

RELS 101.01 Approaches to Religion Life After Death

(Spring 2018, M/W/F, 1:00-1:50 PM ECTR 103)

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Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday (11:00 - 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*. Hampton Road Publishing, 2005.

Dalai Lama, *Mind of Clear Light: Advice on Living Well and Dying Consciously*. Atria Books, 2004.

Moreman, Christopher M. *Beyond the Threshold: Afterlife Beliefs and Experiences in World Religions*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008.

Markides, Kyriacos C. *The Magus of Strovolos: The Extraordinary World of a Spiritual Healer*. Penguin Books, 1989.

Requirements: Requirements are as follows: four quizzes (15 minute each, 5% each = 20%), two short papers (3-4 pages, 15% each = 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 Education Certification based on the following two SLO. Outcome 1: Students analyze how ideas are represented, interpreted or valued in various expressions of human culture. Outcome 2: Students examine relevant primary source materials as understood by the discipline 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.

Writing Lab: is found in the Center for Student Learning (Addlestone Library, first floor). Trained writing consultants will help with writing for all courses; they offer one-to-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, call 843.953.5635 or visit <http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/>.

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: January 8, 10, 12** Religion, Afterlife, and Contemporary Research
A. Reading Assignment: Arcangel, pp. 1-64; Moreman 1-18

II. **Week Two: January 17, 19 (No class Monday)**
A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 18-34
B. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 35-51 Afterlife in Judaism

III. **Week Three: January 22, 24, 26**
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, January 24**

IV. **Week Four: January 29, 31, February 2**
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: February 5, 7, 9** (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, February 9**

VI. **Week Six: February 12, 14, 16**
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, February 14**

VII. Week Seven: February 19, 21, 23 (Pass out study guide)

- A. Reading Assignment: Review Notes/Finish All Reading
- B. Grade Assignment: **EXAM ONE, February 21 (Through Christianity)**

VIII. Week Eight: February 26, 28, March 2

- A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 97-116 Afterlife in Hinduism
- B. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 117-137 Afterlife in Buddhism

IX. Week Nine: March 5, 7, 9

- 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: March 12, 14, 16

- 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, March 16**

SPRING BREAK – MARCH 18-24

XI. Week Eleven: March 26, 28, 30

- A. Reading Assignment: Dalai lama, pp. 159-207, 229-237 Tibetan Buddhism
- B. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 139-158 Chinese Afterlife

XII. Week Twelve: April 2, 4, 6

- A. Reading Assignment: Arcangel, pp. 65-114 Contemporary Research
- B. Reading Assignment: Arcangel, pp. 171-201 Contemporary Research

XIII. Week Thirteen: April 9, 11, 13 (Pass out SLO Paper #2 assignment)

- A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, 161-182 Mediumship and Apparitions
- B. Reading Assignment: Moreman, 183-206 Mediumship and Apparitions
- C. Grading Assignment: **QUIZ FOUR, April 13**

XIV. Week Fourteen: April 16, 18, 20

- A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 207-226 Near Death and OBE Experiences
- B. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 227-241 Past Life Memories
- C. **Grade Assignment: FINAL SLO PAPER DUE, April 18**

XV. Week Fifteen: April 23 Last Class (Pass out Study Guide)

- A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 245-255, Conclusions

XVI. Week Sixteen: EXAM TWO (April 25)

- A. **Final Exam:** will cover from Hinduism to end of course
- B. **Exam will be from 12:00 – 3:00 AM, ECTR 103** (usual room)