

Introduction to World Religions

Ms. Stephanie Wong

"If you only know one religion, you don't know any."

Martin Marty

"No one who has not examined patiently and honestly the other religions of the world can know what Christianity really is, or can join with such truth and sincerity in the words of St. Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

Friedrich Max Müller

"The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. It regards with respect those ways of acting and living and those precepts and teachings which, though often at variance with what it holds and expounds, frequently reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens everyone."

Nostra Aetate, 2

Course Description: This course is a survey of the major world religions. It will analyze each of the religions from a perspective of neutrality, looking at its beginnings, its major teachings, and its modern practice. In addition, it will also look at each religion from a Catholic lens.

Course Benchmarks: Students completing the 12th grade World Religions course will:

- Understand the stance of the Roman Catholic church toward other religions as explicated in *Nostra Aetate* and additional documents.
- Demonstrate a working vocabulary for and a mature understanding of major world religions.
- Appreciate the beauty and complexity of the beliefs of major religions and the expression of those beliefs.
- Understand some of the factors that shape religions, including cultural, geographical and political factors.
- Identify and appreciate the common elements as well as the basic differences between the major world religions.
- Understand that there is diversity within each religion as to how its adherents interpret its basic truths and interact with the wider world.
- Develop an awareness of the impact of religions on the world today.

Text: Nancy Clemmons, *Exploring the Religions of Our World* (Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN; ISBN 1-59471-125-9)

COURSE OUTLINE

Unit 1	Introduction to the course <i>Nostra Aetate</i> Chapter 1: Beginning the Journey
Unit 2	Chapter 5 Hinduism
Unit 3	Chapter 6 Buddhism
Unit 4	Chapter 2 Judaism
Unit 5	Chapter 3 Christianity
Unit 6	Chapter 4 Islam
Unit 7	Chapter 7 Chinese Traditions

Grading and Expectations

Plagiarism - Students are expected to comply with IHHS's policy on academic integrity. This applies to all assignments, including tests, papers, presentations and blog responses.

Study materials – You are expected to bring your textbook to class every day.

Class Participation – Oral participation is *crucial*. Students are expected to participate actively and respectfully in class and in online discussions with thoughtful questions, reflections, or other input. Disrespectful behavior such as interrupting others or making scornful remarks will reflect negatively on your grade. Class participation constitutes approximately 10% of your grade.

Attendance – If you are absent, it is *your* responsibility to find out about any assignments missed and to catch up on class notes. Please check the class website for assignments. If you miss a test due to an excused absence, please plan to make it up on the first day you return. Field trips and guest speakers are important components of the course. Consequently, attendance on these days are mandatory. If you have a legitimate reason for your absence, you must let me know beforehand. An alternate assignment will be given.

Please check my website regularly for assignments, including:

- regular blogs based on a news article. Please comment thoughtfully and respectfully – keeping in mind both your classmates and the religious traditions of the world. Entries should be 6-8 sentences long, using correct grammar and spelling. You should try to present an honest and original viewpoint. It can also consist of personal anecdotes, good questions, or responses on your classmates' comments (Please read them). For security reasons, please do not use your full names when posting comments and do not give any information that might identify you or the school to anyone outside of this class.
- a test at the end of each chapter.
- group and individual presentations.
- reflection papers, due two days after every field trip or class speaker, which should be typed MLA style and consist of an introduction, conclusion and at least three original observations and commentary (1CD:2CM format).

Grades will be based on total points, except for the Final Exam which is worth 25% of your final grade.