RELS 101.01 Approaches to Religion
Life After Death
(Fall 2017, M/W, 11:00-11:50 PM ECTR 116)
Dr. Lee Irwin, Religious Studies Department
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E-Mail Address: irwinl@cofc.edu (send a message!)
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 10:00-11:00, 1:00-2:00
Friday 10:00-11:00, 12:00-1:00 (or by appointment)

Course Description:
This course is a comparative introduction to religion organized around the theme of
death, soul concepts, and a variety of beliefs about life after death. In terms of culture
areas, the theme will be internationalized by looking at a variety of model cultures: ancient
Mediterranean religions; Judaism and Christianity in Europe and America; Islam in the
Middle East; Hinduism and Buddhism in India; and Daoist and Confucian beliefs in China.
The organization of the course starts with the culture areas and examine attitudes and
religious beliefs in life after death among the religions of the world – this portion of the
course will emphasize theories in comparative religions. In Christianity, we will look at an
esoteric Christian writer on sacred cosmology and in Buddhism we will discuss a book by a
famous Tibetan Buddhist leader on after death & afterlife processes. Toward the end of the
course, we examine current research on life after death in a variety of studies linked to
scientific investigation of post-mortem life independent of theories in religion or philosophy.

Books (Required):
Archangel, Dianne. Afterlife Encounters: Ordinary People, Extraordinary Experiences.
Dalai Lama, Mind of Clear Light: Advice on Living Well and Dying Consciously. Atria
Moreman, Christopher M. Beyond the Threshold: Afterlife Beliefs and Experiences in
Markides, Kyriacos C. The Magus of Strovolos: The Extraordinary World of a Spiritual

Requirements: Requirements are as follows: four quizzes (15 minute each, 5% each =
20%), two short papers (3-4 pages, 15% + 15% = 30%), two full period exams (25% each
= 50%). No excuses will be accepted for missed assignments, such as oversleeping, lost
books, or being stuck out of town. Assignments and tests are due on the day they are
assigned. If you have a legitimate excuse, please talk to me before the scheduled
assignment. Students must make up any missed assignments within one week (or receive an F); if you miss more than two assignments you will receive a WF and be dropped from
the course. Students are expected to attend all classes and participate in class discussions,
failure to do so will result in a lower final grade (only three missed classes permitted).

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO): This course meets the requirements for General Edu-
cation Certification based on the following two SLO. Outcome 1: Students analyze how
ideas are represented, interpreted or valued in various expressions of human culture. Out-
come 2: Students examine relevant primary source materials as understood by the disci-
pline and interpret the material in writing assignments. These outcomes will be assessed in
the final writing assignment (Paper #2, worth 15% of the final grade).

Classroom Electronics: Students must TURN OFF all electronic devices before class starts;
you are not permitted to engage in texting or reading electronic mail (etc.) while class is in
session. If you have a computer for taking notes, you must ONLY take notes (no jumping to
read email or surf the web, unless requested). Violation of this code will result in deduction
of points from your final grade average.
Honor Code: Lying, cheating, and plagiarism (failure to cite sources used in a paper) are violations of the Honor Code. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Dean of Students. A student responsible for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure based on dishonesty. Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration—working together without permission—is a form of cheating.

Center for Student Learning offers academic support services for assistance in study strategies, speaking & writing skills, and course content. For more information regarding these services: http://csi.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/ or call (843) 953-5635.

Disabilities: If you have a disability that qualifies you for academic accommodation, please present a letter to me from the Center for Disability Services at the beginning of the semester. Please discuss with me any special needs you may have. For more information regarding accommodation and the SNAP program, see: http://www.cofc.edu/~cds/index.htm

Grading Scale: Numerical/letter grades: A+ = 100-97; A = 96-93; A- = 92-90; B+ = 89-87; B = 86-83; B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-73; C- = 72-70; D+ = 69-67; D = 66-63; D- = 62-60; F = 59 or lower.

Reading Assignments: Readings are assigned per class, generally two per week. Please do the readings before class, that way you will be prepared for the lecture and discussion.

I. **Week One: August 23, 25** Religion, Afterlife, and Contemporary Research
   A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 1-18; Arcangel, pp. 1-15

II. **Week Two: August 28, 30, September 1**
    A. Reading Assignment: Arcangel, 35-64; Moreman, pp. 18-34
    B. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 35-51 Afterlife in Judaism

III. **Week Three: September 4, 6, 8**
    A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 77-96 Afterlife in Islam
    B. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 53-75 Afterlife in Christianity
    C. **Grade Assignment: QUIZ ONE, September 6**

IV. **Week Four: September 11, 13, 15**
    A. Reading Assignment: Markides, pp. 1-46 Afterlife in Esoteric Christianity
    B. Reading Assignment: Markides, pp. 47-87 Afterlife in Esoteric Christianity

V. **Week Five: September 18, 20, 22** (Pass out Paper One assignment)
    A. Reading Assignment: Markides, pp. 88-111 Afterlife in Esoteric Christianity
    B. Reading Assignment: Markides, pp. 112-144 Afterlife in Esoteric Christianity
    C. **Grade Assignment: QUIZ TWO, September 20**

VI. **Week Six: September 25, 27, 29** (Pass out study guide)
    A. Reading Assignment: Markides, pp. 145-170 Afterlife in Esoteric Christianity
    B. Reading Assignment: Markides, pp. 170-209 Afterlife in Esoteric Christianity
    C. **Grading Assignment: PAPER ONE DUE, September 27**

VII. **Week Seven: October 2, 4, 6**
    A. Reading Assignment: Review Notes/Finish All Reading
    B. Grade Assignment: **EXAM ONE, October 4 (Through Christianity)**
VIII. Week Eight: October 9, 11, 13
   A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 97-116 Afterlife in Hinduism
   B. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 117-137 Afterlife in Buddhism

   *** FALL BREAK *** (October 14-17)

IX. Week Nine: October 18, 20
   A. Reading Assignment: Dalai Lama, pp. 9-35 Tibetan Buddhism
   B. Reading Assignment: Dalai Lama, pp. 39-78, 209-215 Tibetan Buddhism

X. Week Ten: October 23, 25, 27
   A. Reading Assignment: Dalai Lama, pp. 79-115, 217-225 Tibetan Buddhism
   B. Reading Assignment: Dalai Lama, pp. 117-158, 225-229 Tibetan Buddhism
   C. Grade Assignment: QUIZ THREE

XI. Week Eleven: October 30, November 1, 3
   A. Reading Assignment: Dalai Lama, pp. 159-207, 229-237 Tibetan Buddhism
   B. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 139-158 Chinese Afterlife

XII. Week Twelve: November 6, 8, 10 (Pass out SLO Paper #2 assignment)
   A. Reading Assignment: Arcangel, pp. 65-114 Contemporary Research
   B. Reading Assignment: Arcangel, pp. 171-201 Contemporary Research

XIII. Week Thirteen: November 13, 15, 17
   A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, 161-182 Mediumship and Apparitions
   B. Reading Assignment: Moreman, 183-206 Mediumship and Apparitions
   C. Grading Assignment: QUIZ FOUR

XIV. Week Fourteen: November 20
   A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 207-226 Near Death and OBE Experiences
   B. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 227-241 Past Life Memories

   THANKSGIVING BREAK (November 22-26)

XV. Week Fifteen: November 27, 29, December 1 (Pass out Study Guide)
   A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 245-255
   B. Grade Assignment: FINAL SLO PAPER DUE, November 29

XVI. Week Sixteen: December 1 & Final Exam (December 11)
   A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 257-2267, Conclusions

   B. Final Exam: December 11: Exam will cover from Hinduism to end of course
   C. Exam will be from 12:00 – 3:00 AM, ECTR 116 (usual room)