

**SIENA HEIGHTS UNIVERSITY at LCC**  
**RST 324: Western Religions**  
**Fall, 2009**  
**Wednesday 6:00 pm–9:00 pm**  
**Sept 2 – Oct 21, 2009**  
**Room:**

**COURSE SYLLABUS AND OUTLINE**

**Instructor: Terry Ferguson**  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is a look at the three great religious traditions of the Western world: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The course will focus on three main issues of these traditions: 1) The historical development of each religion, 2) The main beliefs and rituals of each religion, and 3) The central “founder” and other important characters in each of the religions. The intention of this course is to increase the student’s knowledge and appreciation of spiritual traditions thereby reducing stereotypical judgments and promoting both increased dialog and opportunities for spiritual enrichment.

**TEXTBOOK:**

Molloy, Michael. *Experiencing the World’s Religions: Tradition, Challenge, and Change*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Co., 2002.  
ISBN: 0072835060 (Latest edition is best, but any edition will be okay.)

Maimon, Elaine P., Janice H. Peritz and Kathleen Blake Yancey. *A Writer’s Resource: A Handbook for Writing and Research*. 2<sup>nd</sup>. edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007.  
ISBN: 13:978-0-07-325938-3

**COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

The student will examine the three major religious traditions of the Western world. The course will seek to expand the student’s understanding of what each of these religious traditions believes and what rituals each practices. The course will engage the student in an active critical reflection. Each religion will be approached from a perspective of intellectual curiosity and reverence.

By the end of the semester the student should be able to:

- Propound the general characteristics of the religious response.
- Know the basic beliefs of the world’s great western religions.
- Understand the worldview and the principle myths, rituals, and symbols of these religions.

- Expound a general history of each of the great western religions.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

#### Attendance

The student will be expected to attend all classes, to arrive and leave on time. Attendance will be taken; absences, late arrivals and leaving early will affect the student's grade. Absences are not excused, except in the case of a death in the family or a personal injury that renders the student unable to attend classes. Up to one missed class may be excused for these circumstances. A second miss will result in the final grade being dropped a full letter grade. A third missed class will result in the failure of the course. Unavoidable absence requires the student to demonstrate mastery of missed content to the instructor at the student's initiative. This will include reading, notes from the class, and any other material covered in class. Participation involves the student's interaction in both large and small group discussions. **IMPORTANT NOTICE: Because of the importance of the first class session, anyone missing the first class will be automatically dropped from the class.**

#### Class Participation (10% of the final grade)

Students will be graded on their participation in class discussions and small group interactions.

#### Scripture Reading Reflection Papers (10% for each paper for a total of 30% of the final grade)

The student will read ten pages from each religion's sacred scriptures (Judaism—*The Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, The Mishnah or The Talmud*; Christianity—*The Bible*—specifically from the *New Testament*; and Islam—*The Qur'an*) and will then write a two to three page paper for each reading, three total. Each paper will deal with two main concerns: 1) The student will present a brief overview, one page, of the passage that was read and 2) The student will give her/his personal reflections, one to two pages, on the passage that was read—What is the passage saying to you? What things did you think about as a result of reading this passage?

These papers will be graded on the bases of the criteria handed out in class.

#### Visitation and Phenomenological Studies Paper (20% for each visitation and paper describing the visitation for a total of 60% of the final grade)

Each student will visit a religious service of each of the three religions studied in this course. Following the student's visitation, the student will write a two to three page phenomenological study based on her/his visitation. In other words, the student will be describing her/his experience: What went on during the student's visit? How did the student feel during this experience? How was this particular religious experience different from the student's own religious tradition? How was this particular religious experience similar to the student's own religious tradition? Describe the sights, sounds, smells (your sense experiences) of your visit.

Directions/suggestions on how to go about doing this will be given out in class.

**COURSE POLICIES:**

1. Late papers will not be accepted.
2. Your papers must be typed. Hand written papers will not be accepted.
3. Unit Tests may not be made up except in the case of a serious illness or emergency. Students anticipating a conflict with a scheduled exam must make arrangements with the instructor in advance for an alternate exam time.
4. Attendance:
  - a. You are expected to attend all classes and to arrive and leave on time.
  - b. Attendance will be taken, absences and tardies will affect the student's final grade
5. Extra Credit work is possible, see the instructor for details.

**Attention: It has now become necessary to add the following policies, because of previous abuse by students.**

1. Cell phones and pagers must not disrupt a class. All cell phones and pagers must be either turned off or set to "vibrate" when the student is in class. Text-messaging during class will not be allowed. Please be courteous to your fellow-class mates. If this becomes a problem during a class, the student will be asked to leave and an unexcused absence will be assigned for the day.
2. The same courteousness will also be extended with regard to computers in class. If you are taking notes on your laptop, that is one thing, but if you are surfing the web, playing games or emailing during the class you will be asked to leave and an unexcused absence will be assigned for the day.

**GRADING SCALE:**

Grades will be based on the following scale:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percent</u>
A+	100-99%
A	98-97%
A-	96-94%
B+	93-91%
B	90-88%
B-	87-85%
C+	84-82%
C	81-79%
C-	78-76%
D+	75-73%
D	72-70%

D-	69-67%
F	66-00%

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY:** (Siena Heights University Catalog 2002-2004, p. 156)

Definition

Academic dishonesty is unethical behavior which in any way violates the standards of scholarly conduct. It includes such behaviors as cheating on assignments or examinations, plagiarizing, submitting the same or essentially the same papers for more than one course without the consent of all instructors concerned, misappropriating library materials, or the destroying of or tampering with computer files. Also included in academic dishonesty is knowingly or intentionally helping another violate any part of this policy.

Plagiarism is the failure to give credit for the use of material from outside sources. It includes, but is not limited to, verbatim use of a quote without quotation marks and adequate documentation, submission of a paper prepared by another person as one's own work, using the ideas, facts, words or data of someone else and claiming them as your own, or not documenting ideas, facts, words, or data gathered during research.

Faculty Responsibilities and Penalties

Faculty must explain dishonesty and plagiarism at the start of each course, every semester, and /or state in their syllabi the policies, procedures, and penalties for such behavior. Since academic dishonesty is often more difficult to prove than prevent, each faculty member is encouraged to take every reasonable measure to prevent academic dishonesty from occurring. Faculty are encouraged to explain why academic dishonesty is critical to scholarly endeavor and to provide examples of academic dishonesty that are germane to their classes.

Faculty members who suspect a student of academic dishonesty may settle the case directly with the student. In cases where the violation is substantial or admitted, the instructor may penalize the student in accord with his/her stated policy. When a student is penalized, the faculty member must report the incident in writing to his/her division chair or site director. A copy of the report will be sent to the appropriate Dean (Dean of the College for Professional Studies; Dean of the Graduate College; or the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences). The Dean of Students and the student's adviser will also be notified. If more than one instance of academic dishonesty is reported about a specific student, the Dean will review the reports, and, in cases of serious offenses, could take steps to suspend the student from the university.

Student Responsibility

Students should familiarize themselves with the Siena Heights University Academic Dishonesty Policy, which can be obtained from instructors. Students are not excused from adherence to the policy even if they have not read it.

Appeals Procedure

Any appeal by a student must be made in writing to the instructor within ten (10) university working days from the time the student is notified that a penalty has been levied against him/her. If the appeal is denied, the student may submit a written petition to the division chair or site coordinator with his/her concerns. The division chair or site coordinator should then consult with the faculty member involved before rendering a decision. If the student wishes, he/she may make a final appeal to the appropriate Dean or his/her designated representative.

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS:**

Siena Heights University is committed to providing a learning environment that benefits all students. Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 all reasonable accommodations will be made to meet the documented needs of students. The Siena Accommodations Policy for Students with Disabilities requires a student to provide written documentation of his/her disability to the Academic Advising Office. If you require special accommodations, it is your responsibility to notify each instructor during the first two weeks of the semester.

**TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE AND READING SCHEDULE:**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Material Covered</u>	<u>Reading Schedule</u>	<u>Assignment Due Dates</u>
Week 1	Introductions, Syllabus, The Structure of Religion General Intro to Religion	Chapter 1	
Week 2	General Intro to Religion Unit One: Judaism	Chapter 8	Judaism Scripture Paper Due
Week 3	Unit One: Judaism Judaism DVD	Chapter 8	Judaism Visit Paper Due
Week 4	Discussion on Judaism Visit Unit Two: Christianity	Chapter 9	Christianity Scripture Paper Due
Week 5	Unit Two: Christianity Christianity DVD	Chapter 9	Christianity Visit Paper Due
Week 6	Discussion of Christianity Visit Unit Three: Islam	Chapter 10	Islam Scripture Paper Due

Week 7      Unit Three: Islam      Chapter 10      Islam Visit Paper Due  
                 Islam DVD

Week 8      Discussion of Islam Visit  
                 Final Wrap Up