



Fall 2017: August 28 – December 15

## Philosophy 1304: Introduction to World Religions

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Prerequisite:** College-level Reading; ENGL 1302, Composition II, *strongly suggested*

**Course Delivery Method:** Lecture/Lab

**Professor:**

Mr. Tony J. Howard  
Spring Creek Campus, Office #L259  
2800 E. Spring Creek Pkwy. Plano, Texas 75074

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**Web:** <http://iws.collin.edu/howard/howardt.htm>

**Office Hours:** Mondays & Wednesdays 2:15-4:15pm, Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:30-2:30pm, and by appointment

**Section:**

S03	Tuesdays & Thursdays	2:30-3:45pm	L200	CRN 14489
S70	Tuesdays	7:00-9:45pm	L200	CRN 10231

**Texts**

Eastman, Roger. *The Ways of Religion*. Oxford, 1999.

Hacker, Diana, and Nancy Sommers. *Rules for Writers*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016. (Recommended)

Manning, Christen & Phil Zuckerman. *Sex & Religion*. Wadsworth, 2005.

Smith, Huston. *The World's Religions, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*. HarperOne, 1991.

Note: Please do not attend class without bringing the assigned text(s).

**Course Description & Objectives**

The course offers an introduction to the five major living religious traditions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. We will briefly examine the history of each tradition, but our primary focus will be phenomenological, the *lived experience* of each tradition as it grapples with such matters as the nature of God, the origin of evil, human responsibility, morality, and mortality.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **State Mandated Outcomes:** Upon successful completion of this course, students will:
  1. Read, analyze, and critique religious texts.
  2. Demonstrate knowledge of beliefs, practices, values, and terminology of major world religions.
  3. Trace the historical developments and cultural expressions of world religions.
  4. Articulate key conceptual distinctions in world religions.
  5. Communicate understanding of world religions, orally or in writing. (Critical Thinking; Communication Skills)
  6. Communicate ways of living responsibly in a world where people have diverse religious beliefs. (Social Responsibility)
- **Additional Collin Outcomes:** Upon successful completion of this course, students will:
  1. Demonstrate personal responsibility by doing independent work in PHIL 1304 and properly citing all sources. (Personal Responsibility).

This is a reading and writing intensive course, and it presumes college-level competency; your writing will be evaluated not only for content but also for clarity. Ideally, you will have completed ENGL 1301 *and* ENGL 1302 prior to taking this course. If you have not completed *any* college-level English courses, please consult with me about your preparation for this class.

## Attendance and Late Work Policy

To receive credit for the course, you may miss no more than six hours' worth of classes while maintaining at least a 2.0 average for coursework completed. As a rule, I will not accept late work nor give makeup work, so please be sure to attend classes punctually, prepared, and with assigned work completed. Hard copies of essays are due by the date assigned in the syllabus. *Do not submit work electronically.* It is your responsibility to follow the syllabus and to contact classmates if you are absent in order to stay current. Occasionally, circumstances may require that I change the syllabus. However, I will make every attempt to provide sufficient notice. Please do not email me and ask if you 'missed anything important'; most of your professors like to think what we teach is 'important.' Bottom line: to receive three credit hours for a course means that you were actively present, engaged, and successfully completed the assignments for the three hours per week that the class met. Fair enough?

If you withdraw from the course *after* the census date (9/11/17), a grade of W will be posted to your transcript and count as one attempt toward the repeat policy. **The last day to drop is Friday 20 October 2017.** Students who have stopped attending classes but have not officially withdrawn in the Registrar's Office by then will receive an "F" on their transcripts. **Course Repeat Policy:** Beginning Fall 2016, Texas residents attempting a course more than twice at Collin College are subject to regular tuition plus an additional \$50 per semester credit hour. Please see the "Repeating Courses" section of the Fall 2017 Registration Guide for more information. Also note that students enrolled in

Texas colleges/universities may drop a *maximum* of six courses (18 credit hours) during their *entire* college career. If you are contemplating a withdrawal from the course, please see me first so that I may understand your reasons and advise you accordingly. Bottom line: choose your drops carefully but realize it is certainly better to bail than fail.

### **Etiquette:**

In order to maintain a respectful, positive learning environment:

- 1) Please do not interrupt the class by coming in late.
- 2) Please do not schedule doctor's appointments or other business during class.
- 3) Please **turn off your cell phone and place it out of sight**. If I see it, I may be rude.
- 4) Please bring your text(s) with you to every class.
- 5) Please do not carry on private conversations outside of class discussions or study for other courses or peek at the phone in your lap or file your nails or eat or sleep or, indeed, engage in any other behavior disrespectful of your classmates and professor.
- 6) Please refrain from proselytizing. We're engaged in the academic study of religion; you may not use class time to convert others to your religion or lack thereof.
- 7) Always use your Cougarmail Email account when corresponding with me; I may not respond to your private email accounts.

If you fail to observe basic civility, I reserve the right to ask you to leave the class and may report such behavior to the Dean of Students, who can be less accommodating than I. Attending college is your *choice*. You do not *have* to be here, and I do not *have* to tolerate inconsiderate behavior. I will offer everyone my utmost attention and will respect every point of view that is considerately expressed and seriously presented. Professors and students alike enjoy academic freedom, which gives us the opportunity to grow and learn from one another. Show an interest, and I will go out of my way to deepen that interest; show apathy, and I will likely repay in kind.

### **Course Requirements**

**Reading Quizzes (25%)** Classes will generally begin with a reading quiz based on the day's assignment in order to assess how closely you are reading the text. These quizzes will range from the simple multiple-choice to the more involved short essay response. **Although I do not accept late quizzes, at the end of the semester, I will drop your two lowest quiz grades.**

**Oriental Religions Essay (25%)** You will be asked to write a formal, out-of-class essay based on the course readings and expressing your understanding of Hinduism and Buddhism; the essay should be 3-5 pages, typed, double-spaced, using current MLA format (parenthetical documentation and a Works Cited page). Grading standards for college-level writing appear later in the syllabus.

**Comprehensive Essay (25%)** You will be asked to write a formal, out-of-class essay based on the course readings and expressing your understanding of the religions we have studied; the essay should be 3-5 pages, as per the Oriental Religions essay.

**Final Exam (25%)** During the scheduled final exam period, you will be asked to

complete an objective fifty-question comprehensive final. Please bring scantron & pencils.

**Scale:** A = 90>, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, F = <60

I will provide you with your course average at least twice during the semester, and you may always ask me about your average after class or during office hours.

**Plagiarism Policy:** Other than sources documented and cited according to MLA format, all work submitted for a grade must be your own original work. Submitting another's words as your own is plagiarism and may result in an F in the course. Further, the College may initiate disciplinary proceedings against students accused of academic dishonesty. Quote carefully and document fully in order to avoid even the *appearance* of plagiarism. Please consult pp. 441-457 in *Rules for Writers* as well as the *2017-2018 Student Handbook* regarding definitions and penalties for Scholastic Dishonesty.

**Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance:** It is the policy of Collin College to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals who are students with disabilities. This College will adhere to all applicable Federal, State and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to contact the faculty member and/or the Services for Students with Disabilities at 972.881.5950 in a timely manner to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

### **Grading Standards for College-Level Writing**

Closely graded work will indicate your strengths and weaknesses. I provide specific guidelines for matters of style and substance, and I encourage students to strive for clarity of expression in addition to depth of thought. *Clear writing mirrors clear thinking.* For additional help with writing, consider the free tutoring available in the Writing Centers on each campus (D-203 Spring Creek = 972.881.5843). Also, the college offers free tutoring throughout the semester; phone 972.881.5128 for assistance.

### **Superior (A = 90-100, B = 80-89)**

Note: Although "A" and "B" papers possess many of the same features, the style, originality and level of excellence of the "A" paper are exceptional.

**Preparation:** The student adapts his thinking to the form and requirements of the assignments and develops his paper through preliminary outlines and drafts.

**Contents:** The paper contains a significant and central idea clearly defined and supported with concrete, substantial, and consistently relevant detail. The superior paper displays freshness and originality of perception; it moves through its ideas with an inevitability organic to its central idea.

**Development:** The paper engages attention and interest at the beginning, progresses by ordered and necessary stages, and ends with a conclusion that supports the bulk of the essay without being repetitive. Development is economical, original, well proportioned, and emphatic; paragraphs are coherent, unified and properly developed; transitions between main ideas are effective and logical.

**Sentence Structure:** Sentences are unified, coherent, forceful, and varied to promote a lively and interesting rhythm.

**Diction:** The language is distinctive, fresh, economical, and precise.

**Grammar and Punctuation:** (See the handout on the Basics of grammar and punctuation.) Correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, and mechanics reflect clear and effective thinking.

**Appearance:** The superior paper is carefully proofread and correctly documented. It is typed or word-processed according to MLA style.

### **Average (C or 70-79)**

The "C" paper is clear, competent, and controlled, but its style and originality are undistinguished.

**Preparation:** The paper contains evidence of at least one preliminary draft. The topic and content are clearly and competently adapted to the assignment.

**Content:** The central idea is apparent but too general, too familiar, or too limited. It is supported with concrete detail, though that detail may be occasionally repetitious, irrelevant, or sketchy.

**Development:** The plan of the paper is recognizable, but not developed or not consistently fulfilled. The essay might be disproportionately developed or exhibit an inappropriate emphasis. Transitions are clear but too abrupt, mechanical, or monotonous. The paragraphs are unified, coherent, and usually well developed.

**Sentence Structure:** The sentences are competent, but many lack force, variation in structure, or effective rhythm.

**Diction:** The language is appropriate to the paper's purpose, subject, and audience; it is not overly formal, abstract, or colloquial.

**Grammar and Punctuation:** Deviations from standard grammar, punctuation, spelling, or mechanics damage the paper's clarity and effectiveness.

**Appearance:** The "C" paper conforms to the guidelines established for the superior paper.

### **Unsatisfactory (D = 60-69, F = <60)**

Though "D" and "F" papers may share the same faults (such as inadequate development or absence of a discernible thesis), the "F" paper exhibits an obvious breakdown in style and structure. A plagiarized paper will receive a zero.

**Preparation:** The student's ideas do not relate to the specific assignment, and there is little evidence of a preliminary draft.

**Content:** The central idea is missing, confused, superficial, or unsupported by concrete and relevant detail. Content is obvious, contradictory, or aimless.

**Development:** The essay has no clear and orderly stages and fails to emphasize and support the central idea. Paragraphs are typographical rather than structural; transitions between paragraphs are missing, unclear, ineffective or rudimentary.

**Sentence Structure:** Meaning is thwarted by sentences which are incoherent, incomplete, fused, monotonous, rudimentary, or redundant.

**Diction:** The level of language is inappropriate to the subject.

**Grammar and Punctuation:** Frequent mistakes in basic grammar, spelling, and punctuation obscure the ideas.

**Appearance:** An illegible presentation is always a liability.

### **On Grading**

I do not . . . grade on potential, talent, improvement, effort, motivation, intention, behavior, personality, weight, height, sex, race, accent, appearance. I grade on accomplishment, subjectively, I admit, but to the standards I feel are appropriate to the course. A's represent exceptional work, far above average. B's represent good work, above average. C's represent average work. D's below-average work. And F's exceptional work in the wrong direction.

It is the work I am grading, not the student. It is work that can be shown to the student, to colleagues, to administrators; it is work that relates directly to the quality of the reference that would be given for the student when that student applies to more advanced courses or for a job. It is a grade that represents my evaluation of what the student has accomplished and demonstrated at the end of the course after the student has had the benefit of extensive writing and extensive reaction to that writing.

From *A Writer Teaches Writing* by Donald Murray

### **The Fallacy of Separable Form and Content**

Any pretense that something called "content" can always be separated easily from something called "form" in a piece of writing is just that—a pretense. Naïve at best and, at worse, an excuse for careless writing and muddled thinking, such a notion denies language any self-sufficient communicative power and thrusts readers into the roles of psychics who glance at jumbled words, then mysteriously divine what the writer "Really meant." Very few have psychic powers, and, to the majority of readers, vague, confused writing succeeds only in expressing vague, confused thought.

Similarly, the comfortable old saw that "what one says" is more important than "how one says it" rests on the lazy assumption that language is the mere ornament of basic intention. If such really were the case, then why not reply to a respected host's offer of a cup of coffee with "Yuk, no! Your coffee tastes like skunk toes"? According to the axiom that the intention of "what's said" matters more than the manner of saying it, isn't one simply refusing the coffee just as he would be refusing it by answering, "No, thank you"? Of course not; expression and impression here are of a piece, and attempting a reduction to some sort of "basic meaning," as opposed to "form," comically distorts the nature of social communication, if not of language itself.

In what one writes, even more than in what one says, lies all the meaning, or lack of it, an audience finds, for a writer can not often face his readers and protest "I didn't really mean that." Simply put, written work alone either makes sense, or it doesn't; it communicates clear thinking to literate readers, or it doesn't. And literate readers are hardly found only in college departments of English. Complaints that how a paper is written should matter only in English courses, aside from betraying a dangerous ignorance of the function of language, insults professors in all other disciplines by assuming they—thought obviously literate—somehow don't have the sense or the right to expect literature discourse from students.

One can no more limit making sense in writing to English courses than he can confine the use of numbers to math classes. Understandable language, whether it take the form of sentences or of equations, is too basic, too necessary to civilized living to admit restriction. All college courses require students to write literately. To require any less would deny the social purposes of a liberal education.

--M.L. Lawhon (late professor of Shakespeare at SMU)



Student Profile for PHIL 1304: Introduction to World Religions

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

College ID # \_\_\_\_\_ What is your major? \_\_\_\_\_

Check the college-level English courses you have completed:

\_\_\_\_\_ ENGL 1301 (Composition I) \_\_\_\_\_ ENGL 1302 (Composition II)

\_\_\_\_\_ I have not completed any college-level English courses

What other courses are you taking this semester besides PHIL 1304?

*Why* are you taking PHIL 1304?

Please list five adjectives that describe you well; then choose *one* of them and write an in-depth paragraph describing why it fits you. Give us five or six sentences, please, not just a smattering of random words. Use the back of this sheet, please.

Religious Profile (Anonymous)

What is your religion? \_\_\_\_\_

Which terms best describe you? Circle all that apply:

Jewish      Christian      Muslim      Hindu      Buddhist

Agnostic      Atheist      Born-Again      Fundamentalist      Evangelical

Charismatic      Pagan      Liberal      Conservative      Moderate      Radical

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Do you feel the need to convert others to your religion? Yes No

Do you believe in an afterlife? Yes No (If “yes,” briefly explain)

Which of these statements best describes your approach to the Bible?

\_\_\_\_ The Bible is literally true, the infallible, immutable Word of God, no if’s, and’s, or but’s.

\_\_\_\_ The Bible was written by men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit, but it is not *literally* true in all respects. Some parts are to be taken as symbolic, open to interpretation.

\_\_\_\_ The Bible is a work of poetry and myth, full of wisdom but not divinely inspired.

\_\_\_\_ I have no opinion on the matter.

Do you feel religion and politics should be kept separate? Yes No

In whom or in what do you place your “ultimate trust”? Briefly explain.



**Calendar of Assignments for PHIL 1304.S03  
Fall 2017**

***Reading assignments should be completed by the date assigned.*** Depending on how quickly you read and assimilate the material, each assignment should require an average of two hours for completion (excluding the essays, of course, which will require an additional commitment). Please try to budget your time wisely between employment, recreation, and education. For example, *if you work full-time (40 hours per week), you should not be enrolled for more than nine hours of college credit.* Be realistic, not sociopathic.

KEY: Smith = *The World's Religions* Manning = *Sex and Religion* Eastman = *Ways of Religion*

**Tuesday 8/29:** Introduction to the course: syllabus, handouts.

**Thursday 8/31:** Smith, pp. 1-50 ("Point of Departure" & "Hinduism").

**Tuesday 9/5:** Smith, pp. 50-77; Eastman, pp. 13-22 ("Himalayas of the Soul" & Radhakrishnan, "The Hindu View of Life").

**Thursday 9/7:** Eastman, pp. 40-53 ("Selections, Bhagavad-Gita") and pp. 65-74 (Gandhi, "I Am But a Seeker After Truth").

**Tuesday 9/12:** Manning, pp. 1-14 ("Sex and Religion: An Introduction"); 18-38 (Rita Dasgupta Sherma, "Hinduism").

**Thursday 9/14:** Smith, pp. 82-127 ("Buddhism").

**Tuesday 9/19:** Smith, pp. 128-149.

**Thursday 9/21:** Eastman, pp. 91-105 ("Selections, Buddhist Scriptures").

**Tuesday 9/26:** Manning, pp. 41-57 (Alan Sponberg, "Buddhism").

**Thursday 9/28:** Eastman, pp. 133-139 (D.T. Suzuki, "The Essence of Zen"); pp. 154-160 (Shunryu Suzuki, "Be Like a Frog"). **Oriental religions essay assigned.**

**Tuesday 10/3:** Editing workshop for essay (bring typed rough draft for review).

**Thursday 10/5: Oriental religions essay due.** Grading conferences in L259.

**Tuesday 10/10:** Grading conferences in L259.

**Thursday 10/12:** Grading conferences in L259.

**Tuesday 10/17:** Grading conferences in L259.

**Thursday 10/19:** Grading conferences in L259.

**Friday 10/20:** Last day to drop courses with a grade of “W.”

**Tuesday 10/24:** Smith, pp. 271-315 (“Judaism”).

**Thursday 10/26:** Eastman, pp. 293-313 (Finkelstein, “Nothing is Ordinary” & “Selections, The Holy Scriptures”).

**Tuesday 10/31 :** Manning, pp. 93-112 (Barbara Geller, “Judaism”).

**Thursday 11/2:** Smith, pp. 317-339. (“Christianity”).

**Tuesday 11/7:** Smith, pp. 339-362.

**Thursday 11/9:** Eastman, pp. 343-353 (“Selections, The New Testament”) and Eastman, pp. 353-364 (“The Gospel of Thomas”).

**Tuesday 11/14:** Eastman, pp. 364-380 (St. Augustine, “Selections, The Confessions” and Soren Kierkegaard, “The Anguish of Being a Christian”).

**Thursday 11/16:** Manning, pp. 117-137 (Anthony LoPresti, “Christianity.”)

**Tuesday 11/21:** Smith, pp. 221-268 (“Islam”).

**Thursday 11/23: Thanksgiving Holiday**

**Tuesday 11/28:** Eastman, pp. 406-415 (“Selections, The Koran”); pp. 428-435 (Al-Faruqi, “Moments of the Religious Life”).

**Thursday 11/30:** Manning, pp. 181-194 (Larry Poston, “Islam”). **Comprehensive Essay assigned.**

**Tuesday 12/5:** *Sex and Religion* Video

**Thursday 12/7: Comprehensive Essay due.** Handout: Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse, “Fundamentalism” & Eastman, pp. 530-535 (John Hick, “Personal Note”).  
Review for Final Exam.

**Thursday 12/14: Final Exam for Section S03 (bring scantron & pencils).**

**Calendar of Assignments for PHIL 1304.S70  
Fall 2017**

***Reading assignments should be completed by the date assigned.*** Depending on how quickly you read and assimilate the material, each assignment should require an average of two hours for completion (excluding the essays, of course, which will require an additional commitment). Please try to budget your time wisely between employment, recreation, and education. For example, *if you work full-time (40 hours per week), you should not be enrolled for more than nine hours of college credit.* Be realistic, not sociopathic.

KEY: Smith = *The World's Religions* Manning = *Sex and Religion* Eastman = *Ways of Religion*

**Tuesday 8/29:** Introduction to the course: syllabus, handouts.

**Tuesday 9/5:** Smith, pp. 1-50 (“Point of Departure” & “Hinduism”).

**Tuesday 9/12:** Smith, pp. 50-77; Eastman, pp. 13-22 (“Himalayas of the Soul” & Radhakrishnan, “The Hindu View of Life”). Eastman, pp. 40-53 (“Selections, Bhagavad-Gita”) and pp. 65-74 (Gandhi, “I Am But a Seeker After Truth”).

**Tuesday 9/19:** Manning, pp. 1-14 (“Sex and Religion: An Introduction”); 18-38 (Rita Dasgupta Sherma, “Hinduism”).

**Tuesday 9/26:** Smith, pp. 82-149 (“Buddhism”).

**Tuesday 10/3:** Eastman, pp. 91-105 (“Selections, Buddhist Scriptures”); pp. 133-139 (D.T. Suzuki, “The Essence of Zen”); pp. 154-160 (Shunryu Suzuki, “Be Like a Frog”); Manning, pp. 41-57 (Alan Sponberg, “Buddhism”). **Oriental religions essay assigned.**

**Tuesday 10/10: Oriental religions essay due.** Grading conferences in L259.

**Tuesday 10/17:** Grading conferences in L259.

**Friday 10/20:** Last day to drop courses with a grade of “W.”

**Tuesday 10/24:** Smith, pp. 271-315 (“Judaism”). Eastman, pp. 293-313 (Finkelstein, “Nothing is Ordinary” & “Selections, The Holy Scriptures”).

**Tuesday 10/31 :** Manning, pp. 93-112 (Barbara Geller, “Judaism”).

**Tuesday 11/7:** Smith, pp. 317-362. (“Christianity.”) Eastman, pp. 343-353 (“Selections, The New Testament”) and Eastman, pp. 353-364 (“The Gospel of Thomas”)

**Tuesday 11/14:** Eastman, pp. 364-380 (St. Augustine, “Selections, The Confessions” and Soren Kierkegaard, “The Anguish of Being a Christian”). Manning, pp. 117-137 (Anthony LoPresti, “Christianity.”)

**Tuesday 11/21:** Smith, pp. 221-268 (“Islam”). Eastman, pp. 406-415 (“Selections, The Koran”); pp. 428-435 (Al-Faruqi, “Moments of the Religious Life”). **Comprehensive essay assigned.**

**Tuesday 11/28:** Manning, pp. 181-194 (Larry Poston, “Islam”).

**Tuesday 12/5: Comprehensive Essay due.** Handout: Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse, “Fundamentalism” & Eastman, pp. 530-535 (John Hick, “Personal Note”). Review for Final Exam.

**Tuesday 12/12: Final Exam for Section S70. Bring scantron & pencils.**