

SHEPHERDS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
CARY, NC

THEOLOGY and WORLD RELIGIONS
ME 502

Summer, 2010

Don R. Sandberg, Instructor
Office Hours: M-F, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Office: 919-233-9100
Cell: 919-749-7294

Email: dsandberg@colonial.org; sandbergdon1@gmail.com

Course Description:

This course makes a survey and analysis of the major world religions, focusing particularly upon Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. A critique is made of each religion's central doctrines with a comparison to Christian theology. An emphasis is made on strategies for dialogue with other religions in order to effectively communicate the Gospel.

Course Aims:

1. To examine definitions of religion, and theories of its origin, in light of Scripture.
2. To survey the major world religions by examining their known origins, central doctrines, common practice, and sacred texts.
3. To foster an appreciation for some positive ethical contributions of world religions.
4. To compare and contrast the central doctrines of world religions with orthodox Christian theology.
5. To provide strategies for presenting the truth of Christianity as the only viable worldview.

Student Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. List several definitions of religion and humanistic theories of the origin of religious thought in humanity.
2. Describe in some detail the origins of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, including dates, founders, geography, and the religious and social cultural atmosphere at origin.
3. Describe the unique central doctrines and beliefs of each religion.
4. Describe the daily or regular religious life of adherents to each religion – worship, ritual, taboos, etc.
5. Identify internal inconsistencies and contradictions in each religion.
6. Compare the Biblical view of God, Christ, salvation, and special revelation to the central doctrines of the major religions.
7. State learned strategies of engaging in effective dialogue with world religions with a view toward presenting the Gospel and the Christian worldview as truth.

Required Text:

Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions, by Winfried Corduan (IVP, 1998).

Student Requirements:

- Attendance and thoughtful participation at every class lecture and the final examination.
- Completion of each assignment at its designated due date.
- Timely correspondence with the instructor about questions, absences, and any unforeseen challenges to completing the course requirements.

Course Requirements:

- Completion of reading of assigned books or chapters in assigned books. Due: _____
- Completion of Final Exam (last day of class).
- Research Papers (3):

Write **three 5-10 page papers** on three different world religions (not including Judaism or any branch of Christianity). Each paper will examine **one commonly held doctrine** (core belief) within that religion with a Christian response and biblical evaluation.

- Each paper will make necessary citations (footnotes) and have a title page and bibliography, which is not included in the 5-10 pages of the body.

- These examinations of world religions are not to include unnecessary background information on the origin and history of the religion, any biographical information on the founder, or information on rites, rituals, customs, etc. These papers are about a doctrine of the religion, not a sketch of the religion itself.

- The format is to adhere to Turabian (Chicago) style and use 12 pt font, Times New Roman, double spaced, 1 inch margins on all sides. Pages should be numbered center bottom.

- Only one internet source per paper is allowed.

- All three papers should be printed as a paper copy, bound together (not stapled, not paper clip), and delivered to the teacher by _____ (TBD).

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY*
SHEPHERDS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
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*(Adapted from “Academic Dishonesty,” The Master’s College, Santa Clarita, CA)

Ephesians 4:28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good. . . .

Seminary education is based upon certain shared values concerning the nature of learning and the pursuit of knowledge. One of the most basic assumptions is the respect for intellectual property and right of recognition for this pursuit of knowledge. Violation of this basic assumption includes such practices as cheating, plagiarism, abuse of technology, falsification of research data, unapproved collaborative research, and other deceptive academic practices. Sometimes these abuses are unintentional, but much intentional abuse is found in higher educational institutions, even Christian seminaries.

Policy Guidelines

In an attempt to clarify the problem and offer consequences for participation in such activities, the following materials are offered as both a warning and as a guideline to avoid unconscious participation in questionable practices. Of course, questions regarding the appropriateness of any debatable activity should be cleared in advance with an instructor. Certainly students preparing for the Lord’s work need to make sure that truth and honesty pervade their lives.

Definitions

Plagiarize—to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one’s own; to use someone else’s material without crediting the source (see Merriam-Webster Dictionary On-Line).

Cheat—to deprive of something valuable by the use of deceit or fraud; to violate rules of honesty as on an examination (see Merriam-Webster Dictionary on-Line).

Unquestionable Violations of Academic Integrity

The faculty will generally approach the following cases with severe academic penalties.

Violation Standard Consequence

- Copying answers directly from another student: F for the assignment, and probable F for the course.
- “Cribbing” answers in any form to be accessed during the examination: F for the exam, probable F for the course, and possible expulsion.
- Usage of a substitute person for writing an assignment, term paper: F for the assignment, probable F for the course, and possible expulsion.
- Altering answers on a returned exam for re-submission: F for the assignment and probable F for the course.
- Unauthorized access to faculty files (electronic and or paper): F for the course and probable expulsion.
- Unauthorized discussion of exam content: F for the course for both parties.
- Usage of purchased or pre-existing term paper: F for the assignment, probable F for the course, and possible expulsion.
- Falsification of reading report: F for the assignment, and possible F for the course

Questionable Violations of Academic Integrity

The issues below are deemed unacceptable by most faculty members and will result in confrontation with the student over potential charges of academic dishonesty. In most cases, such unacceptable practices will result in at least a warning, and possibly an F for the assignment.

Violation

- Significant amount of continued writing after the conclusion of an exam
- Multiple submission of the same assignment or paper without approval
- Technological manipulation of electronic text by copy and paste without citation
- Usage of a source without documentation or citation credit
- Artificial additions and inflation of bibliographic sources
- Deliberate alteration of time and date on late assignments
- Exaggerated computer problems or technical problems due to procrastination.

Bibliography
of Works Consulted

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Yandell, Keith, and Harold Netland. *Buddhism: A Christian Exploration and Appraisal.* Downers Grove: Inter Varsity, 2009.

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