EDHI 488C and EDHI 683
WORLD RELIGIONS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

Winter 2012
Class meets January 2, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12
Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 4:00pm – 9:00pm

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OBJECTIVES
The course will seek to:
• help students develop a basic understanding of world religions, looking at their origins, development, teachings, and primary figures.
• explore the roles, meaning, purpose that education plays in the various religions.
• facilitate students’ ability to develop their own intellectual, moral, and ecological intelligences using the teachings, philosophies, and approaches of the various traditions studied.

It is hoped that through this course, students will develop an acute understanding of problems in education that go beyond scores, and place learning and schooling in cultural and religious contexts. They will gain a better understanding of the current challenges and possibilities of building global cultural understanding and respect.

TEACHING
The course will comprise three parts: 1) teaching and class discussion; 2) personal reading and research by students on a specific topic; 3) student presentations of their research. The learning process will be comprised of reading from both primary and secondary texts, followed by discussions to contextualize the material and connect it to societal and individual issues and challenges regarding education.

Class activities will also include presentations by guest speakers, group activities, brainstorming, journal writing and other avenues to stimulate in depth understanding.

Questions for discussion in class:
• What are dominant moral value systems in the different religions and what are their sources (e.g. texts, tradition, etc.)?
• What are the concepts of the divine or the ultimate and how are they understood within the context of the value systems?
• What are the primary commonalities and differences found in the world’s faiths?
• How are humans, nature, and the cosmos understood in the different religions?
• What role does gender, ethnicity, and race play?
• What is the ultimate goal of life in each tradition? What is presented as the best way to obtain it?
• What types of education exist in various religious contexts and traditions and what role do they play in formulating knowledge, vision, wisdom acquisition, intuition, imagination, and creativity?
• What are the implications of religions for education in the 21st century? How do we address critical problems in school, such as school violence, lack of interest in learning, and spiritual void in students’ life?

READINGS

1. Textbooks to be PURCHASED (before class begins):

2. Religious Classics to be READ ONLINE [read as much as you can]
   Confucius: *Great Learning*. [http://www.acmuller.net/conf-dao/greatlearning.html](http://www.acmuller.net/conf-dao/greatlearning.html)
   Confucius: *Doctrine of the Mean*. [http://www.acmuller.net/conf-dao/docofmean.html](http://www.acmuller.net/conf-dao/docofmean.html)
   Lao Zi. *Dao De Jing*. [provided by faculty]
   Zhuang Zi. [http://oaks.nvg.org/ys1ra5.html](http://oaks.nvg.org/ys1ra5.html)

3. Articles: the instructor will assign a number of articles for reading

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Participating in Class Discussions: 20%
2. Weekly Summary and Reflection on the Readings (two essays) 40%
4. Research Project 40%

A+ 97-100%; A = 90-96% and above; B = 80-89%; C = 70-79%; D = 60-69%; F = 59% or less
1) Participation: each student will be called upon to sum up ideas from one chapter/book/article and lead discussions in class.

2) Students will write a weekly report on the readings of each week (4-5 pages/week – this means two essays). They will synthesize the main ideas in the readings, draw on the ideas and use the writing process to clarify and enhance their own religious/spiritual understanding and make connections to and conduct reflection on education. Students are encouraged to critique and debate on views they disagree with.

3) The Research Project (10+ pages for graduate students, and 8+ pages for undergraduates) should draw from literature covered in the class as well as other literature relevant to the students’ topic of choice. Students should use this assignment to connect world religions with the discussion of key issues in education and improvement of schools. They should also use this assignment to clarify their understanding and vision of educational purposes and practices.

**JANUARY 4, WEDNESDAY**

Focus of the Day:
Loving-kindness and virtues in action. Pathway to harmony and salvation. Self-transformation and world transformation; scholars as public intellectuals. Education for personal and social changes

Tao and virtues; returning to a child’s mind; Taoist cultivation for immortality. Theory of Nature/Human Correspondence and Synchronicity; Qi as Bio-information and Bio-intelligence Energy.

Virtues as the foundation of the Collective Unconscious and for the harmony of the universe and the world.

Session 1:
INTRODUCTION

“What Is Spirituality-Words by some scholars.”

Session 2:
CONFUCIANISM AND EDUCATION

*The World’s Religions*, Chapter IV, Confucianism
The Analects of Confucius;
The Great Learning;
Doctrine of the Mean


Session 3:
TAOISM AND EDUCATION

Dao De Jing (Tao Teh Ching-Translated by Steven Mitchell – On Blackboard)
The World’s Religions, Chapter V, Taoism


**JANUARY 5, THURSDAY**

Focus of the Day:
The Buddhist view of the cosmos and human life; karma; roots of human sufferings and its effect on spirituality; detachment; cultivation of wisdom, tranquility and ending of suffering. Love and compassion for All in Buddhism. Zen Buddhism: human nature; let go and go straight to our true Self.
The Hindu view on equality and oneness of all existence; the way to live and to return to God in Hinduism. The highest form of virtues; freedom, Yoga of Life, embracing our greater Self, becoming a person of wisdom.

**Session 1:**
**BUDDHISM AND EDUCATION**

*The World's Religions*, Chapter III, Buddhism

*The Diamond Sutra;*

*The Heart Sutra*


**Session 2:**
**HINDUISM AND EDUCATION**

*The World's Religions*, Chapter II, Hinduism

*The Bhagavad Gita.*


**JANUARY 9, MONDAY**

**Focus of the Day:**
The way of Jesus. A re-examination of compassion and femininity; what does it mean to be Christ-like; freedom gained from repentance and forgiveness; unconditional love and the mystical path of the Kabbalists and Jesus; the Will of All and human choices.

Arts and music and other forms of creativity. Phases of development and challenges today.

**Session 1: JUDAISM AND EDUCATION**

*The World’s Religions*, Chapter VII, Judaism.

*The Old Testament*

“Judaism 101.”


**Session 2: CHRISTIANITY AND EDUCATION**

*The World’s Religions*, Chapter VIII, Christianity

*The New Testament*


**JANUARY 11, WEDNESDAY**

**Focus of the Day:**
Faith and life in Islamic traditions. The teachings of Koran. Education as religious learning. The need for building cultural understanding between the West and Islamic societies.

Native American spirituality; human-nature interconnection. Wisdoms of indigenous people. Modernization, colonialism and challenges to Indigenous knowledge system.

**Session 1: ISLAM AND EDUCATION**

*The Koran.* [on blackboard]

*The World’s Religions*, Chapter VI, Islam


**Session 2:  INDIGENOUS AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN RELIGIONS AND EDUCATION**


**JANUARY 12, THURSDAY**

**Focus of the Day:**


Our life’s mission and destiny. Free will and destiny; charity; good and evil; truth and self-knowledge; spiritual exercises.

The mind and the subconscious mind; the collective unconscious; the implicate order; give and take relationship and energy; choice in life.

Expanding the horizons of education.

**Session 1: RELIGION AND SCIENCE: CAN THEY BE INTEGRATED?**

Einstein’s famous saying:

**Session 2: WORLD RELIGIONS: COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES**

DISCUSSION: The commonalities and differences among world’s religions and spiritual traditions: divine force; fasting; the divine child; trinity; qi, or jinn, or spirits; heaven and hell; the notion of time (one day vs one thousand years); final judgment; end of time or beginning of new age; prophets; gender; ways of knowing; rituals and their purposes; …. The possibility for a dialogue of civilizations and co-existence.


Chapter 1, Dave Bohm: A Physics Perspective;
Chapter 5, Space-Time Creation and the Black/White Hole Metaphor;
Chapter 10, Eastern and Western Thought as Aspects of a Common Reality.
Chapter 11, Toward a New Paradigm.


Session 3:
IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION: WISDOM BASED EDUCATION

[Students will choose to read one article in depth and give a presentation to the class, while enriching the theme with other sources. Or the student can find one or two articles on a subject related to their field and interest, for example, “foreign language learning and culture of faith”]


**JANUARY 17, THURSDAY**

*PRESENTATION OF FINAL PAPER*