

BUTTE COLLEGE

COURSE OUTLINE

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

PHIL 16 - Western Religions

3 Unit(s)

Prerequisite(s): NONE

Recommended Prep: Reading Level V; English Level IV

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

51 hours Lecture

This course is a study of the origins and development of three Western religious traditions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This course explores ways to study, interpret, and understand the beliefs and practices of these traditions, as well as their changes through history, and the relationship between religion and culture.

II. OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Identify significant formative events in the history and development of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- B. Identify and explain important concepts, beliefs, and practices of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- C. Explain the importance of religious figures such as Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Paul, and Muhammad.
- D. Explain the relationships between specific cultures and religious traditions.

III. COURSE CONTENT

A. Unit Titles/Suggested Time Schedule

Lecture	
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Hours</u>
1. The academic study of religion: orientation and terminology	2.00
2. Early Judaism	5.00
A. Yahweh, Abraham	
B. Moses, Covenant, the Law	
C. The Prophets, Diaspora, Torah, Talmud	
3. Judaism in the Middle Ages	4.00
A. Philosophical flowering	
B. Mysticism	
C. Persecutions	
4. Judaism in the modern period	4.00
A. Assimilation	
B. The Holocaust	
C. Festivals and practices	
5. Origins of Christianity	5.00
A. Political and religious conditions	
B. Life and teachings of Jesus Christ	
C. Paul, spread of Christianity	

6. Church doctrines and history	4.00
A. Roman Catholicism	
B. Trinity, Incarnation	
C. Communion, Saints, Mysticism	
7. The Protestant Reformation	4.00
A. Martin Luther	
B. Denominations	
8. Pre-Islamic Arabia	4.00
A. Mecca, Kaaba, Black Stone	
B. Abraham	
C. Hagar and Ishmael	
9. Muhammad; The Qur'an	5.00
A. Life, career	
B. The Qur'an	
C. Reading the Qur'an	
10. Principles and social teachings of Islam	4.00
A. The Five Pillars	
B. Judgement; Heaven and Hell; Prohibitions	
C. Observances; Holy days; Economics	
D. Women; racial equality; war; peace; Islamic Law (Shari'a)	
11. Islamic Sectarianism	3.00
A. Sunni, Shi'a and Sufi	
12. Reform Movements in Islam	4.00
A. The Wahhabi Movement	
B. Islamic Fundamentalism	
C. Islam and Politics	
13. Modern challenges to religion	3.00
Total Hours	51.00

IV. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

- A. Lecture
- B. Collaborative Group Work
- C. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- D. Discussion
- E. Reading Assignments
- F. Multimedia Presentations
- G. Internet Technologies
- H. Videos or Films
- I. A minimum of two hours homework preparation is expected for each hour spent in class or in receiving the equivalent material online

V. METHODS OF EVALUATION

- A. Quizzes
- B. Homework
- C. Class participation
- D. Written Assignments
- E. Mid-term and final examinations
- F. Class Discussion

- G. Students will write at least 1,500 words on essay exams, reports, term papers, etc., which will be graded on the basis of both form and content.

VI. EXAMPLES OF ASSIGNMENTS

A. Reading Assignments

1. Read the chapter "Judism and Modernity" in Religions of the West Today. Be prepared to discuss the modern divisions within Judaism, the development of the Zionist ideology, and the creation of the State of Israel.
2. Read the chapter "The Five Pillars of Islam" in Religions of the West Today. Apply the idea of religion as a path of self-transformation to The Five Pillars of Islam. Be prepared to discuss and analyze this in class.

B. Writing Assignments

1. The Protestant Reformation was unknowingly initiated by a Catholic priest with no intention of creating a vast new branch of Christianity. (a) what did Martin Luther do to spark this religious revolution; (b) what were his main issues with Catholic beliefs and practices; (c) what are two significant differences in Catholic and Protestant Christianity that resulted from the Protestant Reformation.
2. Based on the excerpt from the Book of Genesis, discuss the following topics: (a) what does the story tell us about the nature of God, what does he do, how does he do it, what's his relation to creation and to human beings; (b) what is unique about humans in all of creation and what role does God give them; (c) what does the story of Adam and Eve tell us about human nature and our relationship to God?

C. Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Religion in the Community. Using resources like the internet, the Yellow Pages, and The Chico News and Review: (a) itemize the variety of religious organizations and communities in the Chico area by religion, and (b) call one organization that interests you, ask for general information, and describe what you learned from that brief phone interview.
2. Places of Worship. Visit a place of worship associated with one of the Western religions. Describe the worship service of that community. In this assignment our purpose is simply to observe and describe, not to judge. Identify the place of worship you attended and when you attended, and write a thorough description of the worship service or practice of that community.

VII. RECOMMENDED MATERIALS OF INSTRUCTION

Textbooks:

- A. Molloy, M.. Experiencing the World's Religions: Tradition, Challenge, and Change . 5th Edition. McGraw Hill, 2009.
- B. Esposito, Fasching, Lewis. Religions of the West Today. 2nd Edition. Oxford Univ., 2011.
- C. Ludwig, T.. Sacred Paths of the West . 3rd Edition. Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007.

Materials Other Than Textbooks:

- A. Fieser, Powers. Scriptures of the World's Religions, 3rd Edition, McGraw Hill, 2007.
- B. The Bible, Old and New Testaments, in translation.
- C. The Qur'an in translation.