REL -180  Introduction to Religion  3 credits

I.  Catalog Description: A survey of world religions including Western, Eastern, and indigenous beliefs and practices. Includes coverage of major religious systems, leaders, philosophies and texts.

II.  Prerequisites, pre-/co-requisites, co-requisites, recommended: None

III.  Rationale for Course Level: Religion 180 helps students develop life-long decision-making skills that will lead to a thoughtful and meaningful life, as well as to responsible participation in an increasingly diverse and globalized society

IV.  Suggested Textbooks:

Instructor Course pack includes:

V.  Student Learning Course Objectives:

Institutional Learning Goals:

Students will:

1. Demonstrate competency in reading, writing, oral communication, and numerical literacy
2. Be able to evaluate information
3. Consider multiple perspectives from the diversity of human experience

Course student learning outcomes:

After completion of this course a student can:

1. Acknowledge the importance of religion as the oldest manifestation of humankind’s self-awareness, intelligence, and sense of wonder
2. Identify universal elements of thought among major portions of the human race
3. Identify specific aspects of some of the major religions of the world
VI. Suggested Course Outline:

Tentative Class Schedule

Weeks One thru Four
What is religion?  
Hinduism  
Quizzes: 9/2; 9/9; 9/16

Weeks Five thru Seven  
Buddhism  
Quizzes: 9/30; 10/7

Weeks Eight thru Eleven  
Judaism and Islam  
Quiz: 10/21; 11/02

Weeks Twelve thru Fifteen  
Religious Issues  
The Devil, Angels, The Antichrist, Heaven, Hell, the Garden of Eden, the problem of suffering  
Quizzes and papers TBD

Final Projects

VIII. Suggested Course Evaluation:

Reading Quizzes  60%

Although the quantity of reading is not huge, it is somewhat difficult, and it is the most important element of this course. Lectures will make little sense without background readings.  
- - NOTE: Buy a highlighter and highlight areas of interest as you read. It will help you to find those areas that you have questions about. SEE “Participation” BELOW --Religions are conceptual by nature, so there is little to be gained from memorization of lists of dates, important personages, and so forth. In attempting to gain an understanding of the peoples of the world, it is necessary to find out what they believe and why. Religion has provided the
foundation for culture worldwide. Most academic disciplines derive their methods of inquiry from science; therefore they are obsessed with facts. Religion is about meaning. I consider religion to be about the most important and sublime aspects of being human. Consequently, in order for you to begin to understand these things, you must read. I would like to trust that you will read simply because you are students committed to your education, but for some reason it doesn’t work out that way. I find that if students know they will be quizzed, they do read. Therefore, since you must read, you will be quizzed early and often. There will be a quiz on the reading every single week. They won’t be tricky, if you do the reading you will be able to ace every one of them, and you will be well on your way to a good grade. This way we can all be on the same page when we begin to discuss the sometimes strange and very different concepts that people have concerning their place in the cosmos.

**Attendance 10%**

This course is primarily discussion format. Therefore, preparation, participation and attendance are the paramount requirements. Students will be allowed 4 absences without penalty. Each absence beyond the first four will result in .5 of a grade point off your final grade. (In other words, if your final grade is a 2.0 (C), but you have 6 total unexcused absences, your final grade is a 1.0 (D). So please, let me know ahead of time if you have a legitimate reason for absence.

**Participation 10%**

Much of this course is discussion-based. You should have many questions from the readings. Every quiz day you will bring a minimum of three questions from that week’s reading. I will know if you do them right before class, (e.g.: “Why do they call it Hinduism?”)

**Term Paper 20%**

There will be one major term project due at the end of the semester, the date for which will be set within the first two weeks of class. Students will choose one (any) aspect of religious thought, belief, or practice, and will research it and present a powerpoint or write a formal paper or for presentation in class in the final week of classes.

**Grade Scale**

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<td>59% or less</td>
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Bibliography


Black Elk. 1979. *Black elk speaks as told to John Neihart*


DeMallie, Raymond. *The Six Grandfathers*


**Syllabus Prepared By:**

(Signature of Faculty) 

**Typed Name of Faculty, Credentials**

(Date Syllabus Created/Updated if MCS Review)

Syllabus Prepared By:

2015