

Religion 108 – Myth, Ritual, Symbol

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Adrian College
Fall Semester 2006
Class Room: 327 North Hall
Times Sec. 1: MWF 9:00-9:50
Sec. 2: MWF 10:00-10:50

Course Description:

An introduction to the way in which mythology, symbols and rituals function in religion. Attention will be given to seven different religious traditions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the West; and Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese religion, and Japanese religion in the East. The course format will be a combination of lecture and interactive discussion.

Course Objectives:

- Students will demonstrate their understanding of the nature and function of myth, symbolic representations, and ritual actions
- Students will show how these three aspects of religion work together to form a “way of life”
- Students will apply this understanding to seven major religious traditions

Course Requirements:

Students will take three exams in which they will explain the nature and function of each of the three aspects of religion on which the course focuses and illustrate their understanding through comparative analysis of the course materials. The exam will be in two parts. The first part is a mock Jeopardy game in which students must form groups or teams that will answer the quiz questions. The second part is an essay exam in which students will demonstrate their understanding of each of the three course topics by writing an interpretive essay in class.

Students will contribute to course discussion by being prepared to ask questions or contribute their insights in class. Students who are reluctant to make such contributions in class will contribute through the discussion function in Sakai by submitting their questions and comments before 8 am on the day of the class. Substantive questions will be more important than informational or clarifying questions. To see a description of these three types of questions go to:
<http://www.adrian.edu/~fdetwiler/local/ctwg/questioning.htm>

Students will select one of the seven religious traditions and write a five to seven page paper that goes into greater detail than in class on how the mythos, ritual, and sacred places combine to contribute to the “way of life” of people who are part of the tradition chosen. Papers must be reviewed by the Adrian College Writing Center prior to their submission and revised accordingly. The instructor will not accept papers that are not well written and developed and not formal in style. The instructor is willing to aid students in putting their ideas and research together. Papers can be submitted in hard copy or electronically. Papers submitted electronically MUST be in Microsoft Word. The papers are due **Friday, November 17, 2006** at the beginning of the class.

Plagiarism is considered a serious violation of the student code of conduct. The instructor retains the right to flunk students for the paper or for the course depending on the level of plagiarism. Plagiarism involves both taking direct quotes from outside sources without attribution or substantively borrowing ideas and other materials from outside sources without attribution. As a warning the instructor has the means by which to determine plagiarism from ANY internet source.

Class Attendance:

Students are expected to demonstrate interest in the class by regular attendance. Students who are absent are expected to get information about the class they missed from other students in the class first, and then from the instructor if the information provided to them by other students is insufficient. Students are responsible for all announcements and changes in class schedule and/or requirements whether or not they are in attendance on the day those announcements and changes are made.

Course Grading:

Each of the three exams will account for twenty percent of the final grade. The paper will account for twenty percent of the final grade. Class participation will account for twenty percent of the final grade.

Instructor's Office Hours:

The instructor will maintain announced office hours. Students are encouraged to “drop by” but there may be times when the instructor is not able to keep the posted hours due to other college responsibilities. Therefore, students are also encouraged to make appointments. Appointments may be made at other than the announced times if the announced times are not available to the student. It is extremely important that students consult with the instructor near the beginning of the course if they are experiencing and kind of difficulty with the course.

| Date | Topic | Reading |
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| M Aug. 28 | Introduction to the Course | |
| W 30 | Using Sakai / Questioning Strategies | No reading -- visit questioning strategies site |
| F Sept. 1 | Film – Judaism | Judaism Background Context Sheets |
| W 6 | Film – Christianity (Catholicism) | Christianity Background Context Sheets |
| F 8 | Film – Christianity (Protestantism) | No reading |
| M 11 | Film – Islam | Islam Background Context Sheets |
| W 13 | Discussion – Western religions | No reading – prepare questions |
| F 15 | Film – Hinduism | Hinduism Background Context Sheets |
| M 18 | Film – Buddhism | Buddhism Background Context Sheets |
| W 20 | Film – Chinese religions | Chinese Religion Background Context Sheets |
| F 22 | Film – Japanese religions | Japanese Religion Background Context Sheets |
| M 25 | Discussion – Eastern religions | No reading – prepare questions |
| W 27 | Western Myth/History Introduction | Myth and History Introduction |
| F 29 | Judaism Myth/History | Jewish Myth/History |
| M Oct. 2 | Christianity Myth/History | Christian Myth/History |
| W 4 | Islamic Myth/History | Islamic Myth/History |
| F 6 | Eastern Myth/History Introduction | Myth and History Introduction (reread) |
| W 11 | Hindu Myth/History | Hindu Myth/History |
| F 13 | Buddhism Myth/History | Buddhist Myth/History |
| M 16 | Chinese Myth/History | Chinese Myth/History |
| W 18 | Japanese Myth/History | Japanese Myth/History |
| F 20 | <i>Myth/History Jeopardy</i> | |
| M 23 | <i>Myth/History Essay Quiz</i> | |
| W 25 | Ritual Introduction | Rites of Passage Introduction |
| F 27 | Judaism Ritual | Jewish Rites of Passage |
| M 30 | Christianity Ritual | Christian Rites of Passage |
| W Nov. 1 | Islamic Ritual | Islamic Rites of Passage |
| F 3 | Hindu Ritual | Hindu Rites of Passage |
| M 5 | Buddhist Ritual | Buddhism Rites of Passage |
| W 8 | Chinese Ritual | Chinese Rites of Passage |
| F 10 | Japanese Ritual | Japanese Rites of Passage |

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| M 13 | <i>Ritual Jeopardy</i> | |
| W 15 | <i>Ritual Essay Quiz</i> | |
| F 17 | Sacred Place Introduction | Sacred Place Introduction Term Papers Due at beginning of class |
| M 20 | Judaism Sacred Places | Jewish Sacred Places |
| M 27 | Christianity Sacred Places | Christian Sacred Places |
| W 29 | Islamic Sacred Places | Islamic Sacred Places |
| F Dec. 1 | Hindu Sacred Places | Hindu Sacred Places |
| M 4 | Buddhist Sacred Places | Buddhist Sacred Places |
| W 6 | Chinese Sacred Places | Chinese Sacred Places |
| F 8 | Japanese Sacred Places | Japanese Sacred Places |
| 11-15 | Final exam – Jeopardy and Essay | |
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