RELI 2350: Religious Thinkers  
Spring 2014-University of Texas at Tyler  
Adjunct Instructor Dr. Jimmie A. Reese  
Office: None provided. For an appointment call Dr. Reese at his home (903-586-4116) or contact him by E-Mail: jareese@aol.com.

Course Description: The course will present the religious legacy of a variety of thinkers from ancient time to the modern period. Covered will be representatives of Judaism, Christianity, Eastern religious and critics of religion.

Learning Objectives: By the end of the course, students should:
1. Be able to demonstrate a familiarity with biographical details of the lives of major religious thinkers presented in the course.
2. Be able to demonstrate an understanding of the historical events that may have shaped the thoughts of major religious figures.
3. Be able to analyze the economic, political, and social changes that may have shaped the thought of major religious figures.
4. Be able to demonstrate an understanding of the basic contributions of each religious thinker presented in the course.
5. Be able to analyze how these major religious thinkers may have been enlightened by, or were responding to, the thought of their predecessors.

Required Texts:
Journal articles provided by the instructor will serve as required readings. Visual presentations (DVD and/or Video) are considered as text. Lectures are also considered as text.

Final Grading System.
Students will be evaluated based on the following:
1. There will be four exams on the readings, videos and/or lectures throughout the semester. These will account for three-fourths of your grade. Students may drop the lowest grade of the four exams provided all four are taken. There are no make-ups unless the student absence is due to representing the university for a sponsored event. The average of all four reflection papers (see number two below) may be used as a substitute grade for a missed exam except for the final. Please check with the university calendar for date of your final. Please read University policies beginning on third page.

2. There will also be four reflection papers of 3-5 pages each. Format will be explained in class. They will account for one-fourth of your grade. Students are allowed to miss one reflection paper as the average of the best three will be used in grading. In order for the average of reflection papers to be used as a substitute for a missed exam, all four reflection papers must be completed. Substitution does not apply to the final exam. Each paper will be written from each of the four parts of the course. Course content is subject to change.
Important Dates for Spring 2014
University of Texas at Tyler
Religious Thinkers

FIRST DAY OF CLASS: January 14

FIRST EXAM: PART ONE: January 30
FIRST REFLECTION PAPER: Same week as above.

SECOND EXAM: PART TWO: February 20
SECOND REFLECTION PAPER: Same week as above.

THIRD EXAM: March 27
THIRD REFLECTION PAPER: Same week as above.

FOURTH REFLECTION PAPER: WEEK OF APRIL 28

LAST LECTURE CLASS: MAY 1

FOURTH EXAM DURING EXAM WEEK
Second Week of May. Please check the University calendar for date and time of final.

Dates are subject to change. You will be notified at least a week in advance.

Due dates for Reflection Papers are only due dates. You may want to turn in your paper prior to the due date.

If you need to contact Dr. Reese, please use the following e-mail address: jareese@aol.com or call 903-586-4116.
CLASS SCHEDULE

Part One: Religion and Being Religious

January 14
Introduction to Course and Syllabus

January 16
Lecture and Discussion: Defining Religion and other relevant disciplines.

January 21
Lecture and Discussion: Questions addressed by religious thinkers.

January 23
Lecture and Discussion: How the religious thinkers know what they claim to know.

January 28
Lecture & Discussion: Modern study of religion.

January 30: Exam one will cover the above content.
January 28 or 30: First reflection paper due representing one aspect of part one.

Part Two: From out of Judaism and Jewish thinkers.

February 4
Lecture & Discussion: From out of the Mosaic tradition-Exodus and Moses.

February 6
Lecture & Discussion: From out of the prophetic tradition: Amos & Hosea.

February 11 and 13
Lecture & Discussion: Marx and Freud.

February 18
Lecture and Discussion: Martin Buber

February 20: Exam Two will cover material from part two.
February 18 or 20: Reflection paper two due representing one aspect of part two.

Part Three: From out of the Christian tradition.

February 25:
Lecture and Discussion: Voices from the feminist and womanist movements

February 27
Lecture and Discussion: Walter Rauschenbusch-PBS recently called him “one of the most influential American religious leaders of the last 100 years.”
March 4
Lecture and Discussion: Dietrich Bonhoeffer-Lutheran Pastor

March 6
Lecture and Discussion: Thomas Merton: Catholic Monk and Activist.

March 11 and 13: Spring Break

March 18
Lecture and Discussion: The legacy of Pope John XXIII and of Vatican II.

March 20
Lecture and Discussion: Donald B. Kraybill, leading authority on the Anabaptist movement and the Amish.

March 25
This day will be used to catch up on material in need of closure.

March 27: Exam three will cover material from part three.
February 25 or 27: Reflection paper three due representing one aspect of pat three.

Part Four: Voices from the East

April 1 & 3
Video Presentation: *Heart of Tibet*. Documentary on the Dali Lama.

April 8 & 10
Video Presentation and Response: *A Confucian Life in America*. Features Tu Wei-Ming, noted Confucian scholar

April 15 & 17
Video Presentation and Response: *The Islamic Mind*. Features Seyyed Hossein Nasr, noted Muslim scholar.

April 22
Lecture and Discussion: Andrew Song Park. Dr. Park is well known for his application of the Korean experience of *Han* to American religious thought.

April 24
Lecture and Discussion: Lao-tze and Daoism.

April 29 and May 1
Open Dates to be used for part four closure on material not covered.

Reflection paper four to be turned in on either date covering one aspect of part four.

May 5: Week of Finals. Check official university calendar for exact date and time.

Schedule and content of course outline subject to change.
REFLECTION PAPER GUIDELINES

PART ONE: WHAT IS A REFLECTION PAPER?

First of all-a reflection paper is not a research paper. It is an opportunity for the student to reflect on what has been encountered in class, namely lecture, readings and videos.

PART TWO: GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE PAPER

Your paper is to be divided into three parts. Please follow the outline provided as follows.

1. **Descriptive.** Write what you heard, saw, and/or read. This is an objective question that requires that you **ONLY** describe what you experienced. **PLEASE-NO PERSONAL OPINIONS.** You are trying to explain to someone who knows nothing of what you experienced the content of what you heard, saw and/or read. Example of a descriptive statement: the coffee is black.

2. **Opinion.** Now you can give your personal evaluation of what you have just described. This is a subjective question. You are now trying to explain to someone what you personal reaction is to what you heard, saw and/or read. You will want to be able to defend your opinion. Example of your opinion: the coffee taste good. Not everyone will agree with you, but it is your own unique experience and evaluation. Explain yourself.

3. **Contextualization.** In what ways will the content of your report have relevancy for your own context or will it? Show how you might apply what you have learned or explain how what you learned will not work in your context.

PART THREE: PRESENTATION

All papers will be computer generated OR typed on a typewriter. Be forewarned: handwritten papers will not be accepted. Please double-space all pages.

**The following format is to be placed in the middle of your front cover page.**

- **Name:**
- **Course Title:**
- **Due Date:**
- **Paper Number:**
- **Source:** Title of Video, article or lecture with name of source

Identify each section of your paper with the following words in **Bold Type:**

- **Section I- Description.**
- **Section II- Opinion.**
- **Section III- Contextualization**

The length of the paper should not be less than three pages of double spaced manuscript. That allows for one page per section. No matter the length of any section, no section should be less than one full page. I will read whatever you turn in, but would rather not have more than five pages per paper. **You will be graded on both content and whether or not you follow my instructions on the required format. NOTE: RIGHT AND LEFT MARGINS ARE TO BE ONE INCH.**
Further Reminders

Students Rights and Responsibilities
To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link:
http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/StudentRightsandResponsibilities.html

Attendance and Make Policy
Attendance is required for this course and non-attendance will cause a grade reduction. No exam make-ups are allowed; one exam missed will count as the lowest grade dropped. All written assignments (for example, book reports, abstracts and/or research papers) are due on the date assigned. Late papers will not be excused without serious justification. Broken printers or computers do not count as serious justification. Students need to back up all written data.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness
If you are repeating this course for a grade replacement, you must file an intent to receive grade forgiveness with the registrar by the 12th day of class. Failure to do so will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates will receive grade forgiveness (grade replacement) for only three course repeats; graduates, for two course repeats during his/her career at UT Tyler.

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy
Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the 12th day of class (January 26th). Exceptions to the 6-drop rule include, but are not limited to, the following: totally withdrawing from the university; being administratively dropped from a course; dropping a course for a personal emergency; dropping a course for documented change of work schedule; or dropping a course for active duty service with the U.S. armed forces or Texas National Guard.
Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Registrar's Office and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Registrar's Office if you have any questions.

Disability Services
In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodation must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Support Services counselor. If you have a disability, including a learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact Ida MacDonald in the Disability Support Services office in UC 282, or call (903) 566-7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance
Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities
If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned
absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.  

**Social Security and FERPA Statement:**
It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

**Emergency Exits and Evacuation**
Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.