

## HUMI 9 – Comparative Religion

**De Anza College – Spring '15 -- 4 units**

**Instructor:** Lori Clinchard, Ph.D.; [clinchardlori@deanza.edu](mailto:clinchardlori@deanza.edu)

**Office Hours:** F2 building ; M/T/W/Th – 12:30-1:20

*“All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree. All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man's life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom.” --A. Einstein*

***Come to this class with an open mind, compassion, respect, and a willingness to see the world through others' eyes. Kindness is the rule, and truth is the key.***

### **Course Description:**

This course examines the religious dimension of human life and experience, focusing on the religious language, attitudes, images, myths, metaphors, symbols, and rituals relating to the history and practice of religion. We will study how women and men throughout history and across cultures have lived and expressed a religious faith based on their sense of the sacred.

### **Course Objectives:**

The student will be able to:

- Compare and contrast the variety of ways in which the religious dimension of human existence is expressed and lived from pre-modern times through the present;
- Examine, analyze, and compare different types of religious consciousness;
- Examine, analyze, and compare religious faiths from several cultures and time periods;
- Identify and evaluate similar modern and contemporary patterns in different religions;
- Open and expand both mind and heart to the diversity that exists among human beings.

### **Required Reading:**

1. Smith, Huston. (1994). **The Illustrated World's Religions: A guide to our wisdom traditions.** San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco. ISBN: 0-06-067440-7
2. Maathai, Wangari. (2010). **Replenishing the Earth: Spiritual values for healing ourselves and the world.** New York: Doubleday. ISBN: 978-0-307-59114-2

\*Note: several copies of both texts are on reserve in the De Anza library, available for checkout.

### **Course Requirements:**

1) **Weekly Comparative Religion Worksheet – 35 pts. each x 10 = 350 pts**

These are handwritten responses to the weekly reading assignments, in-class material, and the group dialogues – due in class on Thursdays. You must be present to turn in the worksheet, but it may be turned in late the following Thursday for a loss of 10 points (so an A paper would become a C paper, essentially)

2) **3 Reflection Papers = 100 points each (x 3) = 300 points total**

Turn in a 5 page paper (12 font; double-spaced) once every 3 weeks.

Due Monday of wks. 5, 8, & 11 (may be turned in the following Monday for a loss of 15 points (that's 1½ letter grades; ex: B+ >> C)

- (a) Reflection Question responses (questions provided by instructor)
- (b) Compassionate Listening reports (see handout)

3) **Dialogue Lead – 25 points**

- a) Prepare 4 thoughtful questions for one group dialogue session (sign-up)
- b) Make sure you give context and/or examples in your questions
- c) Lead table group in a 20 minute dialogue session using your questions
- d) Turn typed question sheet in at the end of the period.

**3) Final Essay: – 100 pts.**

This paper will describe and analyze what you have learned in this course about Religion and Spirituality, drawing upon in-class material, the two texts, and your Compassionate Listening sessions. Aim for breadth and depth.

- 6 full pages (typed; 12 font; double-spaced)
- Due Monday of Finals week

**Grading: Total points possible = 775 pts.**

Weekly Worksheets = 350 pts.

Reflection Question + Compassionate Listening Papers = 300 pts

Dialogue Lead = 25 pts.

Final Paper = 100

**Grading Scale:** A-=90%; A=93%; A+=97% / B-=80%; B=83%; B+=87% / C=73%; C+=77%  
D-=60%; D=63%; D+=67% / F=<60%

**Absences:** You may be dropped after a total of 4 absences. However, it is your responsibility to make sure you are dropped if you stop attending. You may otherwise receive a non-passing grade.

**In-class expectations:**

Let's honor and respect our learning environment in every way we can: give each other our care and attention; avoid electronic and other distractions; listen and make space for deep listening....

## **Course Outline**

**Week 1 (4/6) – Spirituality & Religion:** Read Maathai Intro & Ch. 1

**Week 2 (4/13)– Indigenous Religions:** Read Smith Ch. IX: Read Maathai Ch. 2

**Week 3 (4/20) – Hinduism & Sikhism:** Read Smith Ch. II & Read Maathai Ch. 3

**Week 4 (4/27) – Buddhism:** Read Smith Ch. III & Read Maathai Ch. 4

**Week 5 (5/4) – Confucianism & Taoism:** Read Smith Ch. IV & V & Read Maathai Ch. 5  
**Due: 1<sup>st</sup> Reflection Paper (Monday)**

**Week 6 (5/11) – Judaism:** Read Smith Ch. VII & Read Maathai Ch. 6

**Week 7 (5/18) – Christianity:** Read Smith Ch. VIII & Read Maathai Ch. 7

**Week 8 (5/25) – Islam:** Read Smith Ch. VI & Read Maathai Ch. 8  
**Due: 2<sup>nd</sup> Reflection Paper (Monday)**

**Week 9 (6/1) – New Religious Movements:** In-class activities & Read Maathai Ch. 9

**Week 10 (6/8) – Atheism & Materialism:** In-class activities & Read Maathai Ch. 10

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**Week 11 (6/15) – Consciousness + the new sciences:** In-class material & Read Maathai Ch. 11  
**Due: 3<sup>rd</sup> Reflection Paper (Monday)**

**Week 12 (6/22) – Finals week**

**Monday Final Paper Due** (in class and on Turnitin)

+ 2 pts extra credit for bringing HOMEMADE food item to share

**Extra credit options -10 pts.; choose one only - Due by Monday of week 10 (no exceptions)**

- 1) Visit a place of worship (temple, gurdwara, mosque, church, synagogue, Zen garden, etc.). Write a 2 page response paper (double-spaced, 12 font, typed); attach some physical evidence of your visit; **OR**
- 2) Watch the online documentary “What the Bleep do we know”, and respond to the film in relation to the organized religions (2 page response paper; double-spaced, 12 font, typed); **OR**
- 3) Create an artistic representation of your spiritual/religious/atheistic beliefs and/or experience; make an appointment to see me in my office; spend approx. 20 minutes presenting and discussing your work with me.

**\*\*Additional bonus points: 2 pts for bringing homemade food to share on last day**

**Honors Option:**

An Honors cohort is being offered in this section. Eligibility requirements can be found at [www.deanza.edu/honors](http://www.deanza.edu/honors). If you are interested, please contact Mehrdad Khosravi, Honors Program Coordinator at [dahonors@fhda.edu](mailto:dahonors@fhda.edu) or at 408-864-8833 for approval. The cohort entails additional work, **most notably, an informal research paper on an agreed-upon topic**. You must commit to participating in the Honors cohort by the end of the first week of the quarter by dropping the current section of this course and adding the Honors section with a separate add code. You must also sign a written contract with me. Once you commit to the Honors portion, you will be expected to complete the extra work. Failure to complete the Honors work will result in a lowering of your regular class grade by 2/3 of a grade (ex: A- to B; B+ to B-; B to C+; etc.).