ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE
WORLD RELIGIONS – REL 2300 – 2231
SESSION I – FALL 2017
M/W, 9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m., ES 125
August 14, 2017 – December 6, 2017
CLEARWATER CAMPUS

Instructor: Jess Bonds, Ph.D.
E-mail – bonds.jesse@spcollege.edu

Required Text: World RELG3 : Introduction to World Religions, Voorst, Van 2017
ISBN : 978-1-305-66044-1

1. Course Description:

This course offers an introduction to the various religious traditions of the world in order to promote understanding and to foster respect for others in an increasingly diverse and pluralistic world. It also partially fulfills the core humanities requirement and satisfies the global awareness expectation of St. Petersburg College.

2. Prerequisites:

ENC 0020 or EAP 1695 or a satisfactory score on the SPC placement test.

3. At the conclusion of this course:

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the various dimensions of various religious experiences.

2. Students will display a recognition of patterns of belief among primal people.

3. Students will demonstrate a familiarity with foundational knowledge in the areas of Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, Taoist, Jewish, Muslim, and Christian tradition.

4. Students will acquire an understanding of new religious movements:
   a) Cults, sects, and alternative movements.
   b) Key characteristics of new religious movements.
   c) Through designing a new religion.
   d) Through defining a “religious experience” within a newly designed religious context.

5. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the key challenges to religion today, including:
   e) Secularism, materialism, competitive ideology, postmodernism.
   b). Deeper meaning in religious experience.
c). The role of sexuality and gender in religious expression.

6. Students will develop an understanding of religious formulas and constructs that have stood the test of time.

7. Students will acquire an understanding of the various dimensions of religious experience:
   f) Realm of the sacred.
   g) Religious symbolism.
   h) Ultimate transformation.
   i) Meaning of human existence.
   j) Social cohesion.
   k) Ethical and value dimension.
   l) Aesthetic expression.

4. Attendance:

Students should be cognizant and appreciative of the fact that this course will include discussion and personal participation. Therefore, regular attendance and active student involvement in each class session is essential and expected. Absence will generally necessitate special make-up arrangements, per absence. Excessive absence will result in failure of the course.

An attendance sheet will be circulated at the beginning of each class. If a student is late, it is up to that student to notify the instructor at the end of that class period (and officially sign-in) or the student will be marked absent. For the purposes of this weekly course, excessive absence will be defined as missing more than two classes during the semester. Failure to attend class will result in the student receiving a WF for lack of active participation, or an F at the conclusion of the term.

5. Grading Scale:

   90 – 100 pts. - A
   80 – 89 pts. - B
   70 – 79 pts. - C
   60 – 69 pts. - D
   59 or below - F

6. Final Grading:

   a). Research Paper 30%
   b). Presentation 05%
   c). Class Participation (attendance, preparation, topical reviews) 25%
   d). Midterm (Create your own religion) 15%
   e). Final (Create your own religious experience) 15%
7. Word Count on Assignments:

A student is responsible for counting the words written for each applicable assignment and will **enter the word count on the first page** of the paper immediately under the student’s name. Papers will be written using MLA or APA guidelines.

8. Student Assignment Particulars:

**Research Paper:** Develop a topic of personal interest selected from the major topics addressed in the textbook and/or through consultation with the instructor. Papers must be a minimum of 2500 words, double-spaced, and include the following: introduction, body of paper (with internal documentation), summary/conclusion, and references/works cited page, word count, with a minimum of five (5) sources. The following criteria will be utilized in grading the research paper:

1) Is the title appropriate, focused, and effective?
2) Is the general approach to the subject creative?
3) Are thought and expression original?
4) Does the introduction identify and limit the topic?
5) Is the purpose defined and accomplished?
6) Does the whole paper have unity and thought?
7) Do the paragraphs and sections flow smoothly?
8) Is the sentence structure and word order correct?
9) Are words precise and spelled and used correctly?
10) Is punctuation correct?
11) Have grammatical errors been eliminated?
12) Does the body include internal documentation?
13) Was the paper turned in on time?
14) Are salient arguments, pro and con, identified?
15) Are alternative points of view analyzed?
16) Are warranted, judicious conclusions drawn?
17) Does the conclusion echo the main point(s)?
18) Have clichés and wordiness been eliminated?
19) Was MLA style followed?

Students will present a brief formal summary of their research during the last week of class. This assignment will total 35% of your grade (30% content/05% presentation).

a) **Mid-Term:** The following will count as 15% of your final grade. It is being provided ahead of time so that you can organize your thoughts, and think about what you are going to say. **Create your own religion.** It can be humorous. Feel free to have fun in the process. As you design it think about what scholars might say about the religion and how they might analyze it in terms of: definition of religion, historical development of religion, psychology, myth, ritual and symbols, sociology, beliefs, ethics, and women’s issues. For your essay, pretend that you are a religious studies scholar analyzing this new religion in terms of these subjects. (Hint: Obviously the purpose of this essay is to show how much you really
know and understand the material covered along the way. So design your religion in such a way that you can show this with your analysis. Minimum of 750 words, typed and double spaced. Include a word count. Brevity is not necessarily a virtue.

b) Final Exam: The following will count as 15% of your final grade. It is being provided ahead of time so that you can organize your thoughts, and think about what you are going to say. **Create your own religious experience.** It can be humorous. Feel free to have fun in the process. The experience can be one that occurs in a real religion or it can be one that’s totally fictional. You can even make it an experience that occurs in the religion you “created” for the mid-term exam or make it from some other fictional religion. The experience can be unusual, intense or extreme, or it can be an “everyday” kind of religious experience. As you design the experience, think about how scholars might go about studying it and what kind of observations and conclusions they might make. Now, as you did for the mid-term, pretend you are once again a Religious Studies scholar analyzing this experience based on material covered during the semester. (Hint: Obviously the purpose of this essay is to show how much you really know and understand the material covered along the way. So be sure and reflect this in your analysis). Minimum of 750 words, typed and double spaced. Include a word count. Brevity is not necessarily a virtue.

c) The Mall Church: This activity calls for students assume the role of cultural anthropologist, for the purpose of exploring and documenting a domain of reverence in American culture. What do we worship in addition to, or in place of God, religious principles, and/or sustaining philosophies? We will investigate one of these areas (the mall), collect field artifacts, and complete a write-up incorporating insight gained from this direct field observation. Minimum of 500 words. Reference artifacts collected during this field exercise, and attach them to your narrative response paper. Brevity is not necessarily a virtue.

d) Topical Reviews/Spiritual Surfing: Keeping in mind the Arthur Miller quote: “A good newspaper is a community talking to itself”, scan the print media or Internet news sites (or U-Tube segments) on a daily basis, and bring in a minimum of six articles to share in class during the semester. These articles should touch on some aspect of religious expression either locally, nationally, or internationally. The topical review is not a written assignment; it is an information sharing opportunity contributing to the portion of your grade falling under class participation. If you present on any given week, sign and submit news items at the conclusion of class. In order to receive credit, articles must be introduced in class.

9. Cheating/Plagiarism:

Copying or citing the work of another individual or individuals (as if it were one’s own) is one form of plagiarism. For example, any part of a report that is really the work or words of someone else (when not cited or quoted without appropriate acknowledgement) is not acceptable. Education is for the benefit of each student to develop his or her own awareness and capabilities. Therefore, any form of plagiarism defeats the purpose. Plagiarism will result in an ‘F’ grade.
10. Additional Information:

A. Equal Admission/Employment Opportunity. St. Petersburg College is dedicated to the concept of equal opportunity. The college will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin or material status, or against any qualified individual with disabilities, in its employment practices or in the admission and treatment of students. Recognizing that sexual harassment constitutes discrimination on the basis of sex and violates this rule, the college will not tolerate such conduct. Should you experience such behavior, please contact the director of EA/EO at (727) 341-3257 or by mail at P.O. Box 13489, St. Petersburg, FL 33773-3489.

B. Documented Disability Information. If you wish to receive special accommodation as a student with a documented disability, please make an appointment with the Learning Specialist on this campus. If you have a documented hearing loss, please contact the Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at 791-2628 (V/TTD). If you will need assistance during an emergency classroom evacuation, it is imperative that you speak with your campus Learning Specialist immediately about arrangements for your safety. Clearwater: 791-2710, Health Education Center: 341-3721, St. Petersburg/Gibbs: 341-4316, Tarpon Springs: 712-5789.

C. Emergency Procedures. In the event of a fire, fire drill, or any other emergency that would necessitate the evacuation of the classroom, you should take all your belongings exit the rear doors calmly and then proceed to a point at least 100 feet from any building or as directed by your instructor. You must not return to the building until your instructor gives the all clear.

D. Emergency Preparedness. In event that a hurricane or other natural disaster causes significant damage to St. Petersburg College facilities, you will not be provided the opportunity to complete your course work online due to the hands-on requirements for this course. Following the event, please visit www.spcollege.edu regarding your options for completing this course work at an alternative location.

E. Sexual Predator Law. Federal and State law requires a person designated as a “sexual predator or offender” to register with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). The FDLE then is required to notify the local law enforcement agency where the registrant resides, attends or is employed by an institution of higher learning. Information regarding sexual predators or offenders attending or employed by an institution of higher learning may be obtained from the local law enforcement agency with jurisdiction for the particular campus, by calling the FDLE hotline (1-888-FL-PREDATOR) or (1-888-357-7332), or by visiting the FDLE website at www.fdle.state.fl.us/sexualpredators. If there are questions or concerns regarding personal safety, please contact the Provost, Associate Provost, Campus Security Officer or Site Administrator on your campus.

F. Veteran’s Attendance Policy. The Veteran’s Administration requires timely reporting of students who are receiving Veteran’s benefits and who are no longer attending classes. In order to meet these requirements, a report is completed whenever a student receiving VA benefits misses two consecutive classes.
G. **Children on Campus.** Other than in an emergency when specifically approved by the campus provost, the provost’s designee or a supervisor, employees and students shall not bring children to work or class other than for an occasional quick visit, to drop off a paper, pick up materials or other similar activities. In no case is a child to be left unattended on college premises.

H. **Food/Drinks.** It is the college’s policy that food and drinks are not allowed in the classrooms.

11. **Instructor Office Hours:** ½ hour before and after class and, if needed, by appointment.

12. **Right to Change Class Sessions/Assignments:**

The College and the instructor reserve the right to alter the course outline and the schedule of required readings in accordance with special considerations and contingencies. It is anticipated that assignments will be ‘covered in class’ and that ‘discussions’ on respective topics will take place on schedule.

13. **Class Schedule and Reading Assignments:**

A list of assigned reading will accompany the syllabus. It is expected that students will ‘enthusiastically’ comply with this schedule and, thus, mightily impact on the quality of class discussion, facilitating a greater appreciation and understanding of the course material.

14. **Policy on Make-Up Assignments:**

Delays in submitting assignments should be minimized. Exceptions must be negotiated with the instructor.

15. **SPC Important Dates:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classes Begin:</td>
<td>August 14, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Day:</td>
<td>September 4, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanksgiving Break:</td>
<td>November 22, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes End:</td>
<td>December 6, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop/Refund Deadline:</td>
<td>August 18, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal:</td>
<td>October 19, 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. **Some General Comments Regarding the Course and Class:**

This course should prove to be personally fulfilling, rewarding, and insightful. Reading material will be supplemented, when possible, with illustrative videography. Show up for class. Participate in class discussions. Turn your written assignments in on time, and you should do well.

The reading material will not be overwhelming. We will focus on and appraise religious formulas/constructs that have stood the test of time (and faith) as well as emergent postmodern formulas, while fostering a sensitivity to human diversity.
STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS & COURSE OUTLINE

(All textual material should be read and considered prior official class meetings. Religion falls under the rubric of Arts & Letters. Thus, students should willingly accept the resolve of reading, reflecting, discussing, and recording their thoughts in writing.)

Week #01: (08/14&16)  
Introductions  
Class Overview  
“Know thyself” Personality Assessment  
Artifacts & Archetypes  
  ● Defining Family Values 1950  
  ● Defining Family Values 2017  
Moral Development: Point in Time Conversion vs. Conversion Over Time  
  ● Kohlberg  
  ● Gilligan  
  ● Kierkegaard  
  ● Osgood  
What People Want in a Religion  
Video Segment: “Bedazzled”

Homework – Voorst, Chapter 1

Week #02 (08/21&23)  
Topical Reviews  
Review/Discussion of Chapter 1 Topics  
Three Metaphysics: Conditioned vs. Unconditioned Reality  
Forms of Religious Expression  
Descriptive vs. Critical Analysis  
Periods of Religious History  
  ● Does Religion Follow an Evolutionary Tract?  
  ● Is Religion a Seamless Process?  
Role of Gender  
Features of Religion: What Does Religion Provide?  
Video Segment: “Witness”, “Apostle”

Homework – Voorst, Chapters 2

Week #03: (08/28&30)  
Topical Reviews  
Review/Discussion of Chapter 2 Topics  
Visual Segment: “Primal Mind”

Homework – Voorst, Chapter 3

(09/04) Labor Day (College Closed)

Week #04: (09/06)  
Topical Reviews  
Review/Discussion of Chapter 3 Topics  
Visual Segment: Hinduism

Homework – Voorst, Chapter 5
Week #05: (09/11&13)  Topical Reviews
Review/Discussion of Chapter 5 Topics
Visual Segment: The Middle Way & Gender Equity

**Homework – Voorst, Chapter 7**

Week #06: (09/18&20)  Topical Reviews
Review/Discussion of Chapter 7 Topics
Visual Segment: TBA

**Homework – Voorst, Chapter 7**

Week #07: (09/25&27)  Topical Reviews
Review/Discussion of Chapter 7 Topics
Visual Segment: Daoism

**Homework – Voorst, Chapter 7**

Week #08: (10/02&04)  Topical Reviews
Review/Discussion of Chapter 7
Visual Segment: Confucianism

**Midterm Due (10/04/17)**

**Homework – Voorst, Chapter 13 (Alternative Paths)**

Week #09: (10/09&11)  Mall Church/Cult of Materialism Assignment
(Instructor will provide details) Working Hypothesis: "Marketing & advertising has become the defining logic of the era".

**Homework – Voorst, Chapter 10**

Week #10 (10/16&18)  Topical Reviews
Review/Discussion of Chapter 10
Visual Segment: The Long Way Home

**Homework – Voorst, Chapter 11**

Week #11 (10/23&25)  Topical Reviews
Review/Discussion of Chapter 11 Topics
Two Paths to God
Visual Segment: The Mission

**Mall Church Assignment Due (10/25/17)**

**Homework – Voorst, Chapter 11**

Week #12 (10/30&11/01)  Topical Reviews
Review/Discussion of Chapter 11 Topics
Visual Segment: “Luther”

**Homework – Young, Chapter 11**
Week #13 (11/06&08)  Topical Reviews  
Review/Discussion of Chapter 11 Topics  
Visual Segment: The Great Awakening  

**Homework – Voorst, Chapter 12**

Week #14 (11/13&15)  Topical Reviews  
Review/Discussion of Chapter 12 Topics  
Visual Segment: Islam  

**Final Exam Due (11/15/17)**

Week #15 (11/20)  Science vs. Religion  
(11/22)  **Thanksgiving Break (College Closed)**

Week #16 (11/27&11/29)  Student Presentations (Scheduled)  

**Research Paper Due (11/29/17)**  
(12/06)  Wrap-up (10:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.)

**SYLLABUS ADDENDUM**

_In the event that topics listed in this addendum also appear in your syllabus, please note that you should rely on the addendum information as this information is the most current._

This file may be accessed at the following location:  
[http://www.spcollege.edu/webcentral/policies.htm](http://www.spcollege.edu/webcentral/policies.htm)

**Syllabus Attachment**

**Instructional Continuity Plan**

**Emergency Preparedness Procedures for Faculty**

The College realizes that it is possible for a significant natural disaster to compromise SPC campus facilities sufficiently to disrupt the delivery of classes on campus(es) for an extended period of time, and is planning ways our operations can continue following such an emergency.

1. Faculty will be prepared by completing _MyCourses for Faculty Certification_ prior to teaching in any delivery mode. This will ensure all faculty are able to use the learning management system for continuation of learning activities.

2. Online courses will continue as normal.

3. Blended courses will continue with faculty adding online instructional activities to substitute for in-class activities.

4. For courses taught in the classroom, if a Standard Course is available, a copy of the course will be made and all faculty who teach the course on-ground will be enrolled to allow them to pull instructional activities into their sections.
5. If a Standard Course is not available but a fully-online version of the course is currently taught, the dean will identify the course to serve as the temporary Standard, a copy of the course will be made and all faculty who teach the course on-ground will be enrolled to allow them to pull instructional activities into their sections.

6. Practical and internships will be suspended until partner organizations are open.

7. If a course is not appropriate for online delivery (clinical, art classes, studio music, etc.) an email will be sent to all students enrolled in the course via MyCourses stating: In the event that a hurricane or natural disaster causes closure of St. Petersburg College facilities, you may not be provided the opportunity to complete your work online due to the hands-on requirements of this course. Your faculty member will notify you if there are options for completing this course work at an alternate location.