

## INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION

**Religious Studies 100**  
Dr. Diana Steigerwald

Email: [dsteiger@csulb.edu](mailto:dsteiger@csulb.edu)

**Spring 2008 MW 11:00am- 12:15pm**

Office: MHB 612

Office Hours: MW 10:00-10:45 Tu 5:00-5:30

Website: <http://www.csulb.edu/~dsteiger/>

**Course Description:** This course is not simply a world religion class, but rather it introduces students to the study of religion using the primary methodologies of the discipline of religious studies: the historical, phenomenological, anthropological, and sociological approaches. In it, students are exposed, usually for the first time in their lives, to a reasoned approach to religion.

**Course Objectives:** Students must learn in the class to approach religion from a scholarly academic perspective. In this course, students will:

- a) understand the basic methodological approaches to religion (the historical, phenomenological, anthropological, and sociological approaches),
- b) to introduce students to the basic beliefs of some of the major world religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam).

### Course Requirements:

20% Students have to do all the scheduled readings. They have to do two (2) summaries chosen out of a limited choice. Each summary will count 10%. For the first summary, students must choose to do either **summary 1 or 2**. For the second summary, students must choose to do **summary 3 or 4**. Students are expected to complete assigned reading prior to each section and to give a short summary (**4 pages** typed double space Times New Roman point size 12) of each reading assignment on the day indicated on the schedule. The students must give a complete summary of the text and each paragraph must at least have one reference indicating the pages summarized (ex. B1 or B2 or B3 or B4 pp. 54-89). Each short summary must be submitted on time. Missed due dates will result in grade penalties. **All written assignments must be done individually.** You will be graded for the structure, the clarity and the quality of arguments, your capacity to summarize essentials ideas. **Read the handouts for more details.**

10% The **Quiz on Wednesday April 9** follows the same requirements as the final exam, except that there will be no essay questions in the quiz. **Students must write the exam with their best handwriting in square letters, if their handwriting is unreadable they might loose many points.**

30% The **final exam** will contain an introductory section of identifications to be answered in five sentences or less. These are aimed at testing students' direct knowledge of material covered in lectures and reading. The essay questions to be answered in minimum one page or more will be weighted more strongly. Essay questions will be general and broad, designed to test the students' overall grasp of ideas and religious, philosophical, and cultural processes, rather than specific facts. **Students must write the exam with their best handwriting in square letters, if their handwriting is unreadable they might loose many points.**

20% The class will be divided into groups of three students. **Each group will write a play about the biography of an important author.** Here are suggestions of some important authors: Arnold Toynbee, William Robertson Smith, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Edward Burnett Tylor, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, James George Frazer, Wilhelm Schmidt, Émile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Max Weber, Max Müller, Gerardus Vander Leeuw, Rudolf Otto, Joachim Wach, Mircea Eliade, etc. **The Professor will assign one author per group. In the play, students must refer to a minimum of four books.** One of the books could be the book of Daniel Pals. **Students must include at the end of the play a bibliography with complete reference** (including author, title, city, publisher, date, pages or author, title, journal, volume, date, pages). **Each member of the group should speak a minimum of four minutes and should say at least 400 words in the play.** For example the play's length for a group of three should be 3 X 400 words = 1200 words. **The play should not exceed 400 words per member. The deadline for submission of the written version of the play is March 24.** A missed due date will result in grade penalties. **The play must be written in a discussion format between different characters (dialogue between characters)**

**presenting the life of the author, his main books and his contribution in the field of religion. The script of the play must be written in good English not slang.** I will give 70% for the structure, clarity and quality of the arguments and 30% for the mechanical elements of the paper (diction, grammar, bibliography, references etc.). **Get the handouts for more details.**

10% Each student in the group will **present the play to the class on a date, after March 24**, which will be determined by the professor. The length of the presentation is five minutes per student. For instance a group of four students will talk for 20 minutes; a group of three students will talk for 15 minutes

10% (**Group work** requiring the integration of knowledge done in class related to the reading of the week or to complementary topics). Students will work in groups (four members) each week. As part of the requirements of the courses, students will keep a guided journal in which they will explore their responses to a daily question or problem that the professor will give them. Students will write answers to questions in class. The purpose of the journal is to stimulate thinking about issues, questions, and problems raised by the study of religion. This journal will be an exam preparation journal from which exam questions will be derived. In focused freewriting, however, the students need to keep their entire entry focused on the assigned question or problem. Their purpose is to explore their responses to the question as fully as possible within the set time period. After, each individual will join a group and will be given a set time to debate alternative solutions to the same problem. **In a plenary session, groups report and justify their solutions to the whole class.**

10% Students may voluntarily choose to do **summary 5 or 6** to increase their average and to gain **10% extra points.**

**Academic Integrity:** The University expects that students will submit their own original work and properly cite sources for their ideas, including books, handouts, class notes, and ideas from other students. **Plagiarism is a serious matter. Students found to be cheating on any exam, assignments, attendance or other course element may lead the Professor to "the assignment of a failing grade for a course and for administrative actions which may lead to dismissal from the university."** (See campus policies.).

**Attendance: Student presence is important.** Class work comprises a substantial component of the course grade, and one must be present to participate. However, for serious reasons "1. Illness or injury, or serious illness of an immediate family member, 3. Religious reasons, 4. Jury duty or government obligation, 5. University sanctioned or approved activities" (see campus policies) a student will receive an excused absence. In such a case, it is the student's responsibility to provide documentation and find out what he or she missed.

**N.B. POLICY ON LATE PAPERS: I will not accept any summary or play later than the following class. Unless for serious reasons see above campus policies. In such a case, it is the student's responsibility to provide documentation with their late assignment. I do not accept assignments by email you must bring a hard copy in class.**

**Please observe ordinary classroom decorum. For example: Be on time and don't leave early. Don't distract the class with ongoing conversations. Turn off beepers and cell phones, etc.**

**Grading scale: A= 90-100; B = 80-89; C= 70-79; D= 55-69; F= 0-55**

**Required Books:**

- 1) Daniel Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion*. Oxford University Press, 2006. **B1**
- 2) Kim Knott, *Hinduism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, 2000 **B2**
- 3) Damien Keown, *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, 2000 **B3**
- 4) Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam An Introduction*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.**B4**

### Schedule of reading assignments

<b>January 28</b>	Course outline
<b>February 4</b>	B1, History of Religion (Animism and Magic), pp. 18-48
<b>February 11</b>	B1 Sociology of Religion, pp. 85-114
<b>February 18</b>	B1 Phenomenology of Religion (The Reality of the Sacred), pp. 193-225  <b>Deadline <i>SUMMARY1</i>, pp. B1 pp. 18-48, 85-100</b>
<b>February 25</b>	B2 Hinduism: Revelation and the transmission of knowledge, pp. 12-25  <b>Deadline <i>SUMMARY2</i>, pp. B1 pp. 103-114, 193-225</b>
<b>March 3</b>	B2 Understanding self, Divine Heroes, pp. 26-49
<b>March 10</b>	B2 Divine Presence, pp. 50-66  <b>Deadline <i>SUMMARY3</i>, pp. 12-66</b>
<b>March 17</b>	B3 Buddhism and Elephants, pp. 1-14
<b>March 24</b>	B3 The Buddha, p. 15-28  <b><i>Deadline for the written version of the Play</i></b>
<b>March 31</b>	B3 Karma and rebirth, pp. 29-43 <b>Spring Break</b>
<b>April 7</b>	B3 Four Noble Truths, pp. 44-56 <b>Deadline <i>SUMMARY4</i>, B3 pp. 1-56</b>  <b>Wednesday April 9 Quiz</b>
<b>April 14</b>	B4 Arabia before Islam, pp. 7-9, Muhammad, pp. 11-17
<b>April 21</b>	B4 Expansion of Islam, pp. 19-28
<b>April 28</b>	B4 The Qur'ân and its teaching, pp. 29-50  <b>Deadline <i>SUMMARY5</i>, B4 pp 7-9, 11-17, 19-28, 29-50</b>
<b>May 5</b>	B4 The tradition, pp. 51-57, the law, pp. 59-72
<b>May 12</b>	B4 Theology and Philosophy, pp. 73-89, The Shia and related Sects, pp. 91-100  <b>Deadline <i>SUMMARY6</i>, B4 pp. 51-57, 59-72, 73-89, 91-100</b>