



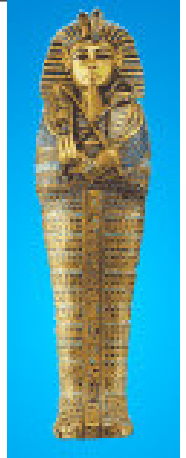
King Tutankhamen

The boy king's tomb was discovered in 1922.

Mercer University



Religion 220 — Survey of World Religions



King Tut

**Gary H. Leazer, Ph. D.
Adjunct Professor**



Two Mercer students pose with three very enthusiastic Buddhist students in front of the altar at the Chua Quang Minh (Vietnamese) Buddhist Temple (Mahayana sect) near Grant Park. The students gave us an excellent tour of the temple. The front of the temple is seen on the right. Photo taken Fall 2008.



Mercer University

Course: Religion 220 — Survey of World Religions

Session & Term: This syllabus is not date specific. Students will receive another syllabus the first meeting night of the course.

Class Days & Time:

Instructor: Gary H. Leazer (pronounced “leisure”)

B. A. Mississippi College, 1971

M. Div. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1974

Ph. D. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1981 (Dissertation:
*Communion with God in Eschatological Perspective According to
Vaishnavism: A Study in Hindu-Christian Parallels*)

Graduate Study: North Texas State University, University of Iowa

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Course Description: A comparative, systematic survey of the major religious traditions of the world. Attention is given to the nature of religion and to the historical and cultural contexts that lead to religious diversity.

Course Objectives:

1. Intellectual inquiry: to explore the historical and theological foundations of the major world religions; Indigenous or tribal religions (Native American, African, Caribbean), Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Islam, Baha'ism, Christianity, and New Religious Movements
2. Reasoned self-expression: to develop skills necessary for critical analysis, and for articulate self-expression
3. Cross-cultural openness: to see the world through the eyes of other worldviews by exploring the similarities and differences among the beliefs, practices, traditions, and ethical teachings of the various world religions
4. Cultural humility: to recognize our worldview as one way of “seeing” among others just as legitimate as our own

Text:

Lewis M. Hopfe and Mark R. Woodward, *Religions of the World* (11th Edition). Upper Saddle River, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 2009. (Earlier editions of this text are acceptable; you do not need to buy the 11th edition if you can purchase an earlier edition.)

CIS Bulletins:

CIS Bulletins are 2-page summaries of the beliefs and practices of various religions. They can be read or



What does a bridal veil have to do with religion?

downloaded from the professor's Web Page at www.garyleazer.org. Students will find the CIS Bulletins will be of immense help in the class and students are encouraged to use these resources. The CIS Bulletins will not be passed out in class. There are no CIS Bulletins for several religions studied in the class. In addition, there are CIS Bulletins on the Web Page for some religions which will not be covered in the class.

Recommended Reading:

Richard C. Bush, General Editor, *The Religious World: Communities of Faith* (3rd Edition). Upper Saddle River, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1993.

S. A. Nigosian, *World Faiths* (2nd Edition), New York, N. Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Jacob Neusner, *World Religions in America: An Introduction*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994.

Gayle Colquitt White, *Believers and Beliefs: A Practical Guide to Religious Etiquette for Business and Social Occasions*. New York, N. Y.: Berkley Books, 1997. (Out of print, but an excellent book.)

Student Responsibilities:

1. Students will attend every class and be in their seats by _____.
2. Students will turn off pagers and cell phones during class time.
3. Students will **read assigned pages in the text book, the CIS Bulletins and any other handouts provided in class**. Not all readings will be discussed in class, but students are responsible for all readings as the information may be on the exams.
4. It is the student's responsibility to obtain lecture or class discussion notes if absent from class (Get a class buddy.)
5. Students should do the reading assignments **before** class and be ready for (1) tests and (2) class participation and discussion.
6. Students will study the syllabus and know its contents. It is our guide for the course.
7. Students may record the class lectures/discussions with permission of the instructor.
8. Be tolerant of different faiths. This class is an academic overview of the various religions of the world. Normally, students from several faiths are enrolled in the class. Keep an open mind and you will learn. You will learn more about your own faith as you are challenged to you ask yourself, "Why do I agree (disagree) with that teaching?"
9. Remember! There is no such thing as a dumb question! If you have a question, chances are some one else has that same question!
10. Students may not leave the classroom for any reason during exams. Upon returning to the classroom, you will not be permitted to continue with the quiz/exam. Please take necessary breaks before class or at scheduled breaks.
11. Cheating on the exams will not be tolerated. The use of notes or talking with neighbors during exams are forbidden. If caught, you will automatically receive an "F" for the exam. **No exceptions!**

Every student consents to the following Honor Code upon entering Mercer University:

"I pledge myself to neither give nor receive aid during tests or for any individual assignments or papers, nor to use any information other than that allowed by the instructor. I further pledge that I will not allow to go unreported to the proper persons any violation of the Honor System and that I will give true and complete information to the Honor Council."

The most frequent violations of the Honor Code are cheating and plagiarism. **Cheating** is the taking of credit for work that has been done by another person. The following are some of the more common instances of cheating:

- 1) Using notes, textbooks, or reference materials on a test, daily quiz, or examination unless the use of such materials is specifically permitted by the professor;
- 2) Copying ideas or facts from another's papers during a test situation;
- 3) Giving or receiving facts or ideas either verbally or in writing during a test situation;
- 4) Obtaining test questions which a teacher does not release for further reference;
- 5) Obtaining or giving specific information which will be on a test before the test is administered;

12. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please see the instructor as soon as possible.

Mercer University is committed to making all of its programs, services and activities fully accessible to qualified students with disabilities. Students requesting accommodations for a diagnosed physical, medical, psychological or learning disability must first self-identify by registering with Disability Support Services. Appropriate and reasonable accommodations will be determined on a case-by-case basis upon review of the submitted documentation.

Further information on policies, procedures and documentation requirements may be obtained by contacting Carole Burrowbridge, the Disability Support Services Coordinator, at 301-2778 or found on the Disability Support Services website at: http://www.mercer.edu/stu_support/swd.htm.

13. To keep the instructor/student relationship functioning well, students and instructors should both be aware of its boundaries: no off-color humor, no hugs, no gifts. The university has released a statement on sexual harassment of which you should be aware.

The University is committed to maintaining an environment in which the dignity and worth of all members of the institutional community are respected. Sexual harassment harms the environment the University seeks to maintain and is unequivocally prohibited. Moreover, sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and violates Federal laws, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Sexual harassment may involve the behavior of a person of either sex against a person of the opposite sex or same sex, when the behavior falls within the following definition.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advance, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or status in a course, program, or activity; or
- submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for an academic, employment, or placement decision affecting the individual; or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or educational experience or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for working or learning.

Sexual harassment will be dealt with severely. If you believe you are a victim of sexual harassment, call the Human Resources office for Mercer University at 478-301-2786.

14. Mercer University is respectful of the religious practices of members of the student body. Students who will be absent from class for religious observances must give instructor a note explaining the reason and date(s) for the absence at the beginning of each semester or session, or at least two weeks prior to the dates of the absence. The disposition of missed assignments will be arranged between instructor and student. If a mutually satisfactory solution is not reached, the right to establish a reasonable alternative is reserved to the instructor. Students who feel that their academic performance will be compromised by the alternative assignment/examination timetable may ask that the instructor's dean review the instructor's decision.

15. Things happen. Sometimes students get a new job, or their work schedule changes, or their family needs help in a special way. Don't drop the class unless you really have to. Talk to the professor about your options before you drop the class.

Attendance Policy:

1. There are only eight class periods so attendance at all classes is extremely important. If you want a good grade in this class, attend classes, read your assignments and come prepared for discussion.

2. Class begins promptly at _____. Students are encouraged not to miss or be late for class.

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3. Missing more than 25 percent of the class periods (2 nights) will automatically result in a final grade one letter grade below that earned on the exams and any other class assignments.

4. Attendance will be taken every class period, but not necessarily at the beginning of the class. Do not leave class for the evening without informing the professor. If you are not present when roll is taken, the professor will assume you were absent for the entire class.

Exams:

1. Normally, four exams will be given during the 8-week course; each exam will be final. In other words, students will not be tested on material more than one time, except as that material may apply to a later religion..

2. There will be no final exam over the course, although there will be an exam on the last night of the class.

3. The total number of points possible on the four exams will count 70 percent of the final grade.

Research Paper:

A 8-10 page research paper will be due on September 30. The paper should be typed, double spaced, with 10 point font and one inch margin on all sides. The papers will be graded on content, grammar, spelling and documentation. The cover page and bibliography do NOT count towards the 8-10 pages.

Selected students may be asked to give an oral report on their research paper on the last evening of the class.

Suggested topics include (but are not limited to):

Importance on initiations in tribal religions with a concentration on one tribal group
Role of women in the family setting in any religious group with a concentration on marriage, raising children, freedom to work and travel, etc.

The growth of Christianity in Africa in the past 100 years

A paper on the Al-Farooq Masjid (mosque) on 14th Street in Atlanta

A paper on Temple (Reform Judaism) on Peachtree Street in Atlanta

The importance of Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths.

A paper on the Hindu Temple in Lilburn

Whatever topic you choose, it is very important to concentrate on a narrow area of the topic you choose. Do not, for example, write a paper on the history of Islam, or the beliefs of Hindus.

The Research Paper will count 30 percent of your final grade.

Grading Scale:

A = 94% - 100%

B = 86% - 93%

C = 73% - 85%

D = 60% - 72%

F = Below 60%

Schedule of Lectures/Discussions/Topics/Reading Assignments:

I. First Night: (Reading Assignment: Hopfe, chapters 1-3)

Introduction to Study of World Religions:

What is religion?

Why should we study world religions?



Why is this Hindu woman wearing a mark, called a tilak, on her forehead?



Stonehenge

**“You and I, Arjuna,
Have lived many lifetimes.
I remember them all:
You do not remember.
— The Hindu god Krishna
speaking to the reluctant
warrior Arjuna. From the
Bhagavad Gita.**

Why this course?
How should we study world religions?

Tribal Religions:

Definition of terms (Basic/Primitive/Prehistoric/Tribal/Indigenous)
Importance of Studying Tribal Religions
Presuppositions of Tribal Religions
General Characteristics of Tribal Religions
Evil and Suffering in Tribal Religions

Examples of Tribal Religions:

African Tribal Religions
Caribbean Religions (Voodoo, Rastafarians)
Native American Religions
Native American Church and Peyote

II. Second Night : (Reading Assignment: Hopfe, chapters 4-5)

Hinduism:

No Single Founder
Period of the Vedas (Before 1000 B.C.)
Priestly or Brahmanic Period (1000-800 B. C.)
Period of the Upanishads/Philosophical Hinduism (800-600 B.C.)
Legalistic Hinduism/Laws of Manu (About 250 B.C.)
Devotional Hinduism/Bhagavad-Gita (About A. D. 1)
Principal Doctrines of Hinduism:

God or Gods (Impersonal Brahman and Individual Deities)
Creation
Nature of Mankind (His Divine Nature)
Ethics (Caste)
Destiny of Mankind (Reincarnation or Liberation)
Means of Liberation (Yoga)

Hinduism Today

Religious Activities in a Hindu Home
Renascent Hinduism Today
Conflict with other Religions (Christianity, Islam and Sikhism)
Hinduism in the United States
Immigrants
ISKCON
TM

Jainism

III. Third Night : (Reading Assignment: Hopfe, chapters 6-7)

Exam on material covered in the first and second meetings of the class.

Buddhism

Founder
Basic Teachings
Four Noble Truths
Eight-fold Path
Ritual and Festivals
Theravada Buddhism

“A Sikh is required not to cut or shave hair from any part of the body. Trimming or shaving of eye brows by Sikh women is as much against [Sikh teaching] as trimming the beard by Sikh men.”



This elephant-headed deity, named Ganesha, is a popular Hindu god of good luck.

“To become a disciple of Buddha, one must believe in the three treasures [or Threefold Refuge]: the Buddha, the Dharma [his teachings], and the Sangha [monastic order].” — From *The Teachings of Buddha*.



Why is a wheel with 8 spokes a symbol in Buddhism?

Mahayana Buddhism
 Tantric Buddhism
 Zen
 Pure Land Buddhism

Buddhism Today
 Buddhism in the United States

Sikhism
 Founder
 Teachings
 The Five Ks
 Sikhism in the U.S.

IV. Fourth Night: (Reading assignment: Hopfe, chapters 8-9)

Chinese Religions

Confucianism

Founder(s)
 Sacred Writings
 Five Classics
 Teachings

Taoism

Founder
 Sacred Writings
 Basic Teachings

Shinto

Beginnings
 Shinto During World War II
 Shinto Today
 Beliefs

**“Knowing others is intelligence;
 Knowing yourself is true wisdom.
 Mastering others is strength;
 Mastering yourself is true power.
 If you realize that you have enough,
 you are truly rich.” — *Tao Te Ching***

**“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!
 And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart
 and with all your soul and with all your might.” — Deut. 6:4-5**

V. Fifth Night : (Reading Assignment, chapters 10-11)

Exam on material covered in the third and fourth class meetings.

Zoroastrianism:

Founder
 Basic Beliefs
 Possible Influence on Later Religions

Judaism

Beginning and Development
 Religious Literature
 Major Jewish Beliefs
 One God

**“If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of mine;
 and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
 — Jesus (John 8:31-32).**

己所不欲，勿施於人
 Yourself,
 what
 [you]
 don't
 want,
 don't
 do
 to
 others.
Analects 15:23



This Taoist priest was sent by his monastery in China to teach Taoism to Americans and to start a Taoist temple.



This Christian Church is in Garfield, New Jersey. Notice the crosses.

Nation of Israel
 Eschatology
 Contemporary Jewish Movements in the United States
 Orthodox
 Conservative
 Reform
 Reconstructionism
 Zionism

VI. Sixth Night : (Reading Assignment, Hopfe, chapter 12)

Jesus as Expected Messiah
 Bible
 The Early Church
 Development of Doctrines & Early Controversies
 Major Doctrines
 Major Branches of Christianity
 Roman Catholic
 Orthodox
 Protestant
 Independent Churches

**“Say: He is Allah, The One!
 Allah, the Eternal, Absolute,
 He begetteth not, nor is He begotten;
 And there is none like unto Him.” — Surah 112:1-4**

VII. Seventh Night : (Reading Assignment, Hopfe, chapters 13-14)

Exam on material covered in the fifth and sixth classes.

Research Paper Due!

The Prophet Muhammad
 Qur’an (Koran)
 Other Religious Literature
 Fundamental Beliefs
 Pillars of the Faith
 Doctrine
 Divisions in Islam
 Diversity in Islam
 Sunni
 Shia
 Sufis

Islam Today
 The Jerusalem/Palestinian
 Question
 Jihad



[Verily Allah does not look to your faces and your wealth but He looks] to your heart[s] and to your deeds. The Messenger of God has spoken the truth.”

“Cast, then, upon me, O my God, the glances of Thy mercy, and forgive me my trespasses and the trespasses of them that are dear to Thee, and which come in between us and the revelation of Thy triumph and Thy grace. . . No God is there save Thee, the Almighty, the Most Powerful, the Ever-living, the Most Compassionate. — *The Prayers and Meditations of Baha’u’llah.*

VIII. Eighth Night

Exam on material covered in the seventh class meeting.

Oral Presentations of Papers

Islam in the United States
 African-Americans

Which faith practices Halal?



The following is a part of a letter from the Dean's office, College of Continuing and Professional Studies at Mercer University:

Dear Colleague:

One area of ongoing concern to us, and I know to you too, is the distribution of grades in the College. A review of past course grades throughout the College over a period of several terms shows that a high percentage fall between A and B+ range. Given our students' academic strengths and weaknesses, a more realistic distribution would include a wide range of grades. By not distinguishing levels of achievement, we unwittingly undermine excellence and academic standard and send the wrong message to important University stakeholders. To assist you in your efforts to evaluate effectively student performance, I am enclosing a description of performance expectations associated with each grade. This information can be found in the College's *Adjunct Faculty Handbook*, page 15. Thank you for helping the College address this issue and for your continuing commitment to quality teaching and learning.

The following is found in the *Adjunct Faculty Handbook* 2004-2005:

A grade of "A" will be awarded for work which far exceeds the minimum expectations of the assignment, not only by doing all that is asked, but by demonstrating superior skill, thoroughness, independence and creativity. By definition, it is unlikely that many students should be able to earn this grade, as it denotes exceptional students.

Grades in the "B/B+" range are very good grades. They indicate above average work, grasp and mastery of the subject matter, evidenced not only by meeting the basic objectives, but also by showing some initiative in pursuing lines of inquiry and some creativity in the use of new understanding.

Grades in the "C/C+ or S" range indicate that the basic objectives of our course have been achieved, that the student has demonstrated satisfactory mastery of the material of the course. The minimum expectations of the instructor are met. This is a perfectly respectable grade, for which not apology is necessary.

A "D" is assigned to work which is passing but below average competency for college students. The student receiving a grade of "D" has not exerted a level of effort or expertise which is expected of the average college student. This work is often incorrect or minimally thought out.

An "F" is assigned to a failing effort. This sort of work does not meet the minimum expectations of the assignment, demonstrates a serious lack of command over course material and a significant absence of effort on the part of the student.



**Lilburn Hindu Temple
Open house was in 2007**