note are the concepts of Brahman-Atman in Hindu Upanishads; Anatta in Buddhism; Sacraments and the Trinity in Christianity; but, otherwise, the materials are interesting. There are great similarities between religions. Canada is a thriving multicultural society. The study of religions is a part of Canadian culture and society.

Course Content:

The course provides a detailed analysis of the major beliefs and practices of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Bahai.

Course Delivery:

Most materials will be covered in lectures and discussion sessions. It is a very good policy to attend all lectures—history shows that the highest grades follow nearly perfect attendance. The room is a wired amphitheatre, meaning that even whispering can be heard there. There will also be various guest lecturers throughout the duration of the course. Attendance is mandatory and any material presented is testable. These speakers have been brought in to enrich your learning experience by allowing students to encounter and dialogue with someone from within the faith.

Required Text

1. *World Religions Today*, ed. John Esposito, Paul Bowlby *et al.*, Oxford University Press, 2009.

Course Evaluation:

RS 2130

1st Term Midterm: Hindu, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikh (20%)

1st Term Exam: Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto and comparative questions (25%)

2nd Term Midterm: Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism (20%)

Final Examination: 2 hours: Scantron with Essay Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Baha'I (35%)

Term Tests: A short test of one hour will be given in each term covering lecture and text-book materials. These are scheduled for: **Wednesday, November 3rd; Wednesday, February 23rd. All tests are to be written in the Kingsmill Room.**

1st Term Exams and Final Exam: A two-hour examination in December will be written during the examination period; a two-hour final exam will be written during the Exam Period in April. Students will check the Registrar's examination timetable for the day, hour, and location of the examination.

Items to Note:

1. The term test will comprise of multiple choice and true/false questions. The December and Final examination will contain multiple choice, true/false questions and an essay question. Students are **entirely responsible for the content of their Scantron, as reviews of the Scantrons are disallowed.**

2. Any student who fails to write an examination on the scheduled date and time will be given zero on that examination. (Make-ups are only provided if the accommodations are approved according to senate policy and special exam policy – see below.)

3. **Special Examination:** The policy of Huron University College is as follows:
PLEASE NOTE VERY CAREFULLY: the Instructor cannot give special examinations without documentation.

'A special examination is any examination other than the regularly scheduled examination. Special exams will be allowed only on receipt of medical documentation verifying a serious illness that kept the student from writing the exam as originally scheduled. Such documentation is strictly confidential and kept in the student's file. In the case of missing a final exam for documented medical reasons, a special exam will be set within thirty days.

'Special examinations will never be granted under the following circumstances: employment interviews, weddings, bar mitzvahs, family reunions, vacations, misreading the exam timetable, oversleeping. Neither will examinations be granted in order to facilitate transportation arrangements, such as booking flights home for Christmas or summer vacation. It is the policy of Huron University College to discourage informal arrangements by faculty which circumvent this regulation.' As the tests I and II are scheduled on Wednesdays in class time. Therefore, it is students' **ONLY** priority at that time to attend class. Midterm conflicts will not be considered reason for special examinations, and must be negotiated with any Instructor whose scheduling postdates this outline (September 13). All tests are held in the Kingsmill Common Room, Huron University College. They are proctored, and no questions are allowed during the test. If there is an error on the test, please notify the proctor **AFTER**

the test—the Proctor will tell the Instructor and the error will be noted on the Scantron master key.

Course Schedule

September 2010

15: Introduction: World Religions, Acres
22: Hinduism I
29: Hinduism II

October 2010

6: C M Jain Memorial Lecture
13: Buddhism I
20: Buddhism II
27: Sikh (and Field Trip TBA)

November 2010

3: **Midterm (7-8pm, Kingsmill)**
10: Chinese religions
17: Confucius
24: Tao

December 2010

1: Shinto

December Examination: Consult the examination schedule (Chinese religions and comparison questions only)

January 2011

5: Zoroastrianism
12: Judaism
19: Synagogue
26: Guest Lecturer

February 2011

2: Christianity I
9: Christianity II: College Chapel
16: Conference Week
23: **Midterm (7-8 pm Kingsmill)**

March 2011

2: Islam I
9: Mosque Visit
16: Islam II
23: Baha'i faith: Guest speaker
30: Summary of themes

April 2011

6: Review
Final Exam: TBA

The above is the general pattern for the lectures: much of the material will overlap into the following week. Not all of the material on the following sheet will be covered in class. Each student must, therefore, read the appropriate required text in addition to the lecture material.

Religious Studies: Lecture materials covered.

Introduction:

1. What is religion?
2. Importance of understanding the world religions.
3. Characteristics of religion

Hinduism:

1. Origins: Historical development
2. Scriptures: Vedas, Upanishad, Bhagavad Gita
3. Major beliefs and practices:
 - a) The Absolute (Brahman) and the soul (Atman)
 - b) Bondage and paths of liberation

- c) The law of Karma
- d) The four goals of life
- e) The four stages of life
- f) Hindu trinity, daily worship (puja)
- 4. Hinduism at present

Buddhism:

- 1. Life of Gautma Buddha
- 2. Scriptures of Buddhism
- 3. Four Noble Truths: Middle path, Nirvana
- 4. Rituals, Symbols (three refuges)
- 5. Concept of No-self
- 6. Sects of Buddhism
- 7. Buddhism outside India

Jainism:

- 1. Life of Mahavira
- 2. Jain writings
- 3. Basic concepts: living and non-living
- 4. The five great vows, non-violence
- 5. Types of Jain practices

Sikhism:

- 1. The life of the founder, Guru Nanak
- 2. Political history of Sikhism
- 3. Scripture of Sikhism
- 4. Basic teachings
- 5. Sikh symbols (5 k's)
- 6. Variations within Sikhism
- 7. Sikh ceremonies and observances

Introduction to Chinese and Japanese religions

Confucius: Qong Zi's teachings

- 1. Historical background to his writings
- 2. Life of Confucius: teacher
- 3. Literature of Confucianism: Analects
- 4. Teachings of Confucius: a) Ethical principles b) religious teachings
- 5. Confucianism and the modern world.

Taoism:

- 1. Origin and life of Lao Tzu
- 2. Scriptures of Taoism
- 3. Taoism as philosophy
- 4. Taoism as religion
- 5. Taoism today

Shinto:

- 1. Origin and historical development
- 2. Basic teachings: Kami, Nature, Human Beings
- 3. Forms of Shinto: Primitive, State (Tennoism) and Domestic (popular)
- 4. Religious festivals and observances
- 5. Shinto in present time

Second Term

Zoroastrianism:

1. Life of Zoroaster
2. Zoroastrian Scriptures
3. Basic Teachings and Practices: a) Nature of God; b) Zoroastrian Ethics and Humans; c) Worship and Rituals; d) Tower of Silence

Judaism:

1. Historical background
2. Scripture: The Hebrew Bible
3. Basic Teachings and beliefs: The Absolute, the World, Humans
4. Jewish Observances and Festivals
5. Major groups of Judaism

Christianity:

1. Life of Jesus Christ
2. Scripture: The Bible
3. Major Teachings of Jesus: a) The Kingdom of God; b) Religious teachings; c) Ethical teachings; d) Trinity
4. Worship and Sacraments
5. Major groups of Christians

Islam:

1. Life of the Prophet Muhammed
2. Scripture: The Quran
3. Major beliefs and the five Pillars of Wisdom
4. Islamic Observations and Festivals'
5. Sects of Islam

Bahai:

1. Origin and development of Bahai
2. Life of the Founder: Bahauallah
3. Major teachings and practices
4. Structure of Bahai faith
5. Bahai and the modern world.



Appendix to Course Outlines

Prerequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Conduct of Students in Classes, Lectures, and Seminars

Membership in the community of Huron University College and the University of Western Ontario implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon

registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. The academic and social privileges granted to each student are conditional upon the fulfillment of these responsibilities.

In the classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Students can avoid any unnecessary disruption of the class by arriving in sufficient time to be seated and ready for the start of the class, by remaining silent while the professor is speaking or another student has the floor, and by taking care of personal needs prior to the start of class. If a student is late, or knows that he/she will have to leave class early, be courteous: sit in an aisle seat and enter and leave quietly.

Please see the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* at:

http://www.huronuc.ca/students/student_life/student_policies

Technology

It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited to, laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is an academic offence and will be treated as such. Students who are in doubt as to the nature of this offence should consult their instructor, Department Chair or the Dean, as well as the Huron University College Statement on Plagiarism, available at the reference desk in the HUC Library and at <http://www.huronuc.ca/library/Citing/>. In addition, students may seek guidance from a variety of current style manuals available at the Reference Desk in the HUC Library.

Information about these resources can be found in LibGuides on the main page:

<http://www.huronuc.ca/library>.

Students found guilty of plagiarism will suffer consequences ranging from a grade reduction to failure in the course to expulsion from the university. In addition, a formal letter documenting the offence will be filed in the Dean's Office, and this record of the offence will be retained in the Dean's Office for the duration of the student's academic career at Huron University College.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence,

- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

Statement on Academic Offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>

Policy on Special Needs

Students who require special accommodation for tests and/or other course components must make the appropriate arrangements with the Student Development Centre (SDC). Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at:

http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/?requesting_acc

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Academic Accommodation for Medical/Non-Medical Grounds

For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable SMC see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

[downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading]

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the instructor.

For non-medical grounds or for medical grounds when work represents less than 10% of the overall grade for the course, the student must submit a request to the instructor in writing prior to the due date of an assignment, and immediately in the case of a test. (Or as soon as possible following a medical emergency) Students are protected under the Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy and so written requests need only include a broad and general explanation of the situation, and the approximate length of time required. At the discretion of the instructor, the granting of extensions and re-scheduled tests may require the student to submit supporting either medical or non-medical documentation to the Academic Counsellor, who will then make the determination as to whether accommodation is warranted.

Class Cancellations

In the event of a cancellation of class, every effort will be made to post that information on the Huron website.

Accessibility

Huron University College strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that

respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place as, and in a similar way to, other customers. We welcome your feedback about accessibility at Huron. Information about how to provide feedback is available at: <http://www.huronuc.ca/accessibility>

Program and Academic Counselling

Religious Studies students registered at Huron who require advice about modules and courses in Religious Studies should contact Dean Danaher, wdanaher@huron.uwo.ca. Students should contact Debbie Chadwick or Kent Robinson, Academic Counsellor on other academic matters. See the Academic Counselling website for information on services offered.

http://www.huronuc.ca/students/service_centre/academic_counselling/