

Syllabus

Religion 291: Comparative Themes and Issues in Religion

Room: 214 Hall of Languages

Time: Tuesday and Thursday 2:00 – 3:20 PM

Instructor: Ronald R. Cavanagh

E-mail: rrcavana@syr.edu

Office: 431 Hall of Languages

Office Hours: Tues. and Thurs. 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Or by special appointment

Telephone: 443-4903

Course Description: A contemporary, existential, introduction to the academic study of religion at the heart of the Humanities in conversation with the Natural and Social Sciences at University aimed at developing an answer to the questions What is a human being and How might one best become one?

Course Requirements:

Each student is responsible for:

(1) The critical reading and discussion of the following texts:

Tomorrow's God, Lloyd Geering

Theologies of Religions, Paul F. Knitter

The World Religions, Houston Smith

Weekly Blackboard Listings

(2) Prepared attendance and participation in all scheduled class sessions.

(3) The legible writing/printing of three (3) scheduled take-home essay tests.
What I cannot read will be given zero credit.

(4) The submission of an end of term paper critically arguing his/her personal response to the questions What is a human being and How might one best become one, from the perspective of religion as presented in the readings, lectures and class discussions.

Attendance Policy: It is expected that all students will attend all classes prepared for critical discussion. Students are expected to be in their seats at the beginning of class through to its conclusion. A student may miss without excuse two classes without penalty. Any additional unexcused absence will result in the reduction, by one +/- letter grade, of the student's earned final grade for the course.

Testing Policy: All examinations will be essay in nature and given as a take-home assignment. They must be turned in on time to be graded. Students with physical or learning disabilities requiring a modification of this expectation must secure and present to me documentation to that effect from the Office for Services for Students with Disabilities, 804 University Avenue, Room 309, ex-4498.

Grading Policy: The assessment of a student's work will be weighted in the following manner: 35 % of the final grade for the quality of his or her cumulative classroom participation; 35 % of the final grade for the quality of the three in take-home essay examinations; and 30 % of the final grade for the quality of the end of term paper.

Academic Integrity: It is expected that any work submitted by a student is his or her own work. Representing the work of others as your own, even when it involves an inadvertent failure to cite sources (plagiarism), is cheating, a violation of academic integrity, and will be identified to the appropriate College officials for institutional action. There is no circumstance that justifies cheating or that can compensate you for the loss of your integrity.

Class Etiquette: It is expected that all class participants will display a disposition of courtesy and politeness in class interactions. To this end everyone will avoid cell phone interruptions (turn them off before class), late arrivals, early exits, using listening devices, doing e-mail, or other inconsiderate acts. Politeness is essential to learning because it indicates that you are attending to what others are doing, saying and feeling.

CLASS READING, TESTING AND DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

Week I - Introduction to Religion 291 and the scholarly study of religion

September 1-3

Reading Assignment: Introduction, **Tomorrow's God**

Blackboard entries

Week II – How human world's are created

September 8-10

Reading Assignment: Chapters 1 – 5, **Tomorrow's God**

Blackboard entries

Week III – Why human world's are created

September 15-17

Reading Assignment: Chapters 6-10, **Tomorrow's God**

Blackboard entries

Week IV – The creation of the Global World

September 22-24

Reading Assignment: Chapters 11-15, **Tomorrow's God**

Blackboard entries

Week V – Taking responsibility for your World

September 29-October 1

Reading Assignment: Review, **Tomorrow's God**

Blackboard entries

First Examination: Take-Home Essay due in class 10/06/09

Week VI – World Religions: the point of departure

October 6-9*

Reading Assignment: pages XI-Chapter 1, **The World Religions**

Blackboard entries

Class on the 9th of October is cancelled

Week VII – Hinduism

October 13-15

Reading Assignment: Chapter 2, **The World's Religions**

Blackboard entries

Week VIII – Buddhism

October 20-22

Reading Assignment: Chapter 3, **The World's Religions**

Blackboard entries

Week IX – Judaism

October 27-29

Reading Assignment: Chapter 7, **The World's Religions**

Blackboard entries

Week X - Christianity

November 3-5

Reading Assignment: Chapter 8, **The World's Religions**

Blackboard entries

Week XI – Islam

November 10-12

Reading Assignment: Chapter 7, **The World's Religions**

Second Examination: Take-Home Essay due in class 11/17/09

Week XII – One True Religion

November 17-19

Reading Assignment: Introduction-Part I, **Theologies of Religions**

Blackboard entries

Week XIII – One fulfills the many

November 24

Reading Assignment: Part II, **Theologies of Religions**

Blackboard entries

Week XIV – Many true religions called to dialogue

December 1-3

Reading Assignment: Part III, **Theologies of Religions**

Blackboard entries

Week XV – Many true religions: so be it!

December 8-10

Reading Assignment: Part IV, **Theologies of Religions**

Third Examination: Take-Home Essay Exam in class 12/10/09

End of Term Paper is due no later than the morning of Tuesday December 15th. This project will be, on average, about ten typed pages, and provide the students personal existential and critical response to the questions What is a human being and How might one best become one? drawing upon the ideas from class readings, lectures and discussions.