

## **RELS 103.01 & .02 Death and the Afterlife**

(Spring 2019, MWF ECTR 219)

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Office Hours: MW 11:00-12:00, 1:00-2:00; F 11:00-12:00  
(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 examines 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*. Second Edition. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2017.

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

**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).

### **Requirements:**

Students are expected to attend all classes and participate in class discussions, failure to do so may result in a lower final grade (three missed classes permitted). Requirements are as follows: four quizzes (15 minute each, 5% each = 20%), two short papers (3-4 pages, 15% + 15% = 30%), two exams (20% midterm + 30% final = 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.

### **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://csl.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: <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 by mid-week, that way you will be prepared for the lecture and discussion.

**I. Week One: January 9, 11** Religion, Afterlife, and Contemporary Research

A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 1-8 (Introduction); Arcangel, pp. 1-15

**II. Week Two: January 14, 16, 18**

A. Reading Assignment: Arcangel, 16-64; Moreman, 11-32 (Ancient Conceptions)

B. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 33-48 (Judaism)

**III. Week Three: January 23, 25 (No class 21)**

A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 69-86 (Islam)

B. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 49-68 (Christianity)

C. **Grade Assignment: QUIZ ONE, January 25**

**IV. Week Four: January 28, 30; February 1**

A. Reading Assignment: Markides, pp. 1-46 (Esoteric Christianity)

B. Reading Assignment: Markides, pp. 47-87 (Esoteric Christianity)

**V. Week Five: February 4, 6, 8** (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 8**

**VI. Week Six: February 11, 13, 15**

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 15**

**VII. Week Seven: February 18, 20, 22**

- A. Grade Assignment: **EXAM ONE: February 20 (Through Christianity)**
- B. Reading Assignment: Moreman pp. 87-104 (Hinduism)

**VIII. Week Eight: February 25, 27, March 1**

- A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 105-124 (Buddhism)
- B. Reading Assignment: Dalai Lama: 9-53 (Tibetan Buddhism)

**IX. Week Nine: March 4, 6, 8**

- A. Reading Assignment: Dalai Lama, pp. 54-98 (Tibetan Buddhism)
- B. Reading Assignment: Dalai Lama, pp. 9-134, 209-215 (Tibetan Buddhism)

**X. Week Ten: March 11, 13, 15**

- A. Reading Assignment: Dalai Lama, pp. 135-158, 217-229 (Tibetan Buddhism)
- B. Reading Assignment: Dalai Lama, pp. 159-207 (Tibetan Buddhism)
- C. **Grade Assignment: QUIZ THREE, March 15**

**SPRING BREAK 17-23**

**XI. Week Eleven: March 25, 27, 29**

- A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 125-142 (Chinese)
- B. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 143-164 (African Traditions)

**XII. Week Twelve: April 1, 3, 5 (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: April 8, 10, 12**

- A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, 165-186 (Mediumship)
- B. Reading Assignment: Moreman, 187-210 (Apparitions and Hauntings)
- C. Grading Assignment: **QUIZ FOUR, April 12**

**XIV. Week Fourteen: April 15, 17, 19**

- A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 211-228 (Near Death and OBE)
- B. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 229-246 (Past-Life Memories)
- C. Grading assignment: **PAPER TWO (SLO) DUE, April 19**

**XV. Week Fifteen: April 22, 23 (Pass out Study Guide)**

- A. Reading Assignment: Moreman, pp. 247-258 (Comparisons); 271-282 (Mysticism)

**XVI. Week Sixteen: FINAL EXAM (10:00 class am on April 27, 8:00-11:00 AM)  
(12:00 Noon class on April 29, 12:00-3:00 PM)**

- A. Exam will cover from Hinduism to end of course
- B. **Exam will be in room ECTR 118** (usual room)