

## **Beijing Jiaotong University**

### **2020 Summer Session**

### **REL 110 World Religions**

#### **Course Outline**

**Term: July 13 -August 07, 2020**

**Class Hours: 8:00-9:50 (Monday through Friday)**

**Code: REL 110**

**Instructor: Job Chen, Ph.D.**

**Home Institution: Clemson University**

**Office Hours: By Appointment**

**Email: [zhuoc@clemson.edu](mailto:zhuoc@clemson.edu)**

**Credit: 4**

**Class Hours:** This course will have 52 class hours, including 32 lecture hours, 8 lecturer office hours, 8-hour TA discussion sessions, 4-hour review sessions.

#### **Course Description:**

Religious beliefs and practice have been and remain a dominant force in human culture. This course is intended to be a general introduction to the origin, history, beliefs, and practices of religious traditions originating in India (Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism), China (Confucianism, Taoism), and Japan (Shintoism), as well as the major Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), indigenous or oral religious traditions, and new religious movements. Ideally, students should exit this course with a sense of what religion is, as well as how various religious adherents understand the world and their place within it. We will also think seriously throughout this course about the role that these religions do play, and should play, in the modern world. Because of the breadth and depth of religious practices, the course can provide only a summary introduction to various faith traditions. But it should equip students to understand what motivates and underpins various faiths, and allow them to gain an understanding of them regardless of their own religious background and beliefs.

### **Course Objectives:**

The proximate goal of this course is to provide students with an understanding of the history, beliefs and practices of the world's major religions. The expectation, however, is that such an understanding will allow students to engage individuals of different religious perspectives in an open and productive manner.

### **Required Textbooks:**

Oxtoby, Willard. A Concise Introduction to World Religions, 3rd edition (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Novak, Philip. The World's Wisdom: Sacred Texts of the World's Religions. HarperOne, 2011.

### **Grading & Evaluation:**

Grades will be distributed as 90-100%=A, 80-89%=B, 70-79%=C, 60-69%=D; and below 60% = F.

#### **Exams (65%)**

- First exam (20%) – will be 50 multiple choice questions given in the beginning of week 2 to cover all materials previously studied.
- Midterm exam (20%) – will be 50 multiple choice questions given in the beginning of week 3 to cover all materials previously studied.
- Final exam (25%) – will be 60 multiple choice questions given in the end of week 4 to cover all materials previously studied.

#### **Field Report (25%)**

Since this is a religious studies course, the student is required to make a visit to a gathering (service/ritual) of a religious group of some type, with which he or she has had no prior experience, for observation. This can be of any religious tradition. The purpose of the visit is to observe and experience various aspects of the gathering, while reflecting on what you have read and studied in this course. For better understanding, you might want to ask questions from a member or a leader of the group about what you observe.

After your visit, you should write a paper, 4-5 pages (excluding title page and reference page, if needed) in length, in which you describe your visit, observations, and experiences, and make connections to various theories and concepts studied in this course. Punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure will

factor into your grade, so be sure that you proof your paper carefully before turning it in. Consult the Tentative Schedule of Classes for the due date. The paper is worth 20% of the grade.

#### **Class Participation and Attendance (10%)**

The points will be evenly distributed over these class meetings and awarded for attendance and participation. To maintain an accurate record of attendance, roll will be taken at beginning of each class to ensure an accurate distribution of attendance points. If the student arrives to class late, it is the student's responsibility to inform the professor after class so that proper credit can be given for attendance; otherwise the student will be marked absent.

### **Course Schedule:**

#### **Week1**

Session 1: Introduction: What is Religion?

Session 2: Oral Religious Traditions

Session 3: Hinduism I

Session 4: Hinduism II

Session 5: TA Review

#### **Week2**

Session 1: First Exam and Recap

Session 2: Jainism and Sikhism

Session 3: Buddhism I

Session 4: Buddhism II

Session 5: TA Review

#### **Week3**

Session 1: Midterm Exam and Recap

Session 2: Shintoism

Session 3: Confucianism

Session 4: Taoism

Session 5: TA Review



## **Week4**

Session 1: Judaism

Session 2: Christianity

Session 3: Islam

Session 4: TA Review

Session 5: Final Exam