

WORLD RELIGIONS

Abilene Christian University
Spring 2010

BMIS 371.01
3 credit hours

MW 12:00-1:20
BI 103

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Mission: The mission of ACU is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. The broad mission of the Graduate School of Theology is to provide Biblical training, Christian spiritual formation, and a Christian world-view for every student.

Purpose: This course will provide students an introductory survey of important issues in the study of religion throughout the world. It will also engage students in critical reflection on their own awareness of world religions and Christian practice in the context of other faiths. In particular, this will be a critical study of present-day non-Christian religions concentrating on animism ("traditional religion"), Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam. We will give attention the presence and impact of other religions in North America and what this means for the Church of Jesus Christ.

Learning Outcomes: I intend this course to be a learning experience of how theology, faith, and practice intertwine into a coherent faithful, missional response. Theology is "faith seeking understanding." Yet, this faith must lead to faithful living and this living is always missional in orientation. The specific course objectives include:

1. To gain a workable knowledge of selected world religions focusing on origins, core beliefs, and practices
2. To grapple with the differences between the Christian faith and other religions.
3. To prepare for living, witnessing and offering Christian leadership in a religiously pluralistic world.
4. Develop skills in learning how to empathetically understand the religious and spiritual attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, decisions, and practices of others in their own contexts
5. To prepare to share what you learn in this course with other Christians to enable God's people to live as faithful, witnessing Christians in the contemporary world

Competencies	Measurability
1. Learners will demonstrate	1. Pass quizzes

understanding of basic information regarding world religions	
2. Learners will reflect on contemporary experience of religion in light of Christian commitment	2. Analyze world religions and submit blog reflections; synthesize a Digital Scrapbook
3. Learners will demonstrate critical thinking	3. Reflect critically and differentiate between the various dimensions of religions

Required Texts:

- Muck & Adeney. *Christianity Encountering World Religions*.
- Urubshurow. *Introducing World Religions*.
- Van Voortst. *Anthology of World Scriptures*.

Assignments:

1. **First Day of Class assignment** (10 points)
2. **Test** (not comprehensive-over Muck and Adeney) (100 points)
3. **Quizzes** (4 quizzes of 25 point each, 100 points total)
4. **Blog Reflections** (6 400-500 word "Reflection on name of religion" (post these in your blog) (10 points each or 60 points total)

Each of these blog entries should contain your own personal reflection, drawing specifically from the reading and video, regarding three dimensions:

- 1) Illumination-What did you find that was new, surprising, or shocking?
- 2) Appreciative-What did you find interesting, beautiful, or a sign of God's grace?
- 3) Critical-What did you find that was inadequate or, from your faith commitment, problematic?

5. **Digital scrapbook**-you will construct a blog entry from online newspapers, websites, and resources. Your goal is to create a web space that catalogs information dealing with the *present day* impact of a non-Christian religion of your choosing in the world today. At the end of your blog entry, write a 500-word evaluation of what is happening regarding this religion and include your own personal response from your position of faith commitment. (100 points)

6. **Reading self-assessment** (3 books of 25 points each, 75 points total)

Points	25	20	15	10	0
Of the assigned readings, I	100% with sufficient care and	Less than 100% but more than	Less than 75% but more than	Less than 50%	I did not read this book

read:	thoroughness	75%; or, I read 100% but skimmed much	50%		
Van Voorst					
Muck & Adeney					
Urubshurow					

Grading:

There are 445 possible points. Final grades are as follows:

A—92%-100% (409-445 total points)

B—84%-91% (373-408 total points)

C—76%-83% (338-372 total points)

D—67%-75% (298-337 total points)

F—66% and below (less than 298 total points)

Course Schedule:

Week 1- Introductions

Class #1. **1/11**

Class #2. **1/13**

Week 2- What is religion?

Class #3. MLK Junior Day-no class

Class #4. **1/20 (Urubshurow Chpt. 1; Speaking of Faith audio)**

Week 3-Primal religions/animism

Class #5. **1/25 (Urubshurow 21-33; Animism is the Belief in Spiritual Beings 41-42)**

Class #6. **1/27 (Urubshurow 33-44)**

Blog post on primal religions/animism due 1/29

Week 4- Judaism

Class #7. **2/1 (Van Voorst 205-214; Urubshurow 61-75)**

Class #8. **2/3 (Van Voorst 214-244; Urubshurow 76-79)**

Week 5-Judaism

Class #9. **2/8 (Van Voorst 244-247; Urubshurow 79-92)**

Class #10. **2/10 Quiz & Video**

Blog post on primal Judaism due 2/12

Week 6- Buddhism

Class #11. **2/15 "The Life of Buddha"**

Class #12. **2/17 Van Voorst 65-91; Urubshurow 193-212**

Week 7- Buddhism

Class #13. **2/22 Van Voorst 91-108; Urubshurow 213-229**

Class #14. **2/24 Quiz**

Blog post on primal Buddhism due 2/26

Week 8- Hinduism

Class #15. **3/1 Van Voorst 21-40; Urubshurow 230-247**

Class #16. **3/3 Broom Colloquium (no class)**

Week 9- Hinduism

Class #17. **3/8 Van Voorst 40-64; Urubshurow 247-260**

Class #18. **3/10 Quiz & Video**

Blog post on Hinduism due 3/10

Spring Break

Week 10- NRM's

Class #19. **3/22 Van Voorst 327-351**

Class #20. **3/24 Van Voorst 351-363**

Blog post on NRM's due 3/26

Week 11- Islam

Class #21. **3/29 "Muhammad-Legacy of a Prophet"**

Class #22. **3/31 Van Voorst 289-326**

Week 12- Islam

Class #23. **4/5 Urubshurow 131-162**

Class #24. **4/7 Quiz & Video**

Blog post on Islam due 4/9

Week 13- The Bible and religions

Class #25. **4/12 Muck & Adeney Intro & Chpt. 1**

Class #26. **4/14 Muck & Adeney Chpts. 2-3**

Week 14- Religion and dialogue

Class #27. **4/19 Muck & Adeney Chpts. 4-5**

Class #28. **4/21 Muck & Adeney Chpts. 6-7**

Week 15- Witness in a pluralistic world

Class #29. **4/26 Muck & Adeney Chpts. 8-10**

Class #30. **4/28 Muck & Adeney Chpts. 11-13**

Finals week