

1. SUBJECT MATTER OF THE COURSE:

This course consists of an exploration of the world religions as they challenge us Americans in today's world. This course approaches the conversation among the world religions by asking about the critical interplay of globalizing society and religion. How does the wisdom of the world's religions— from learning about their various histories and especially from pondering their sacred scriptures—challenge us Americans act in our increasingly globalized world? We investigate the chronological presence of religious traditions in the USA beginning with Native Americans through the various European religions and to the more recent arrival of Asian religious traditions. Also included are the principal made-in-America religions: apocalyptic communities, metaphysical communities, nature religions, and various new-age movements.

Gonzaga is a Catholic Jesuit university so the approach of this course will be that of theology with a focus on lived faith. It will be academic and dialogical as it relates Christianity to other religious traditions to discover common ground and also differences in belief and practice.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. A fuller awareness and basic knowledge of these many religious traditions and current developments as they continue the ever-expanding interreligious dialog in America.
2. An opportunity in this wide context to explore and express your own religious or value stance with respect to what the you value and/or question about human life and its meaning within the four dimensions of reality: self, society, nature, and Ultimate Reality.
3. Since we will be reading primary texts of the major world religions (**Novak** book), you will also have occasion to appreciate the wisdom of these sacred scriptures.

2. COURSE TEXTS:

World Religions in America, ed. Jacob Neusner (2003 third edition): **bring to class TUESDAYS**
The World's Wisdom, Philip Novak (1995): **bring to class EVERY DAY**

3. REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance is required, but students will be allowed one unexcused absence; any additional absences must have a doctor's note or official letter to be excused.

Students with no absences will receive 3 additional points on their Semester Grade.

After one unexcused absence, every additional unexcused absence will take 3 points off the Semester Grade; every tardy arrival or early departure will take 1 point off.

The Semester Grade will be based on:

1/4 Participation: bring NOVAK TO CLASS EVERY DAY; NEUSNER ON TUESDAYS.

a. TUESDAYS: Weekly reports on the *Neusner* text which will consist of typed responses to questions 1,3,5,7,9 in each assigned chapter. For full credit, responses must be carefully composed in complete sentences. Each question requires only 2 to 3 sentence response. This report will be evidence that you have prepared the chapter for our class discussion.

b. THURSDAYS: Preparation of the assigned pages in *Novak* for our class discussion: each

student should come prepared to discuss 3 reading selections which characterize aspects of the religion being studied and with reasons why the readings particularly appeal to you.

Semester participation grade: 90-100% += A; 80-90% += B; 70-80% += C, etc.

Weekly Written Report += complete and informed; Oral Report += at least one significant oral comment during *Neusner* or *Novak* discussion during that week.

1/4 Interview and Midterm:

Students will each interview a committed believer with a 3-4 page (1000 words) typed report on: 1) biographical info on the interviewee's approximate age, stage of life, religious tradition, when and why religiously committed; 2) how your interviewee expresses belief in his/her religion; what difference does faith make in his/her personal values and life goals; what is his/her attitude to committed believers in other traditions; what are his/her strongest convictions about self, society, nature, ultimate reality; what doubts.

3) your evaluation of how enhancing and/or limiting you find your interviewee's path to be.

This interview counts for half of the Midterm grade.

MIDTERM EXAM: based on the assigned questions in *Neusner* chapters 1-7, the class readings from *Novak*, the viewing questions on the videos, and your interview responses.

1/4 Term Reflection Essay: Outline/Draft (10 Points); Format/Articulate (10 Points).

A 10 page reflection essay to be carefully composed and typed (2500-3000) words:

The first part (4 pages) in which you articulate either 1) your own creed: what you yourself believe and/or question about life and its ultimate meaning, or 2) the beliefs and values of Gonzaga's Jesuit Catholic religious tradition. (20 Points)

In either instance, think of your own or the religious tradition you write about in terms of the role or place of self, society, nature, and Ultimate Reality in creed and practice.

The second part (5 or 6 pages: THE MOST IMPORTANT part for grade purposes!) will express:

1) one major insight which you derived from each chapter of *Neusner*'s book (chapters 1-11) and 2) how these major insights from the world religions in America challenge and/or underscore the religious position you stated in the first part of the essay above about your personal religious stance or about Gonzaga's Jesuit Catholic religious tradition. (50 Points)

One page on how two clearly identified works of religious art you have viewed and studied in Florence connect with your religious search and this course. (10 Points)

Outline (3 pages) or Draft due Week 11 (10% of Grade); Term Essay due Week 13.

1/4 Final Exam based on the assigned questions in *Neusner* (chapter 8-20), the corresponding readings from *Novak*, and the viewing questions on the videos since the Midterm, plus some overall reflections on this course.

GRADES: 94-100=A; 90-93=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 80-82=B-; 77-79=C+; 73-76=C; 70-72=C-; 67-69=D+; 63-66=D; 60-62=D-; 59-0=F.

5. OFFICE HOURS:

By appointment, just see me before or after class.

Also: by telephone or by e-mail: <pbernadicou@calprov.org>

6. ASSIGNMENTS BY WEEKS:

Wk 1	<u>Neusner</u> Intro and <u>Novak</u> Intro Video: 'Primal Mind'	
Wk 2	<u>Neusner</u> 1: Nat Americans <u>Novak</u> 333-79 (N & S Am).	<u>Novak</u> V: 'Native American Dance'
Wk 3	<u>Neusner</u> 2: Protestant Xtians <u>Novak</u> 227-253.	<u>Novak</u> V: H. Smith 'Christianity'
Wk 4	<u>Neusner</u> 3: African Ams <u>Novak</u> 333-73(African).	<u>Novak</u> V: 'Kwanzaa'
Wk 5	<u>Neusner</u> 4: Catholics <u>Novak</u> 255-279.	<u>Novak</u> V: 'Prayer' & 'We Are Church'
Wk 6	<u>Neusner</u> 5 & 6: Hisp & Orth <u>Novak</u> 274, #52 (TRY IT!)	<u>Novak</u> V. 'Russian Orthodoxy'
Wk 7	<u>Neusner</u> 7: Jews <u>Novak</u> 175-205	<u>Novak</u> V: H Smith 'Judaism'
Wk 8	INTERVIEW REPORTS DUE MIDTERM	V: 'Passover' TERM ESSAY EXPLAINED
Wk 9	<u>Neusner</u> 8: Hindus <u>Novak</u> 1-39.	<u>Novak</u> V: H. Smith 'Hinduism'
Wk 10	<u>Neusner</u> 9: Buddhists <u>Novak</u> 49-77	<u>Novak</u> V: H. Smith 'Buddhism'
Wk 11	<u>Neusner</u> 10: East Asians & TERM ESSAY OUTLINE/DRAFT <u>Novak</u> 111-33; 145-55.	V: H. Smith 'Confucianism'
Wk 12	<u>Neusner</u> 11: Muslims <u>Novak</u> 281-310	<u>Novak</u> V: H Smith 'Islam'

Wk 13 **TERM ESSAY DUE (5 % off each day late)**

NO CLASS: Prepare your Presentations on Neusner Ch 12-20:

Each trio will make a 15-20 minute presentation on an assigned chapter (chs 19-20 together)

Each member must actively participate in one of the following roles:

The coordinator who will oversee, keep time, and introduce the presentors.and topics.

- 1) What did you (singular and plural) find the most interesting information in this chapter?
- 2) How did the chapter extend and enrich your understanding and appreciation of religions in America? Be specific about your negative and positive reactions to this religion.
- 3) Which of the Study Questions would you consider the best question for the Final Exam? And what would you consider an A level response?

