



**THEO-379-M01
STUDIES IN NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS**

At the dawn of the 21st century, religion plays a central role in public life and has become a significant identity marker. In our increasingly pluralistic societies, more inter-religious dialogue and cooperation are needed if conflict fuelled by religion is to be constructively addressed. Spiritual and religious traditions are a source of values that can defend dignified life for all; these traditions need to be explored.

We need new ways to understand particularity, universality and plurality; we must learn to live our faith with integrity while respecting and accepting each other.

World Council of Churches Programme for Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation

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Office: SIH 3rd floor, Room 5

Office Hours: WF 10:00-10:50 and by appointment

MWF 12-12:50, PRH 3

Semester: Spring 2015

Core requirement: 3 Credits

**Prerequisites: THEO-100, one
200-level theology course**

Course description:

This course will examine the historical and contemporary roles of religion in human experience. It will serve as an introduction to the origins, development, beliefs, practices, divisions, and social and political contexts of the world's major religions and new religious movements, with the goals of promoting respect, critical analysis, understanding, peace, and care for the earth and her inhabitants.

Student Learning Outcomes:

This course is designed to attend to the Five Dimensions of Saint Louis University's Mission:

1. **Knowledge:** THEO-379 will help you to build upon the foundation of your previous theological courses by diversifying and deepening your theological knowledge. Specifically, you will learn to articulate and explain the core beliefs and practices of the world's major religions and be particularly well versed in your chosen topic of research.
2. **Inquiry:** Through the lectures, class discussions, and student presentations, you will acquire tools for seeing and thinking about the world in theological terms, the ability to express your insights, convictions, and questions, and to listen to those of others. To this end, each student will be encouraged to share, reflect upon and integrate his or her knowledge and experience of religions and their followers with what we learn in this course.

3. **Community:** Through learning more about the role of religion in society and in the lives of individuals, you will be better equipped to engage in dialogue with those of different faiths in order to promote peace and understanding on campus and around the world.
4. **Leadership:** In your current and future leadership roles, you will benefit from the knowledge and discernment that you will acquire in this course, as faith is a vital dimension of the lives of the majority of the world's population, for good and ill. Through learning how people of different faiths understand what it means to live ethically and responsibly in the world, my hope is that you will grow in understanding of your own calling to be "men and women for others."
5. **Spirituality:** Over the course of the semester, you will be exposed to the diverse ways in which people live out their spirituality and acquire critical insight into how people make ethical decisions in line, and at times in contradiction, with the faith that they profess. If you apply both mind and heart to your studies, you may grow and deepen both intellectually and spiritually through your exposure to ancient wisdom and to modern journeys of faith.

You are also encouraged to formulate your own objectives for this course and to share them with me if you like:

Required texts:

Selected readings from primary sources (to be distributed, posted on Blackboard or placed on reserve in the library)

Textbook: Fisher, Mary Pat, *Living Religions: A Brief Introduction*, 3rd Edition (Pearson: 2012).

Online textbook and supplementary study and research resources available for purchase at www.pearsonmylabandmastering.com

To register for THEO-379-M01, under Register, click Student, and enter course ID: mitchell85047. Click Continue and sign in with an existing Pearson account or create an account:

- If you have used a Pearson website (for example, MyITLab, Mastering, MyMathLab, or MyPsychLab), enter your Pearson username and password. Click Sign in.
- If you do not have a Pearson account, click Create. Write down your new Pearson username and password to help you remember them.

Select an option to access your instructor's online course:

- Use the access code that came with your textbook or that you purchased separately from the bookstore or buy access using a credit card or PayPal.
 - If available, get 14 days of temporary access. (Look for a link near bottom of page.)
- Click Go To Your Course on the Confirmation page. Under MyLab & Mastering New Design on the left, click THEO-379-M01 to start your work.

Texts on reserve:

Sacred Texts of the World: A Universal Anthology, Smart and Hecht, ed.s (NY: Crossroad, 1998).

The Ways of Religion: An Introduction to the Major Traditions, Roger Eastman, ed. (NY: Oxford, 1993).

World Religions: The Illustrated Guide, Michael D. Coogan, ed. (London: DBP, 2003).

Assignment Descriptions:

1. **Worship Visit Report:** On your own or with the class (dates pending), visit a non-Christian religious site or religious event. Examine the architecture, the layout, art, hymnals, reading material, people present, rituals observed, technology used, and the like. As you are able, interact with the people present. How can you connect what you see with what you have learned in class about the religion practiced at the site?
2. **Current Event Presentation (CEP):**
 - a. Choose a print or online article that is pertinent to the theme of the day (where possible) and that discusses the role of religion, an event related to religion, or a topic of debate that is current and relevant.
 - b. Turn in an electronic or print copy of the article to your professor one day in advance.
 - c. Orally present the article in your own words to the class, explaining its relevance, giving a bit of your own analysis, and proposing a question or two for class discussion.
 - d. Total time: 5-10 minutes.
3. **Examinations:** Students will take two midterm examinations and one final examination. These will be of short essay format, based on previously distributed questions, and may only be rescheduled in strict accordance with university policy. The examinations will not be cumulative *per se*, but they may be based on themes which will run throughout the course, and you may be asked to draw on earlier material in connection with current material, as specified in the study guides.
4. **Research Paper and Presentation:**
 - a. Each (optional) presentation will be around 15 minutes. Students will present their research to the class in a scholarly and engaging manner, entertaining questions at the end. The use of slides is strongly encouraged, a copy of which is to be submitted to the professor in advance.
 - b. The paper will rely on academic sources and be 15-17 pages, plus a bibliography. See more extensive guidelines at end of syllabus.

The final grade will be calculated in one of the following ways. Choose one by Friday, March 27.

OPTION 1:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Attendance and Participation | 5% |
| Report on visit to place of worship | 5% |
| Current Event Presentation (CEP): | 5% |
| First Midterm Examination: | 15% |
| Second Midterm Examination: | 15% |
| Research Paper: | 20% |
| Research Paper Presentation: | 15% |
| Final Examination: | 20% |

OPTION 2:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Attendance and Participation | 5% |
| Report on visit to place of worship | 5% |
| Current Event Presentation (CEP): | 5% |
| First Midterm Examination: | 20% |
| Second Midterm Examination: | 20% |
| Research Paper: | 20% |
| Final Examination: | 25% |

Grade scale:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|---|-------|
| A | 94-100 | B+ | 87-89 | B- | 80-82 | C | 73-76 | D | 60-69 |
| A- | 90-93 | B | 83-86 | C+ | 77-79 | C- | 70-72 | F | 0-59 |
| AF | Absence Failure | | | | | | | | |

Policy on late-work:

1. For every day a paper is late, five points will be subtracted from the grade.
2. If you are to present in class and are unable to do so, you must request a date change at least a day in advance, unless an emergency arises.
3. If you are unable to attend class, you may send assignments to the professor by e-mail, entrust them to a classmate, or leave them in my box in SIH.

Attendance policy:

It will be impossible to adequately master the material presented in this course without regular attendance. Illness, personal and family emergencies constitute excused absences. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any absence in a timely fashion and crucial to recover any material missed.

More than three absences will lower your participation grade a letter, three late arrivals will constitute an absence, and more than ten absences will lead to a grade of AF: Absence Failure (Failure due to unauthorized withdrawal, excessive absence, or failure to take the final exam without prior arrangements having been made).

Active, relevant participation in class, while not a replacement for regular attendance, will boost your participation grade. Extra credit assignments may be an option to make up for some absences, especially in the case of trips which can be made to include religious sites and experiences. Also, writing up the class discussion assignment will make up for an absence on the day of the discussion. Writing up the others will enhance your learning and grade.

Academic integrity:

Please note that, as a student in this course, you are required to adhere to the university's Academic Honesty Policy. Cheating, falsification, and plagiarism are strictly forbidden. Plagiarism is the intentional representation of someone else's thoughts or words as if they were one's own. Any violation of this policy will result in an 'F' for the pertinent academic exercise and a report to the Academic Integrity Committee. A detailed statement of the policy may be found at: http://spain.slu.edu/academics/policies_&_procedures/docs/Academic_integrity.pdf.

Accommodations:

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor, and university-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing

services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to http://spain.slu.edu/academics/learning_resources.html.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at +34 915 54 58 58, ext. 204, send an e-mail to counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu, or to visit the Counseling Office (San Ignacio Hall). Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

Assessment:

Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus is committed to excellent and innovative educational practices. In order to maintain quality academic offerings and to conform to relevant accreditation requirements, we regularly assess our teaching, services, and programs for evidence of student learning outcomes achievement. For this purpose we keep on file anonymous representative examples of student work from all courses and programs such as: assignments, papers, exams, portfolios, and results from student surveys, focus groups, and reflective exercises. Thus, copies of your work for this course, including exams, presentations, and papers may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes. If you prefer that Saint Louis University-Madrid Campus does not keep your work on file, you will need to communicate your decision in writing to your professor.

CALENDAR

Note: The class schedule may be altered as needed, and changes will be announced in class. It is your responsibility to track not only scheduled assignments but also any changes.

Wednesday, January 14: Introduction to course and participants
Read: Living Religions (LR) Chapter 1: Religious Responses

Thursday, January 15, 5:00 p.m.: Optional Morocco Trip Presentation (SIH C)

Friday, January 16: Religious Responses: Understanding Religion and its Purposes

Optional Student Life Trips to Toledo (January 16 and 18)
http://spain.slu.edu/student_life/trips/spring2015.html

Monday, January 19: Religious Responses: Understanding Religion and its Purposes
Assignment for class discussion on Wednesday: Bring examples of some of the positive contributions that religions have made to human affairs—or—Bring examples of some of the horrors committed in the name of religion. In trying to understand the negative side of organized religion, some people argue that religious violence is carried out when people misuse or misinterpret their religion. Others argue that the widespread nature of religious violence suggests that religion itself may be the problem. Which view

do you find more convincing? Why?

Wednesday, January 21: Religious Responses: Debate with Critics of Organized Religion

Friday, January 23: Film: *Oh My God*; Discussion; CEP Sign-up

Read: LR Chapter 2: Indigenous Sacred Ways

Application deadline for Spring and Summer Semester Degree Candidates

Monday, January 26: Film: *Oh My God*; Discussion; Indigenous Sacred Ways

Tuesday, January 27: Last day to ADD a class or to DROP a class without a grade of "W" and/or to choose AUDIT or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) options

Wednesday, January 28: Indigenous Sacred Ways; CEP

Friday, January 30: NO CLASSES

Assignment for discussion on Monday: Investigate the history of your region to discover whether there has been, or still is, an indigenous religion there. If so, what native religion? Are any of its major characteristics explained in this chapter?

Monday, February 2: Indigenous Sacred Ways: Local groups; Sign up for Hindu visit.

Read: LR Chapter 3: Hinduism

Worship Visit Opportunities:

<http://www.harekrishna.es/templos/madrid/> (Weekday chants and meal, etc.)

Asociación Jhulelal Mandir: C/. Federico Moreno Torroba, 1 (Friday nights or midday New Year's celebration in April)

Assignment for discussion on Wednesday: Do an Internet search using terms such as "Indus Valley Civilization" and evaluate at least two websites. What does this teach you about the different views concerning the earliest history of Hinduism? What does this reveal about myth and fact in religion, as well as the importance of each?

Wednesday, February 4: Hinduism; Debate about Origins and Myths

Friday, February 6: Hinduism; CEP

Monday, February 9: Hinduism; CEP

Wednesday, February 11: Hinduism; CEP

Read: LR Chapter 4: Jainism

Friday, February 13: Jainism; Midterm review will be distributed; CEP

Assignment for discussion on Monday: Imagine that Jains have decided to send missionaries to your country. What message do you think they would offer to your fellow citizens about their lifestyles, and what types of responses might they receive?

Optional Student Life Trip to Avila (February 14)

http://spain.slu.edu/student_life/trips/spring2015.html

Monday, February 16: Jainism: A Countercultural religion in the West? Discussion

Wednesday, February 18: FIRST MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Read: LR Chapter 5: Buddhism

Registration for Summer 2015 Sessions begins.

Optional Student Life Trip to Morocco (February 19-23)

http://spain.slu.edu/student_life/trips/spring2015.html

WINTER BREAK: Friday, February 20 – Monday, February 23

Wednesday, February 25: From the East to the World: Buddhism; CEP

Worship Visit Opportunity: <http://budismotibetanomadrid.org/>

Assignment: A paragraph-long written description of your research paper along with any sources you have consulted to date. Due on Monday, March 2.

Friday, February 27: Buddhism; CEP

Monday, March 2: Buddhism; CEP

Due: Paragraph on research paper and preliminary list of sources

Wednesday, March 4: Buddhism; CEP

Read: LR Chapter 6: Daoism and Confucianism

Friday, March 6: Ancient Chinese Religion: Daoism and Confucianism; CEP

Monday, March 9: Daoism and Confucianism; CEP

Wednesday, March 11: Daoism and Confucianism; CEP

Friday, March 13: Daoism and Confucianism; CEP

Read: LR Chapter 7: Shinto

Last day to DROP a class and receive a grade of "W"

Optional Campus Ministry Trip to Loyola (March 13-15)

http://spain.slu.edu/student_life/trips/spring2015.html

Monday, March 16: Japanese Religion: Shinto

Last day to submit transfer application for Fall Semester

Wednesday, March 18: Shinto; Second Midterm questions will be distributed.

Thursday, March 19: San José Holiday. University closed.

Friday, March 20: SECOND MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Read: LR 142-146: Zoroastrianism

Monday, March 23: Zoroastrianism; Sign-up for worship visit opportunity; CEP

Read: LR Chapter 11: Sikhism

“Worship” Visit Opportunity: Centro Islámico <http://www.ccislamico.com/home2.html>

Wednesday, March 25: Sikhism; CEP

Friday, March 27: Sikhism; CEP

Deadline: Last day to inform professor of decision on paper/presentation options.

Read: LR Chapter 8: Judaism

HOLY WEEK HOLIDAYS: Saturday, March 28 – Easter Sunday, April 5

Monday, April 6: Judaism; Guest speaker (pending confirmation)

Assignment: A brief outline or abstract of your research paper that describes the content of the paper as well as your intent, plus a close to final bibliography. Time will be given for you to share your topics with the class. Due: Friday, April 10

Registration for Fall Semester begins.

Wednesday, April 8: Judaism; CEP

Friday, April 10: Judaism; Sharing of research paper topics

Due: Research paper abstract and bibliography to date

Read: LR Chapter 10: Islam

ATLAS WEEK: April 12-18: Theme and Activities T.B.A.

Monday, April 13: Visit to Islamic Center (pending confirmation)

Assignment: Religious site visit reports are due by Friday, April, 17.

Wednesday, April 15: Islam; CEP

Assignment for discussion on Friday: Think about your impressions of Muslim women and consider how those impressions have been formed. What image might people outside the United States have of American women based on the popular media? Do modern media images oversimplify matters? Have you encountered any stereotypes about “people like you” in your time abroad?

Friday, April 17: Islam; Discussion of stereotypes

Due: Religious site visit reports

Monday, April 20: RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS

Wednesday, April 22: RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS

Friday, April 24: RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS

Monday, April 27: RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS

Wednesday, April 29: Religion in a New Era; Final Examination questions will be distributed.

DIA DEL TRABAJADOR HOLIDAY: Friday, May 1

Monday, May 4: Religion in a New Era; Final review

Due: RESEARCH PAPER (to be turned in electronically by this date if not before)

Wednesday, May 6: Religion in a New Era; Last day of class

Thursday, May 7, 12-15:00: FINAL EXAMINATION



Research Paper Guidelines

The research paper is an important part of this course and constitutes 20% of your grade. The paper should be 15-17 pages, typed, numbered and double-spaced, and shall be submitted to me by e-mail: mmitch8@slu.edu

Feel free to propose ideas for your project, and I would be pleased to brainstorm with you. Choose something that will interest you, that you will enjoy researching, and if presenting, that the class will find interesting. Perhaps there is a topic that relates to religion and to your major. Perhaps there is a topic about which your cultural background gives you particular insight. Perhaps there is another question that intrigues you. This is an opportunity to explore it!

A successful paper will include an introduction that sets out the goal(s) of your research paper and explains how and why the project is important, as well as a conclusion. Other sections are also appreciated, as they help you to stay organized and help your reader to follow your arguments.

In addition to clarity with respect to clearly articulating the goals of your project, I shall also be looking for correct grammar and spelling, proper attribution of source material, and original thought as opposed to mere citation of material. I expect you to engage the material you include from secondary sources rather than merely quote it.

You must utilize at least three print sources. Consult the library books (on the shelves and on reserve) and the library databases. Our textbook may constitute a fourth written source. If you utilize internet material, be careful to distinguish scholarly works from those which seek to preach elements of a particular religion. The latter, plus personal experience, interviews, etc. may be used to supplement your sources, but you must discern and make note of the difference in drawing your conclusions.

Make sure quotations and paraphrases are relevant, well-selected and cited. Quotations of three lines or more should be single-spaced and indented. You will be required to provide notes for any material used in your paper. Any standard style of notes may be used (endnotes, footnotes or in-text notes) but you must be consistent.

Failing to provide citation for material or ideas taken from another source constitutes plagiarism and will result in a 0 for the term paper. For ways to avoid plagiarism, see: http://spain.slu.edu/academics/academic_advising/docs/Academic_integrity.pdf

In addition to the notes, a bibliography of all cited works must be included.

Make sure to proofread for grammar, spelling, homonyms and typographic errors. The English Writing Center is available to help you if you help yourself first: http://spain.slu.edu/academics/degrees_&_programs/undergraduate_programs/english/english_writing_center.html

If you use graphics, make sure they are relevant, well-placed and clearly and accurately captioned—not merely decorative nor to fill up space.

Various deadlines will be observed, but students are also encouraged to consult regularly with the instructor during both the research and writing phases of the project.

Deadlines

Monday, March 2: Turn in a written description of your research project along with any encyclopedia articles or internet sources you have consulted to date.

Friday, March 27: Inform me as to whether or not you want to present your research.

Friday, April 10: Turn in a brief outline or abstract of your project that describes the content of the paper as well as your intent (i.e., what would you want a reader to understand and why). A bibliography should be included in this as well. While this bibliography may not be the same as

in the final version of your paper, it should be close to it. Time will be given in class for you to share your topic so anyone can ask questions or make comments.

Monday, April 20-Monday April 27: Research Presentations (Turn in copy of slides in advance.)

Monday, May 4: Turn your paper in electronically before midnight. A late submission will cost half a letter grade. An early submission is perfectly acceptable.

Criteria for grading

A range = *Superior, exceptional, outstanding*. The assignment demonstrates critical, informed, and creative theological inquiry that reflects superior understanding of essential theological/historical concepts. This means the student demonstrates depth of insight beyond what is normally expected. Carefully nuanced reasoning and writing, free from material, structural and grammatical error are presupposed in this grade.

B range = *Good*. The assignment demonstrates ready command of full range of concepts and shows some critical, informed, and creative inquiry that reflects above average understanding of essential theological/historical concepts. This means the student has produced an assignment that is free from material, structural and grammatical errors.

C range = *Acceptable*. The assignment demonstrates satisfactory ability to describe overall picture and essential concepts. This means the student has completed the assignment in a manner involving no significant errors. Material may not be free from structural and grammatical errors. Nuanced reasoning is not demonstrated.

D range = *Below average*. The assignment demonstrates reasoning that is neither carefully nuanced nor coherently presented; writing is insufficient in depth of insight and/or use of texts; presentation is not free from material error in structure, spelling and grammar. This means that the student failed to respond adequately to the assignment and its intentions.

F = *Unsatisfactory*. In one or more of the following ways the student: 1) failed to turn in the assignment; 2) did not respond to the assignment as given; 3) submitted work so thoroughly flawed as to indicate that the student did not make a serious effort, 4) was involved in plagiarism or cheating.