



## **PHIL 137 - Comparative Religions Course Outline**

**Approval Date:** 01/12/2017

**Effective Date:** 06/10/2017

### **SECTION A**

**Unique ID Number**

**Discipline(s)** Philosophy  
Philosophy  
Philosophy

**Division** Arts and Humanities

**Subject Area** Philosophy

**Subject Code** PHIL

**Course Number** 137

**Course Title** Comparative Religions

**TOP Code/SAM Code** 1509.00 - Philosophy / E - Non-Occupational

**Rationale for adding this course to the curriculum** Textbook update.

**Units** 3

**Cross List** N/A

**Typical Course Weeks** 18

**Total Instructional Hours**

#### **Contact Hours**

**Lecture** 54.00

**Lab** 0.00

**Activity** 0.00

**Work Experience** 0.00

**Outside of Class Hours** 108.00

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**Total Contact Hours** 54

**Total Student Hours** 162

**Open Entry/Open Exit** No

**Maximum Enrollment** 50

**Grading Option** Letter Grade or P/NP

## Distance Education Mode of Instruction

### SECTION B

#### General Education Information:

### SECTION C

#### Course Description

**Repeatability** May be repeated 0 times

**Catalog Description** Comparative Religions offers a philosophical survey of the world's major religions, thereby providing a trenchant knowledge of avenues to spiritual growth, multicultural values and critical thinking skills.

#### Schedule Description

### SECTION D

#### Condition on Enrollment

1a. **Prerequisite(s):** *None*

1b. **Corequisite(s):** *None*

1c. **Recommended:** *None*

1d. **Limitation on Enrollment:** *None*

### SECTION E

#### Course Outline Information

##### 1. Student Learning Outcomes:

- A. Identify and evaluate the various methodological approaches to understanding any given religious system.
- B. Apply each methodological approach to any given religions system, logically assessing the efficacy of beliefs and conduct found within the system given the cultural milieu of its provenance and ensuing history.

##### 2. Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. demonstrate an understanding of various religions through their teachings and practices;
- B. distinguish and assess philosophical theories regarding the origin of religious beliefs;
- C. logically appraise the various religions and their adherents, thereby gaining respect for divergent viewpoints;
- D. consider, weigh and critically assess her/his own personal faith;
- E. demonstrate improved citizenship through understanding the value and contributions of religious plurality in America;
- F. logically criticize religious prejudices, fear, hatred and discrimination;
- G. define "religious person";
- H. compare and evaluate religions alien to her/him by participating in an institutional form of worship different from her/his own;
- I. summarize and critically compare and assess the various extant philosophical theories on the origin and meaning of religions;
- J. critically evaluate the place and function of religion in the contemporary world;
- K. engage in meaningful dialogue with persons of other faiths with the goal of revising her/his own personal beliefs based on logical analysis;
- L. acquire and apply tools for self-evaluation.
- M.

##### 3. Course Content

- I. Contemporary and etymological definition of "religion"**
  - A. Descriptive, not prescriptive approach
- II. Philosophical Methodology for Studying Religion**
  - A. Phenomenological
  - B. Existential
  - C. Historical
  - D. Critical Philosophy
- III. Theories of the Origin of Religions**
  - A. Animistic
  - B. Nature-worship
  - C. Theory of Original Monotheism
  - D. Magic Theory
  - E. Feuerbach and Freud's Wish Fulfillment Theory
  - F. Spiritus Mundi Theory
- IV. Types of Religions**
  - A. Basic or Ancient - African, Native American, Druids
  - B. Religions Originating in India
  - C. Religions Originating in China and Japan
  - D. Religions Originating in the Middle East
- V. Brief Chronology**
  - A. Paleolithic Hunting Religions
  - B. Neolithic Agricultural Religions
  - C. Ancient Empires - Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China
  - D. Religions Respond to History
    - 1.) Epics, Rituals and Religious Founders.
  - E. Medieval Devotion
  - F. Modernity
- VI. Goddess Worship**
  - A. IDEA - Goddess within
  - B. Shekina, Mari, Ishtar, Shin-Mu, Isis, Morgana Le Fay, Virgin Mary, et al
  - C. Androgyny of the avatars
- VII. Ancient Myths of Resurrection**
  - A. Tammuz, Lord of the Shepherd Seat (c. 4,000 BCE)
  - B. Osiris (c. 3,000 - 2,000 BCE)
  - C. Adonis (c. 1400 - 1200 BCE)
  - D. Attis (c. 1400 - 1000 BCE)
  - E. Christ (c. 3 or 4 CE)
  - F. And many more...
- VIII. Ancient Rituals and Contemporary Vestiges**
  - A. Taking on the physical characteristics of the ones perceived as powerful, mysterious
  - B. Donning the clothes of the "powerful" ones
  - C. Taking on the name of the "powerful" ones
- IX. The Problems of Fundamentalism**
  - A. Psychological insecurities
  - B. Intellectual vacuity
- X. History, Development, Philosophy, Beliefs, Rituals, Sacred Writings of Specific Wisdom Faiths (Religions) of the World**
  - A. Hinduism
  - B. Jainism
  - C. Buddhism

- D. Sikhism
- E. Zen
- F. Taoism
- G. Zoroastrianism
- H. Judaism
- I. Christianity
- J. Islam

**4. Methods of Instruction:**

**Activity:** Films, podcasts, music.

**Critique:** Instructor will offer spontaneous oral critiques of student comments during class discussions as well as written critiques of assigned essays.

**Discussion:** Class discussion will be conducted intermittently at appropriate intervals during the lecture presentations.

**Lecture:** Lectures corresponding to the course outline will be given each class session.

**Other: MINIMAL STANDARDS FOR PASSING:** At least 75% of students will earn 70% or higher on all exams and essays listed above.

**5. Methods of Evaluation:** Describe the general types of evaluations for this course and provide at least two, specific examples.

**Typical classroom assessment techniques**

Exams/Tests -- Multiple choice unit exams and final exam. 75% of students will earn 70% or above overall on all exams and essays.

Home Work -- Reading and writing assignments (see above).

Final Exam -- One hundred item multiple choice comprehensive exam.

Additional assessment information:

**MINIMAL STANDARDS FOR PASSING:**

At least 75% of students will earn 70% or more on their overall cumulative scores of exams and essays.

Letter Grade or P/NP

**6. Assignments:** State the general types of assignments for this course under the following categories and provide at least two specific examples for each section.

A. Reading Assignments

1. Read INVESTIGATE AND INQUIRE incrementally throughout the semester and in conjunction with lecture presentations. Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2 for Tests #1.

2. Read Chapters 3 and 4 for Test #2.

3. Read Chapter 5 and 6 for Test #3.

4. Entire book - Introduction and Chapters 1 - 6 for the Final Exam.

B. Writing Assignments

One five-page paper critically assessing at least one major idea from at least one religion studied in class. Compare and contrast two or more religious views on the same topic if appropriate.

Specific Examples:

1. Critically evaluate the personal and social implications of the following notion from Gnostic Christianity. "If God is infinite, then she/he is everywhere, and there is nowhere that she/he is not. Therefore, every person is of divine nature, no exceptions. Every material object in the world, animate or inanimate, is also divine."

2. Critically evaluate Buddha's teaching that desire is the cause of suffering. Be sure to include an analysis of existential fear as the other side of desire.

C. Other Assignments

Attend at least one religious ceremony or celebration of a faith other than the student's own professed faith.

**7. Required Materials**

**A. EXAMPLES of typical college-level textbooks (for degree-applicable courses) or other print materials.**

Book #1:

Author: Mooney, C.

Title: Comparative Religion: Investigate the World Through Religious Tradition (Inquire and Investigate)

Publisher: Nomad Press

Date of Publication: 2015

Edition:

**B. Other required materials/supplies.**