

Directed Study of World's Living Religions  
Miss / Phil 4333  
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Course web site: <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/worldrel.htm>

## Course Description

Introduction to the world's major religious systems: Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Islam, Animism and even some segments of Christianity. We will investigate these religions from several perspectives, including historical (beginnings and development), phenomenological (beliefs, rituals, practices), and comparative (similarities and differences).

## Texts

*The Illustrated World Religions* by Huston Smith  
*Can Evangelicals Learn from World Religions?* by Gerald McDermott

## Course objectives

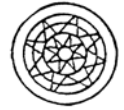
Upon completion of this course, a student should be able to:

1. Articulate with sympathetic understanding the dimensions of several major religious worldviews: history, geographical areas of influence, ritual practices, doctrinal beliefs, ethics, expected experiences
2. Have the ability to describe the function of religion in sociological categories
3. Have the ability to describe and interpret the relationship between the religious aspects of a culture and individual behavior
4. Have the ability to describe the experiences of religious groups as expressed in literature, art and music
5. Have the ability to think globally and engage cross-culturally for the purpose of Christian mission

## How do I pass this course?

1. **Read the textbooks.** Keep a reading log in which you write a minimum of 150 words of reflection on each of the following sections from the two books plus two sample test questions over that same material.

McDermott 1-20  
McDermott 21-44  
McDermott 45-72  
McDermott 73-90  
McDermott 91-132  
McDermott 133-156  
McDermott 157-169



McDermott 171-184  
McDermott 185-205  
McDermott 207-219  
Smith 17-57  
Smith 59-97  
Smith 98-121  
Smith 122-143  
Smith 144-177  
Smith 178-203  
Smith 204-229  
Smith 230-243

2. **Video.** View at least 20 of the 24 videos listed at: <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/worldrel.htm>. All of these are in the SNU library. For each video fill out the response form which is linked to in that web page listing.
3. **Temple/Synagogue/Mosque visits.** Visit the worship center (temple, mosque, synagogue) of five of the traditions studied in this course. Your visit can be to an actual service or meeting or it can be a visit to the building and a conversation with someone there. Report on that visit with a 2-3 page written observation paper.

The professor's favorites are marked with an asterisk:

Baha'i Faith, 1201 S Blackwelder, 631-7490

Buddhist temples

Giac Quang Temple, 516 SE 17 (Vietnamese), 636-1845

\*Rissho Kosei Kai Dharma Center, 2745 NW 40th, (Japanese) 943-5030

\*Vien Giac Buddhist Temple, 5101 NE 36th (405) 424-0264 (Vietnamese)

\*Wat Chairatanaram, 710 SE 50th, 634-2144

Wat Sangharatanaram of Oklahoma, 2200 SE 26 (Thai Theravada) , 677-4306

Wat Lao Buddharam Temple, 7600 N Kelly Ave. (Laotian), 632-7842

\*Hindu Temple, 7200 N Coltrane (405) 478-0787

Islamic mosques

Islamic Center of Oklahoma City, 3201 NW 48th, 948-6188

Masjid Al-Salam, 525 N University Drive, Edmond, 341-1077

Masjid Mu'min, 1322 NE 23, 424-0352

\*Islamic Society of Greater OKC, 3815 North St. Clair Avenue (405) 946-2116

Jewish synagogues

\*Emanuel Synagogue (conservative), 900 NW 47 (405) 528-2113

\*Temple B'nai Israel (reformed), 4901 N Pennsylvania (405) 843-2755

Kehilat Rosh Pinah (messianic), 3106 N Utah Avenue (405) 941-2889

\*Sikh Gurdwara (or Gateway), 4525 NW 16th, Oklahoma City OK (405) 949-2638

Mormon Temple and Church,

4. **“My conversion to Christianity from . . . .”** Assume that you are following of a religion other

than Christianity and that your spiritual journey let you to convert to Christianity and to embrace Jesus as Savior and Lord. Describe that journey. What caused you be curious about Christianity. What things did the Holy Spirit use to draw you toward a decision to make a paradigm shift? Attach to your paper a bibliography of sources consulted.

5. **Case studies:** Read through two of the case studies listed at <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/worldrel.htm> and write a 500-750 word reflection on possible courses of action for each one.
6. **Seminar handouts.** Prepare “seminar handouts” for three religions. Use your textbook as well as other sources. All sources used in the paper must be properly cited. Direct quotes must be enclosed in quotation marks and the source properly identified. See SNU’s policy on plagiarism at: <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/integrity.htm>

Include with your handout a separate bibliography page of sources consulted. In alphabetical order, give the full name of each author (surname first, then first name) followed by the title of the work. Book and journal titles should be italicized or underlined. Article titles should be in quotation marks. Place and date of publication should be included (date only in case of journals).

Here are some questions to get you started:

- What is the history of this religion?
- Is there a founder? Who? Where? When? Why?
- Where is it found and how many adherents does it have?
- What are the most important sacred stories of this religion?
- What are some of its beliefs about God, spirits, human nature, how the world came to be, what is it that humans should strive for (is it soteriological, for example)?
- What rituals are important in it?
- Is there a priesthood or ecclesiastical hierarchy?
- Is there a creed its adherents subscribe to?
- What ethical ideals does it promote?
- What major artifacts, architectural monuments, art work has it produced?
- Is there more than one sect, version or denomination?
- What do you think your seminar audience will most interesting about this religion?

7. **What I would become.** At the end of the semester, after you have done almost all the work in the class, imagine that Christianity was no longer a viable option as a belief system. Explain in 500 to 1000 words which religion you would choose to embrace and why if that happened.

## Due Dates

All work is due by Friday of the last day of classes of the semester.

## Grading

- Videos: 20% of grade
- Textbook readings: 20% of grade
- Worship center visits: 20% of grade
- Seminar handouts: 20% of grade

## Where to begin your research

### Some journal and periodical article suggestions

*Evangelical Missions Quarterly, Christianity Today, International Review of Mission, International Bulletin of Missionary Research.*

### Here are a few of the books in the SNU library:

- Abdul-Haqq, Adiyah Akbar. *Sharing Your Faith With a Muslim*
- Aberle, David. *The Peyote Religion Among the Navaho.*
- Accad, Fouad Elias. *Building Bridges: Christianity and Islam*
- Akhtar, Shabbir. *A Faith for All Seasons: Islam and the Challenge of the Modern World*
- Bahr, Donald, Juan Gregorio, David Lopez and Albert Alvarez. *Piman Shamanism and Staying Sickness.*
- Bavinck, Johan. *The Church Between Temple and Mosque.*
- Boi-Nai, Vincent. "The Christian Response to the Phenomenon of Witchcraft in Ghana" (M.A. thesis, Microform).
- Braaten, Carl E. *No Other Gospel: Christianity Among the World's Religions.*
- Brown, Joseph. *The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian.*
- Burnett, David. *The Spirit of Buddhism: A Christian Perspective of Buddhist Thought*
- Burnett, David. *The Spirit of Hinduism*
- Bushey, Clinton. *The Superiority of Christianity: A Comparative Study of the Religions of the World.*
- Carmody, Denise and John. *Prayer in World Religions*
- Cave, Sydney. *Christianity and Some Living Religions.*
- Chapman, Colin. *Cross and Crescent*
- Clendenin, Daniel. *Many Gods, Many Lords: Christianity Encounters World Religions*
- Cornille, Catherine and Valeer Neckebrouck. *A Universal Faith? Peoples, Cultures, Religions and the Christ: Essays in honor of Dr. Frank De Graeve.*
- Crocker, Jon. *Vital Souls: Bororo Cosmology, Natural Symbolism and Shamanism.*
- Desmangles, Leslie. *The Faces of the Gods: Vodou and Roman Catholicism in Haiti.*
- Dretke, James. *Christian Approach to Muslims: Reflections from West Africa*
- Dunham, Katherine. *Island Possessed.*
- Durkheim, Emile. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life.*
- Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy.*
- Esposito, John. *Islam: The Straight Path.*
- Firth, Ramond. *Tikopia Ritual and Belief.*
- Fleming, Daniel John. *Attitudes Toward Other Faiths.*
- Gehman, Richard J. *African Traditional Religions in Biblical Perspective.*
- Geisler, Norman and Abdul Saleeb. *Answering Islam: The Crescent in the Light of the Cross*
- Georges, Robert A. *Studies on Mythology.*
- Gilmore, George. *Animism, or Thought Currents of Primitive Peoples.*
- Grant, George Honro. *The Religions of the World in Relation to Christianity.*
- Gross, Edward. *Miracles, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare: An Urgent Call for Discernment.*
- Harner, Michael. *The Way of the Shaman.*
- Howard, James. *Oklahoma Seminoles: Medicines Magic and Religion.*
- Hultkrantz, Ake. *Native Religions of North America: The Power of Visions and Fertility.*
- Jurji, Edward Jabra. *The Christian Interpretation of Religion, Christianity in its Human and Creative Relationships with the World's Cultures and Faiths.*
- Kateregga, Badru. *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*
- Kramer, Kenneth. *The Sacred Art of Dying: How the World Religions Understand Death*
- LaBarre, Weston. *The Ghost Dance: Origins of Religion.*
- Lawson, E. Thomas. *Religions of Africa: Traditions in Transformation.*

Lehman, Arthur and James Myers. *Magic, Witchcraft and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*.

Leslie, Charles. *Anthropology of Folk Religion*.

Levy, Jerrold E. and Raymond Neutra and Dennis Parker. *Hand Trembling, Frenzy Witchcraft and Moth Madness: A Study of Navajo Seizure Disorders*.

Lowie, Robert. *Primitive Religion*.

Luhrmann, T. M. *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England*.

MacArthur, John. *Terrorism, Jihad and the Bible*

Musk, Bill. *Touching the Soul of Islam*

Musk, Bill. *The Unseen face of Islam*

Neill, Stephen Charles. *Christian Faith and Other Faiths*.

Nickel, Gordon. *Peaceable Witness Among Muslims*

Owens, Donald. "Korean Shamanism: Its Components, Context and Functions" (Ph.D. dissertation).

Parshall, Phil. *Inside the Community: Understanding Muslims through Their Traditions*

Parshall, Phil. *The Cross and the Crescent: Reflections on Christian-Muslim Spirituality*

Renard, John. *In the footsteps of Muhammad: Understanding the Islamic Experience*

Richard, Herbert. *Following Jesus in the Hindu Context*

Ridenour, Fritz. *What's the Difference? A Biblical Comparison of Orthodox Christianity with Major Religions and Major Cults*.

Robinson, Neal. *Christ in Islam and Christianity*

Rubin, Barry. *You Bring the Bagels, I'll Bring the Gospel*

Schumann, H.W. *The Historical Buddha*.

Shenk, Calvin. *Who do You Say That I Am? Christians Encounter Other Religions*

Shenk, David. *Global Gods*

Smith, Huston. *The Religions of Mankind*

Soderblom, Nathan. *The Living God: Basal Forms of Personal Religion*.

Streeter, Burnett. *The Buddha and the Christ: An Exploration of the Meaning of the Universe and of the Purpose of Human Life*.

Thorpe, Shirley. *African Traditional Religions: An Introduction*.

Tillich, Paul. *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*.

Toynbee, Arnold Joseph. *Christianity among the Religions of the World*.

Turner, Harold. *Bibliography of New Religious Movements in Primal Societies*, Vol. 5--Latin America

Vos, Johannes. *A Christian Introduction to Religions of the World*.

Werbner, Richard. *Ritual Passage, Sacred Journey: The Process and Organization of Religious Movement*

Wheaton Theology Conference. *The Challenge of Religious Pluralism: An Evangelical Analysis and Response*.

Wolfe, Regina. *Ethics and World Religions*

## Disability services

If you need assistance with a learning, physical or psychological disability that may affect your academic progress, I encourage you to contact the Academic Center for Excellence, Disability Services at #491-6694 (M-F 8:00-5:00). All students with disabilities are encouraged to seek assistance from ACE, the Academic Center for Excellence (LRC 3rd floor).