



Walsh University School of Business and Professional Studies

## Theology 105 Religions of the East

**Dates:**

**Location:** Medina Campus

**Time:** 6:00 – 10:00 PM Wednesdays  
May 7,14,21 & 28 and June 4,11,18 & 25

**Instructor:** Sally M. Deckard, MEd., MRE

**Contact Information:** Please feel free to email or call me at:

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330-806-2937 (cell)

### **Course Description:**

The course will begin with a discussion of the phenomenon of religion including the various dimensions that religion encompasses. Students will have the opportunity to explore the history, basic teachings, practices and principles of the world's great religions. Attention will given to the importance of religion in the world's political and social framework. Students will learn how these traditions find a place in the religious landscape of the United States and have the opportunity to explore, in depth, some aspect of these religions that interests them.

### **Required Texts:**

**World Religions in America** (3<sup>rd</sup> edition by) Jacob Neusner

## **Objectives:**

- Students will develop and understanding of the dimensions of religion.
- Students will be able to distinguish between a true religion and a philosophy of life.
- Students will have a general understanding of the history and practices of the world's great religions.
- Students will have knowledge of how these religions find a place in the United States and North America.
- Students will gain an appreciation for the impact religion has on the social and political world scene.
- Students will be able to distinguish between the authentic practices of these religions and extremist versions which subvert those practices.

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**Point Values for the Course Assignments**

<b>ASSIGNMENTS</b>	<b>DUE</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
<b>Individual</b>		
Class Participation (Full duration of class, sharing <u>informed</u> opinion, offering insights & feedback, etc.)	ALL	30 each 240 Total
Reflection Questions (Be sure to answer all questions using complete sentences.)	ALL	50 each 300 total
<i>Little Buddha</i> Reflection Essay	W6	100
Final Reflection Paper	W8	100
Individual Final Presentation	W7 or 8	100
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>840</b>

# **WORKSHOP TOPICS and ASSIGNMENTS**

## **WORKSHOP # 1 Understanding the Dimensions of Religion**

***Assignment Due for Workshop 1 – Read pages 1-7 in the text and respond to questions on page 7.***

## **WORKSHOP # 2 The Religious Landscape of America The Catholic Church and World Religions**

***Assignment Due for Workshop 2 – Read *Nostra Aetate* and answer questions..***

### **Questions on *Nostra Aetate***

**1. Answer this question before you read the document.**

What do you think is the Catholic Church's attitude toward other religions in the world? Include a discussion of both other Christian traditions as well as non-Christian.

2. After reading this document, are there things in it that surprised you? If so, what? If not, what things that you already knew about the Church's viewpoint were confirmed?

3. How do these understandings fit with your own opinions about religions other than your own? What do you think has most greatly shaped your attitude toward religion in general and specific religions in particular.

4. What is your reaction to the statement about the Church and her high regard for Islam? Did this come as a surprise to you? Yes ? No? Why?

***Read pages 303-321 in Neusner. Answer question 2 on page 313 and questions 1,2,4 and 5 on page 321.***

**\*\*\*Answer each question completely. Do not give one sentence answers. Explain your answers as fully as you are able and give examples whenever applicable or possible. Beware of broad generalizations. You will be challenged on them !**

### **WORKSHOP # 3 Hinduism**

***Assignment due for Workshop 3: Read pages 125-139 and answer the following questions to turn in.***

1. There is still great material poverty in India. In your reading about Hinduism if there anything in its teachings that might perpetuate this cycle of poverty?
2. In Hinduism the emphasis is on the importance of “right actions” meaning that it is very important that the right rituals are performed in the right way. That the proper foods are eaten and the proper roles in life are fulfilled. How does compare with your vision of “religion” and how you live out your spirituality? What do you think is the most believable evidence of true faith?
3. In your reading, what about Hinduism made the most sense for you? What in the practice of Hinduism and the Hindu way of life would you find most useful?

### **WORKSHOP # 4 Buddhism**

***Assignment due for Workshop 4. Read pages 142-152 and pages 155-168 and answer the following questions to turn in.***

1. One of the keys to ending suffering is detachment. What have been you experiences of needing to detach? Is detachment a hard thing? If so, why?
2. Describe your understanding of the Buddhist value of impermanence. Do you believe there is a value in contemplating this idea? Please explain your answer.
3. Buddha set out to find a solution to the problem of countless reincarnations. Does the doctrine of reincarnation sound burdensome to you or do you view it as a positive thing. Again, please explain your answer?
4. Look at the 4 Noble truths as described in your text. In your view, is this an optimistic or pessimistic outlook. Have there been instances in your life where this philosophy would have been beneficial. Please describe to the level that you feel comfortable.
5. In US culture a high value is placed on the individual and being unique. Buddhism teaches that the “ self” is merely a combination of “thoughts, feelings, and conscious states all of which are in a continuous state of change.”(Neusner 147) What is your reaction to this Buddhist idea? Why do think that Buddhist has grown so in popularity in the Western world.
6. How much quiet time do you have in your day? How much solitude? What value do you see in these?