

This course is part of UNI's Liberal Arts Core and is taken by first and second year students. The primary goal of this course is to advance students' religious literacy by giving them access to information and ways of thinking that will comprise a "walking around in the world" skillset for them. This particular version, which I teach Spring semester, has a "family life" emphasis and it particularly relevant to education majors and to students in the social sciences and social work. At one point, I realized that the syllabus had become too long for students to read because of the addition of required components (e.g., ADA support) and advice about acclimating successfully to an academic culture. I deleted some portions of text and now present them to students in the form of a before/after worksheet. I have students complete this worksheet midway through our discussion of the syllabus and this activity reenergizes them. The worksheet is amended to the end of the syllabus below. Sample essay exams are found in a separate teaching sample.

**COURSE:** RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

**DATE:** Spring, 2011

**COURSE #:** 640:024:01 & 03

**PROFESSOR:** Dr. Martie Reineke

**TIME:** 8 a.m. & 9:30 a.m.

**PHONE:** 273-6233

**OFF. HRS:** T 11-noon; 3:30-4:30 p.m.  
Other hours by appt.

**Mail:** martha.reineke@uni.edu

**OFFICE:** Baker 151

**MAILBOX:** Baker 135

**WORLD WIDE WEB SITES:** <http://www.uni.edu/reineke>  
<http://www.uni.edu/philrel>

**TEXTS:**

1. *Ethics of Family Life* ed. Jacob Neusner (University Book & Supply)
2. *Religions of the World* by Breuilly (University Book & Supply)
3. *Work Book on Religions of the World: Family Life Emphasis*, by Dr. Martha J Reineke (at U. Book and Supply)
4. *Essay Packet on Religions of the World: Family Life Emphasis* edited by Dr. Martha J. Reineke, (at U. Book and Supply)

This course will be built on discussion of key texts. The Breuilly volume functions as an introduction to each religion. The Neusner volume gives us an overview of the family life emphasis for each religion. Selected essays found in the essay packet supplement the study of each religion: these essays permit a close-up view of key topics in the area of family life in the world religions. Integral also to this course is a series of videotapes. Students often express a desire not only to learn about the various world religions, but also to see them in action, to see how people who believe in them

actually practice these religions. The videos provide special insights into the dynamics of family life in the world religions.

Note: Most students decide to keep Breuilly at the end of the semester for their personal libraries. If you wish to sell the Neusner volume, please keep in mind that I teach the “family life” emphasis of Religions of the World on alternate semesters. You will get a better price if you wait until the end of *next* semester to sell your book.

**SUPPLIES:** One package, 3x5 cards.

### **THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990 (ADA)**

The ADA provides protection from illegal discrimination for qualified individuals with disabilities. Students requesting instructional accommodations due to disabilities will want to arrange for such accommodation through the Office of Disability Services. The ODS is located in 103 Student Health Center (273-2676). Assistive Testing Services are provided to enrolled students approved by the University of Northern Iowa Office of Disabilities Services for accommodations. Alternative testing formats, as well as auxiliary aids such as readers, scribes, or assistive technology, are available. Tests are to be scheduled in advance with the Department of Academic Services -- Examination Services office. The test service is provided for University course tests and final examinations (not quizzes) to students enrolled in classes that are unable to provide the approved accommodations (i.e. extended time, large print options, reader/recorder, or computer testing). Course testing accommodations are based on disability documentation as determined by the University of Northern Iowa Disabilities Services.

### **WRITING CENTER ASSISTANCE**

The Writing Center offers one-on-one writing assistance open to all UNI undergraduate and graduate students. Writing Assistants offer strategies for getting started, citing and documenting, and editing your work. Visit the Online Writing Guide at [www.uni.edu/unialc/writingcenter/](http://www.uni.edu/unialc/writingcenter/) and schedule an appointment at 008 ITTC or 319-273-2361.

### **POLICIES ON LATE WORK AND E-MAIL**

Late Work other than exams: You are urged to remain current with assignments. If you have not completed an assignment on the day that I request that you submit it to me, you will be ineligible for points on that assignment. Students often have very good reasons for missing class (e.g., illness, car accidents, etc.). **However, late submissions will not be accepted for points because they are associated with group work in class.** If a student’s very good reason for missing class leads her or him to miss more than two consecutive class sessions, the student should consult with me about compensating for the loss of worksheet points. I will work with the student to develop alternative opportunities for points so that his/her grade is not unduly impacted.

Late Exams: If you are unable to be present for a scheduled exam, you must inform me beforehand or not later than the next day. Messages may be left at 273-6221 or on e-mail. A make-up exam will then be arranged.

Down Server: The UNI server occasionally goes down for brief periods of time. Do not wait until the last minute to download any assignments or other work posted on the server. Unless I have documented evidence that the UNI server was down for the full 24 hours preceding your class, you will be held responsible for obtaining all assignments and completing them on time.

## **E-MAIL POLICIES**

E-mail Accounts: It is **required** that you obtain and use your university e-mail account for this class. I will use e-mail to communicate with you periodically about changes to the syllabus, assignments, etc. As a general rule, you should check your e-mail daily for class announcements that may be sent to you from any of your professors.

E-mail Etiquette: While I encourage you to communicate with me via e-mail, it is important that you consider this communication as a formal dialogue between professor and student. Employers regularly report that one of their primary issues with recent college graduates is that they do not know how to send professional e-mails. As you work on developing this skill in this class, here are some recommendations.

- 1) Begin your e-mail with a formal address: Dr. Reineke,
- 2) Conclude your e-mail with your complete name, section number, and small group number.
- 3) If you are making a request, word it appropriately. For example, if you are asking me if you can do something, be sure the body of the e-mail includes, at a minimum, the word "please."
- 4) Symbols and abbreviations that you use to IM with your friends are a foreign language to most professors. I should not have to ask my daughter how to translate your e-mail.

E-mail Submissions: Course work may be submitted by e-mail only with prior permission of the professor. A paper copy **MUST** always follow an e-mail submission for which you have received prior permission.

## **CHEATING**

Any documented instance of cheating will be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs and will result in a grade of "F" for the course. In this course, UNI's Academic Ethics Policies are strictly enforced. These Policies are posted at <http://www.uni.edu/policies/301>. Students are responsible for knowing these policies. To assist students in complying with Academic Ethics Policies, a Statement of Rules will be posted on the web site with each exam. All students will be asked to staple a signed copy of this Statement of Rules to each exam, confirming that they have read, understood, and complied with course policy on examination protocol. Exams submitted without this signed statement will not be graded.

## **EXTRA CREDIT**

Throughout the semester, there may be various opportunities for extra credit. You may choose to do an extra credit project if you believe that your grade in this course does not reflect your actual level of achievement. Extra credit projects will be posted on the web site. Complete instructions for writing the extra-credit reports may be found under "Extra Credit" in the Religions of the World course web site.

## **COURSE GOALS**

"Religions of the World" is one of the oldest courses in the UNI core curriculum. Through most of UNI's history, the academic study of the world religions has been a vital part of the UNI undergraduate curriculum. It is included in the LAC Core today because the members of the faculty at UNI believe that the UNI graduate should "be cognizant of the variety of religious beliefs and their powerful role in individual lives and societies." Religion is a powerful and deeply felt force in human society. It shapes the ideals, hopes, and needs of humanity. It organizes key aspects of experience--sexuality, birth, death, power, and violence--and provides a basis for decisions based on knowledge of good and evil, right and wrong. It influences the nature of our relations with each other, the shaping of familial structures, and the organization of communities, economic, and political life.

There are many ways in which we can carry out an examination of religion. In the past, many "Religions of the World" courses featured 500-page textbooks. Most UNI graduates were unlikely to encounter the multiple world religions outside of that textbook: they would not live near or work with persons from varying religious backgrounds nor would they travel widely for business and/or pleasure. The Internet did not exist. But times have changed. In our global society, many UNI graduates will have regular contact with persons of differing religious backgrounds. Moreover, the Internet offers access to the world religions far greater than the typical textbook. For example, Google offers 6,360,000 hits for Hinduism, 5,070,000 for Buddhism, and 11,800,000 for Christianity. Students face a dilemma: at the very moment when students need to become life-long learners about the world religions in order to negotiate the global society in which you will live, you are confronted with almost overwhelming information overload. We will rely on two, linked strategies to negotiate this dilemma. First, we will select a course theme that will enable us to hone in (as if we were using a magnifying glass) on the world religions. Second, we will develop skills in how to study religion that you will be able to apply after you have completed this course to any future encounters with the world religions.

Actually, each section of Religions of the World offered at UNI has a theme, e.g., religions of the world for business, ethics in the world religions, family life in the world religions, and health and healing traditions of the world religions. In this section, the overarching theme is family life. Family life and ethical issues associated with family life are of widespread interest in contemporary society.

## **NAVIGATING MY WEBSITE:**

Go to the UNI home page and type in my address, exactly as listed on p. 1 of the syllabi (no caps). Click on "Courses."

- 1) Click on "Religions of the World." Note that I teach two different courses: a family life emphasis and a "What is religion?" emphasis.
- 2) Click on "Family Life" and explore options.

### **Calendar for Religions of the World - 2010**

- 1-11 Introduction to the course – “Before Assessment”
- 1-13 Breuilly on Hinduism. Mini lecture on Hinduism.
- 1-18 Chapter on Hinduism by Smith in Neusner
- 1-20 Smith Continued. Begin Essay Packet: “Hinduism” by Vasudha Narayanan.
- 1-25 Video: Dadi and Her Family;
- 2-27 Essay Packet: “Hindu Women’s Family and Household Rites in a North Indian Village.”
- 2-01 Writing Day. No classroom experience.
- Exam on Hinduism due 5:00 p.m. Under Baker 151 door.**
- 2-03 Breuilly on Buddhism and Taoism
- 2-08 Mini-Lecture on Buddhism. Chapter on Buddhism by Clough in Neusner
- 2-10 Clough continued.
- 2-15 Video: Choice for a Chinese Woman: Enlightenment in a Buddhist Convent”
- 2-17 Essay Packet: “Religion and Family Formation in Taiwan: The Decline of Ancestral Authority”
- 2-22 Writing day. No classroom experience today.
- Exam on Buddhism due 5:00 p.m. Under Baker 151 door.**
- 2-24 Breuilly on Judaism
- 3-01 Mini-Lecture on Judaism; Neusner on Judaism. .
- 3-03 Neusner on Judaism continued.
- 3-08 Video: “Still Waters”
- 3-10 Video: “Return of Sarah’s Daughters”.
- 3-22 Essay: “Religious Communities, Secular Society, and Sexuality: One Jewish Opinion” (e-book or library reserve)
- 3-24 Essay: “Sexual Orientation and Human Rights:” A Progressive Jewish Perspective”. (e-book or library reserve)
- 3-29 Writing Day. No classroom experience today.
- Exam on Judaism due 5:00 p.m. Under Baker 151 door.**
- 3-31 Breuilly on Christianity
- 4-05 Essay Packet: “Family Bonds and Christian Community: New Testament Sources.”

- 4-07 Essay Packet: "Southern Baptist," "Catholic," and "Presbyterian." Family Interview Project.
- 4-12 Essay Packet: "Southern Baptist," "Catholic," and "Presbyterian" continued.
- 4-14 No class. Professor speaking at seminar at U. of California - Berkeley
- 4-19 Breuilly on Islam and Mini-Lecture on Islam
- 4-21 Chapter on Islam by Sonn in Neusner.
- 4-26 Essay Packet: Islam and the Family
- 4-28 Video: "My Journey, My Islam." "After Assessment."
- Final Exam Consultation on Christianity and Islam:  
 Tuesday, May 3, 9-9:50 a.m.; Wed., May 4, 9-9:50 a.m.  
**Exams and Family Interview due 5:00 p.m. Under Baker 151 door. Wednesday, May 4.**

Full Citations:

1. "Hinduism" by Vasudha Narayanan in *Her Voice, Her Faith: Women Speak on World Religions* eds. Arvind Sharma and Katherine K. Young, Westview, 2003, pp. 11-40.
2. Hindu Women's Family and Household Rites in a North Indian Village," in *Unspoken Worlds: Women's Religious Lives*. Eds. Nancy Falk and Rita Gross, Wadsworth, 1989, pp. 72-81.
3. "Religion and Family Formation in Taiwan: The Decline of Ancestral Authority," from *Family, Religion, and Social Change in Diverse Societies* Eds. Sharon K. Houseknecht and Jerry G. Pankhurst, Oxford U. Press, 2000, pp 121-146.
4. "Family Bonds and Christian Community: New Testament Sources," in *Family: A Christian Social Perspective*, by Lisa Sowle Cahill. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2000. Pp.18-47, 142-46.
5. "Southern Baptist," "Catholic," and "Presbyterian" in *Faith Traditions and the Family*, Eds. Phyllis D. Airhart and Margaret Lamberts Bendroth. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996, pp. 8-21, 53-72, 114-125.
6. "Islam and the Family in North America," in *American Religions and the Family* eds. Don S. Browning and David A. Clairmont, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007, pp. 211-224.

E-Book from Rod Library:

"Religious Communities, Secular Society, and Sexuality: One Jewish Opinion" and "Sexual Orientation and Human Rights: A Progressive Jewish Perspective" from *Sexual Orientation and Human Rights in American Religious Discourse* Eds. Saul M. Olyan and Martha C. Nussbaum, Oxford U. Press, 1998, pp. 11-45.

**Learning Goals for Religions of the World**      **Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Section** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Family Life Emphasis Assessment**

Below you will find goals listed for this course. You will see that beside each goal are two columns. One asks you to assess your **current knowledge or level of skill**. The other asks you to assess your **degree of interest** in the goal. Please fill in your answer for each goal.

Knowledge/Skill and Interest Code: Strong (S); Moderate (M); Little or None (L).

<b>Current Knowledge or Skill</b>		<b>Degree of Interest</b>		<b>Liberal Arts Core Goals</b>
<i>Jan</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>May</i>	
				Develop a broad base of knowledge of the variety of religious beliefs and their powerful role in individual lives and societies.
				Expand my awareness of myself and of the worlds in which I live.
				Foster an appreciation for diverse cultures.
				Nurture a respect for others that enhances communication across cultures.
				Develop a lifelong love of learning.
				Improve my college-level reading skills.
				Improve my college-level writing skills.
				Improve my college-level oral communication skills.
				Better understand human emotions, motivations, and idiosyncrasies.
				Strengthen my problem-solving skills.
				Develop my ability to synthesize and integrate information and ideas.
				Develop my ability to think holistically: to see the whole as well as the parts.
				Develop my ability to draw reasonable inferences from my observations.
				Enhance my skills for participating effectively in groups.
				Develop strong team skills for collaborative learning.



				Enhance my ability to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
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Knowledge/Skill and Interest Code: Strong (S); Moderate (M); Little or None (L).

<i>Current Knowledge or Skill</i>		<i>Degree of Interest</i>		<b>Goals for the Study of the World Religions: “Family Life Emphasis”</b>
<i>Jan</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>May</i>	
				Learn key beliefs and practices of adherents of the major world religions.
				Develop skill in using the tools of inquiry central to the scholarly study of the world religions.
				Explore representative experiences of family life in the world religions.
				Foster an understanding of perspectives and values about family life held by followers of the world religions.
				Learn about family life among the gods and goddesses of Hinduism and Asian religions.
				Learn about monastic “families” in the world religions.
				Explore views toward unconventional family life (e.g., single-parent families, gay and lesbian families) in the world religions.
				Assess ways in which family life contributes to the shaping of different religious traditions and in turn is shaped by these traditions.
				Examine ethical issues associated with mutual obligations of family members to each other. What should husbands and wives expect from each other? What responsibilities do parents have toward their children? What expectations are appropriate for parents to have of their children? How should the breakdown of family relationships be analyzed?
				Think in complex ways about issues associated with diverse viewpoints on family life within and among the world religions.
				Identify a feminist perspective on family life in the world religions as well as explore views of those who are skeptical of a feminist perspective.  <b>Note:</b> The definition of “feminist perspective” in this course is: “to hold the view that religions need to be critiqued if they are the occasion for the denigration of women; so also should they be assessed for their potential to uphold the full humanity of women.”

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Section # \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Current Knowledge or Skill</b>		<b>Degree of Interest</b>		<b>Liberal Arts Competencies in Writing for the Writing Enhanced Section of Religions of the World</b>
<i>Jan</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>May</i>	
<p><b>In this course we will work on activities that enhance your ability to produce written texts that are focused, clear, complete, and effective.</b></p>				
				My written texts are well organized.
				I express and communicate ideas clearly with detailed explanation and support for points made.
				I use source materials critically and with understanding of their content and context.
				I am able to use a professional documentation style correctly and consistently.
				I am able to adapt my writing to the needs of various audiences.
				My written work demonstrates awareness distinct writing purposes and I can modify my written work in order to be responsive to different purposes for writing.
<p><b>In this course we will work on activities that enhance your knowledge of and ability to practice the processes of effective writing.</b></p>				
				I regularly write more than one draft in order to enhance the quality of my writing.
				I make skillful use of writing processes of revision and editing.
				I can assess my own writing and have the ability to recognize in my writing possibilities for improvement.