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MS 674 Introduction to World Religions

Terry C. Muck

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Syllabus

Course: MS674 W1 (SP 2009)
Title: Introduction to World Religions
Hours: 3.00
Published: Yes, on 02/05/2009
Prerequisites:

IS501

Department: Christian Mission
Faculty: Dr. Terry Muck



Email: terry.muck@asburyseminary.edu
Office: MC
SPO: 949

Meetings:

During 02/09/2009 to 05/22/2009 on Tuesday and Thursday from 8:00a to 9:15a in SH231.

Maximum Registration: 50

Catalog Description: An introduction to the origin, history, and basic tenets of each of the major religious traditions of the world-Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shinto, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism. Students learn basic religious study skills, and engage in research projects in one or more of these religions. Meets with MW708 on the Kentucky Campus.

Objectives:

ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Spring 2009

MS674, MW708
Meeting Time:

Introduction to World Religions
Tuesday, Thursday 8:00 – 9:15

Room:

Instructor: Terry C. Muck **Phone:** 859-858-2145
E-Mail: terry_muck@asburyseminary.edu **Office:** MC309 (ESJ School)
Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00 – 4:30 or as scheduled

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, students study the origin, history, and basic tenets of each of the major religious traditions of the world--Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism. Students learn basic religious study skills, and engage in research projects in one or more of these religions.

II. REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

David Noss and Blake Grangaard. A History of the World's Religions. Twelfth Edition.
 New York: Prentice Hall Publishing Company, 2007.

Terry C. Muck. How To Study Religion.
 Wilmore, Kentucky: Wood Hill Books, 2005.

III. ASSIGNMENTS

1. Attendance, participation, quiz (10 percent)
2. Four written exercises (10 percent each)
3. Read the texts
4. Two exams (25 percent each)

IV. CLASS SCHEDULE

Feb. 10 - What is religion? Why study religion? Noss, Chap. 1. Muck, Chap. 1

Feb. 12 - Three Views of Religion (**Exercise #1** - A Three View Visit - Due March 5)
 The Religious Studies Attitude; Quiz; Muck, Chaps. 2, 3

Feb. 17 - Hinduism: History
 Noss, Chap. 3

Feb. 19 - Hinduism: Beliefs
 Noss, Chap. 4

Feb. 24 - Buddhism: History
 Noss, Chap. 6

Feb. 26 - Buddhism: Beliefs
 Noss, Chap. 7

March 3 - Determining a Religious Studies Event
 Muck, Chap. 4 (**Exercise #2** - Isolate An Event - Due April 9)

March 5 - Jainism **EXERCISE #1 DUE**
 Noss, Chap. 5

March 10 - Sikhism
 Noss, Chap. 8

March 12 - Taoism
 Noss, Chap. 9

March 17 - Confucianism

Noss, Chap. 10

March 19 - How To Talk To Someone About Religion

Muck, Chap. 5 (**Exercise #3** - Interview - Due April 16)

March 24 - **EXAM #1**

March 26 - No Class

March 30 – April 3 - Reading Week

April 7 - How to Compare and Contrast Religions

Muck, Chap. 7 (**Exercise #4** - Compare/Contrast - Due April 28)

April 9 - Roots of Western Religions: A Different View; Zoroastrianism

Noss, Chaps. 2, 12; Muck, Chap. 6 **EXERCISE #2 DUE**

April 14 - Judaism: History

Noss, Chap. 13

April 16 - Judaism: Beliefs and Practices **EXERCISE #3 DUE**

Noss, Chap. 14

April 21 - Christianity

Noss, Chaps, 15, 16

April 23 - The Question of Truth

Muck, Chap. 8

April 28 - Islam: History

EXERCISE #4 DUE

Noss, Chap. 17

April 30 - Islam: Beliefs

Noss, Chap. 18

May 5 - How to Continue Studying Religion

Muck, Chap. 9

May 7 - Christianity and the Other Religions

May 12 - **EXAM #2**

V. EXERCISES

Exercise #1 - A Three View Visit. Write three, one page (typewritten, double spaced) descriptions of a religious service you have attended recently. One of the descriptions should be from the insider's stance, one from a reporter's stance, and one from a specialist's stance (for the latter, choose the viewpoint of the psychologist, the sociologist, or the philosopher). See Muck, How To Study Religion, pp. 27-37.

Due March 5.

Exercise #2 - Isolate a Religious Event. Choose a religious subject of interest to you. Using the library, write a description of the time period of the subject (its beginnings and history, and what time

period your study focuses on), the context of the subject (the role it played or plays in its culture), and the function and importance of the subject in its particular religious system. Four to five typewritten, double spaced pages. See Muck, How To Study Religion, pp. 51-59. Due April 9.

Exercise #3 - Interview. Interview a non-Christian person about a religious topic. Plan on a twenty minute interview, and then write up the results in a five page paper. Include in the paper a statement of the interview time, location, and subject, and a description both physical and biographical of the interviewee. End with a transcript or summary of the interview itself, in question and answer format.

The topic of the interview could be one of many different things. Consider the following set of questions, based on issues raised in James McClendon's book, Biography As Theology (Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1990), as one possibility:

What are your main spiritual and theological images? (For example, if the subject is a Buddhist, you might ask her or him to consider the Buddha: Is your mental image of Buddha sitting in a meditative posture? In India? Teaching? etc.

How do these key images apply to your life?

How do your images apply to your religious community's life?

What parts of your religious tradition are most important to your spiritual life? Give examples.

What parts of your tradition are not so important to your spiritual life? Example?

Feel free to try some different approach to the interview.

See Muck, How To Study Religion, pp. 61-70. Due April 16.

Exercise #4 - Compare and Contrast. Do a religious studies comparison along the lines described in Muck, How To Study Religion, pp. 83-92. Four to five typewritten, double spaced pages. Due April 28.

VI. COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students will be able to do field research into a religion's worship practice and behavior.
2. Students will be able to interview people about their religious beliefs.
3. Students will be able to compare and contrast discrete elements of religious belief systems other than their own.
4. Students will understand the basic history, beliefs and practices of eight world religions.