CREL 1206: WORLD RELIGIONS
Tuesday and Thursdays 12:00-1:30PM
BAC 241
Fall Semester 2018
Instructor: Dr. Donna L. Seamone

STUDENTS SHOULD CONSULT ACORN FOR Reading Assignments, Dates, Etc

Office: BAC 409
Office Hours:
Sign-up for appointments—either in-person at office or on skype—through the link provided on your acorn home page. Times are posted there.
E-mail: donna.seamone@acadiau.ca
Cell phone 902-521-2858

1. CALENDAR COURSE DESCRIPTION
From the Acadia University Calendar: “The history, beliefs, practices and contemporary relevance of the Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, Taoist, Zoroastrian, Judaic, Muslim and Christian faiths. After outlining methods of understanding different ways of being religious the course examines the components of larger streams of tradition and compares and contrasts their respective beliefs and practices.”

2. COURSE OBJECTIVES
   Following are the objectives for our course of study:
   A. To provide an introduction to the concepts, methods and content of the academic study of religion.
   B. To provide an introduction to beliefs, practices, histories and traditions of a variety of religious movements or “World Religions” as well as indigenous traditional religions.
   C. To explore basic religious studies concepts and questions. What is a religion? Who is a religious person? How are belief and action related in religious life? In religious communities?
   D. To inquire about and reflect on the religion-culture relationship(s). For example: What does the presence and persistence of religion in society signify about both established religions and the broader culture?
   E. To develop a critical ability to identify and assess religious tenets (doctrines/claims/beliefs) and their contribution to the wellbeing and/or harm of persons and groups.
   F. To learn critical skills to facilitate the assessment of various types of information about religion in textual sources, information on the internet, and in other media.
G. To develop academic skills for energetic and informed engagement in the tasks of critical and empathetic reading, writing and talking about religious life.

3. REQUIRED READINGS
There is one main required text both first and second semester.
2. From time to time I will assign readings available either from Academic texts, scholarly articles or popular sources. These readings will be announced in class and links to those available on the internet will be provided on ACORN. Since the subject of inquiry is living religion, I will draw from academic and popular venues.

4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS--THE FINE PRINT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Semester</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>Class attendance and participation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>Assignment Website on Religion description, analysis and evaluation</td>
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<td>5/35 DUE September 25th (Assignment: Website selection and description due in class)</td>
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<td>10/35 DUE October 25th (Assignment: Topic of paper, abstract and relevance of sources &amp; tentative thesis (related to Website assignment due in class)</td>
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<td>20/35 DUE November 22nd (Assignment: final paper on Website on Religion due in class)</td>
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<td>20%</td>
<td>Midterm exam (October 16th)</td>
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<td>35%</td>
<td>Final Exam (Final exam TBA: Exam period Dec. 7th -20th)</td>
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2nd Semester
Same marking framework different topics for assignments

COURSE REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED Now the really fine Print!!!

1. CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION IS REQUIRED. There is no replacement in learning for showing up and going through with it! Class participation and interest displayed can change your mark by as much as a letter grade. Prepare for class by reading assigned texts and reflecting on general themes. In class contribute to discussion by sharing your questions and thoughts and by attending to the ideas of others.

   Students are expected to make their own review notes for texts, lectures and videos. Lectures will build on readings not merely echo the content of the readings. PowerPoint presentations, though posted on ACORN, will only provide the skeletal structure of lectures and class content. These presentations will not be sufficient to serve as a replacement for notes and memory! Required Readings are designated on ACORN under assignments.

   Reading for this class as it proceeds is imperative (TRANSLATION: ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY!).

   The required course text contains study aids and glossaries. A Companion website is available for through my religion kit which you gained the right to access through purchasing your text. Use this website often, as well as the CD in your text. There are sample test questions that allow you to test your knowledge of the material in the text. I more than RECOMMEND you practice these tests!

ASSIGNMENTS:
1. First semester Assignment: Website on Religion description, analysis and evaluation
For this assignment you will do 3 assignments as part of this semester long research project. ALL assignments are on the same topic, leading to the final 6-8 page paper analyzing a website (of
your choice) that offers information about religion. You will analyze the website from the perspective of a religious studies scholar/student. The major paper must have a thesis. Students will consult at least 3 academic articles or chapters in books related to the subject of the website. Detailed instructions for the assignment are available in Appendix A and will be discussed in class. The assignment will be due in 3 stages:

1. Website selection and description due September 25th (2 pages)  
   worth 5 of 35% for total assignment
2. topic of paper and annotated bibliography of sources October 25th (2 pages)  
   o worth 10 of 25% (20 out of 100%) for total assignment
3. Final paper due November 21st (6 pages)  
   worth 20 of 35% (60 out of 100%) for total assignment

These assignments are due at the beginning of the class due date. No extensions for assignments will be granted. Adjustments will only be made with a valid doctor’s note. You are advised to retain copies of any written work you submit for this class until you have received an official grade. All Assignments MUST ALSO BE ALSO SUBMITTED TO ACORN PRIOR TO THE CLASS IN ORDER FOR YOU TO BE CREDITED FOR THE ASSIGNMENT. No assignments will be accepted as e-mail attachments. 

I encourage you to take advantage of assistance available at the Acadia Writing Centre.

3. EXAMINATIONS

All students will be required to take both the mid-term (in Class) and final examinations (scheduled by the registrar). Both exams will be based on required readings, lectures and videos. (The format of all tests consists of two sections: Section one is composed of multiple choice questions; Section two is 1 essay question (to be selected from a choice of 3 questions). You are expected to write the test on the date specified. For any problems, you must consult the instructor before the date of the exam. There will be only one opportunity to write a midterm make-up exam. This will be offered 2 weeks after the in-class test date. Only those students with a valid doctor’s note will be afforded the opportunity to write this test.

The final exam for each semester is cumulative—it covers the entire semester’s work.

5. A RULES ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND DISHONESTY

Each student is responsible for familiarizing themselves with University Policies on Academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Please read the section “Academic Integrity” found in the Acadia University Calendar, 2006-2007, either in hard copy or on-line at: https://libguides.acadiau.ca/plagiarism

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

All of these offences are serious breaches of intellectual ethics and serious offences. I will adhere to the policy of the history and classics department: plagiarized work will receive a grade of zero (no departmental appeal is possible). In especially bad cases more severe penalties, including a course grade of F (zero) and/or a recommendation for expulsion from the university, are possible.

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, grade of F for the course or suspension or expulsion from the university.

NOTE In this course we will be using a software package designed to reveal plagiarism. STUDENTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT THEIR MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS ELECTRONICALLY TO ACORN AND IN HARD COPY TO THE PROFESSOR IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED SUBMITTED.
5.B. Accessible Learning Services
If you are a student with documentation for accommodations who anticipates needing supports or accommodations, please contact Accessible Learning Services at 902-585-1823, disability.access@acadiau.ca. Accessible Learning Services is located in Rhodes Hall.

5.C. WRITING HELP
The Writing Centre offers free help to all students wanting to improve their writing skills. You can sign up online today:
- To book a one-to-one appointment with a trained writing tutor, click here: writingcentre.acadiau.ca/writing-tutorials.html
- To see which helpful presentations and workshops you’ll want to attend this year, click here: writingcentre.acadiau.ca/workshops-and-presentations.html

6. CLASS TOPICS; WORLD RELIGIONS FALL 2018

OFFICIAL READING ASSIGNMENTS will be posted on ACORN (under assignments UNDER THE WEEK IN WHICH THEY ARE DUE FOR CLASS). This list is included to give you a picture of the shape of the semester.

WEEK 1: Thursday September 6: Course Introduction
WEEK 2: Tuesday September 11: What is religion?
Reading: Chapter 1: (Fisher text: LR)
ALWAYS CONSULT ACORN FOR READING ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES
Thursday September 13: What are we doing when we are studying religion?
Reading: Gary Kessler, Chapters 1 & 2 from Studying Religion posted in PDF file on ACORN
WEEK 3: Tuesday September 18: Studying religion (continued)
Reading: Review reading to date; explore resources in My Religion Kit
Thursday September 20: Indigenous Sacred Ways
Reading: Chapter 2 (Fisher text: LR)
WEEK 4: Tuesday September 25: Indigenous Sacred Ways
Reading: Chapter 2 (Fisher text: LR)
Assignment: Website selection and description due in class
Thursday September 27: Indigenous Sacred Ways
Reading: Chapter 2 (Fisher text: LR)
WEEK 5: Tuesday October 2: Indigenous Sacred Ways
Reading: Both articles from American Indian Quarterly > Vol. 20, No. 3/4, Special Issue: To Hear the Eagles Cry: Contemporary Themes in Native American Spirituality.

1. Ronald L. Grimes. “This May Be a Feud, but It Is Not a War: An Electronic, Interdisciplinary Dialogue on Teaching Native Religions” pp. 433-450 (access through ACORN)
2. Christopher Ronwaniènte Jocks “Spirituality for Sale: Sacred Knowledge in the Consumer Age.” pp. 415-431. (access through ACORN)

WEEK 6: Thursday October 4 Hinduism
Tuesday October 9 Hinduism
Thursday October 11 Hinduism
WEEK 7: Tuesday October 16 Hinduism
Thursday October 18 Midterm Exam (on all material covered thus far)
WEEK 8: Tuesday October 23 Buddhism
Thursday October 25 Buddhism (Assignment: related to Website assignment due in class)

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WEEK 9:  Tuesday October 30  Buddhism  
        Thursday November 1  Buddhism  
WEEK 10:  Tuesday November 6  Buddhism  
        Thursday November 8  Jainism  
        **Tuesday November 12  FALL STUDY DAYS NO CLASSES**  
WEEK 11:  Tuesday November 20  Shinto  
        Thursday November 22  Shinto  **(Assignment: paper due in class)**  
WEEK 12:  Tuesday November 27  Confucianism  
        Thursday November 29  Confucianism  
WEEK 13:  Tuesday December 4  wrap up/exam prep  

(Final exam TBA: Exam period Dec. 7th-20th)

**Appendix A: Detailed Guidelines for First Semester Three-Part Assignment: Website on Religion: description, analysis and evaluation**

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!You will find it helpful to read the guidelines for all assignments (described previously) to help you see the big picture for the 3 assignments this term. Also consult the assignment aids discussed in class and posted on acorn as the term proceeds.

With the advent of the internet there has been an information explosion on topics relevant to the study of religion. Websites are established by those whose aim is theological (they want to propagate their “truth”); to those who wish to declare all religion false (anti-cult groups and individuals); to those whose purposes are more analytical. Some websites present their mission as educational but in fact are closer to recruitment tools. Motives are often mixed. Those who access the internet must develop skills in assessing the type of information with which they are being presented, hence this semester’s assignment. The goal of this three-part assignment is to develop analytical and interpretive skills in relation to internet material and to explore the usefulness of this information highway to the academic study of religion.

4. Website selection and description due September 24th (2 pages)  
   worth 5 of 25 % (20 out of 100%) for total assignment
5. Topic of paper, abstract and relevance of sources & tentative thesis October 25th (2 pages)  
   o worth 5 of 25 % (20 out of 100%) for total assignment
6. Final paper due November 22nd (6-8 pages)  
   worth 15 of 25 % (60 out of 100%) for total assignment

**The First semester Assignment: Website on Religion Description, Analysis And Evaluation will be due in 3 stages:**

1st stage: **Website selection and description due September 24th** (2 pages)  
   worth 5 of 25 % (20 out of 100%) of total assignment

A. First browse a number of websites that offer information about some aspect of religion to get a sense of the variety of websites available before you select a site to evaluate. (You should consider the following questions as you evaluate the site.) You should choose a popular site – not an academic journal or encyclopedia.
1. Who sponsors this site? Is it a group or an individual? What can you find out about the group or person?
2. How current is the information? When was the site last updated?
3. What are the three most important things you think the author(s) of the site wants to communicate?
4. Why are these things important to this sponsor?
5. What type of information does the site provide for the academic study of religion for a scholar whose perspective is informed by the objectives outlined in the course description? Is the primary purpose of the site to present a religious stance or inform a particular religious position (theological or confessional) or is it an analytical site about religion (religious studies?)

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6. If the site is confessional, how might a scholar use the material with critical, analytical awareness?
7. Are there other questions a scholar would need to ask if he/she were using this information in a scholarly manner? If so, what are they?
8. What are the limitations of this site for the academic study of religion?

B. Choose a website and write a two page paper. In the 2 pages you must
a. Provide a complete URL for accessing the site plus the name of the site.
b. Identify the topic which the site addresses and if possible the topic which you will address in your paper. These will be related but not identical. (Use questions above as a guide to providing a summary description of the site.
c. Other information:
   1. Your assignment should be typed using standard font on 8x11 white paper, double spaced, pages, one inch margins, numbered consecutively, with all pages stapled together. Maximum font size 12 pt Minimum 11pt. Include a cover page with your name and student number.
   2. Wikipedia is not an accepted source for academic work.
   3. Here is a website that offers further information about critically analyzing information sources: [http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill26.htm](http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill26.htm)

On what issue will you focus? In identifying the topic which you will address in the paper clarify the topic by naming some of the main questions that you will ask as a scholar of religious studies. You MUST pose a tentative thesis for the paper. It is appropriate to situate briefly your own interest in focusing on this site/ topic.
You must to identify the specific academic sources you will use for your paper. Provide an annotation (brief abstract /summary of the argument) for each article/source. for each source and identify how these sources help you understand/analyze the site and provide an annotation for each source brief abstract /summary of the argument of each article/source.

3RD Stage: Final paper Website on Religion description, analysis and evaluation due November 21st (6-8 pages) worth 20 of 25 % of total assignment

For this assignment you will write a 6-8 page thesis driven essay growing from your analysis of the website (of your choice) that offers information about religio and your subsequent research of some aspect of religion related to the site or focusing on critical exploration of the site as a representation of religion. You approach this site from the perspective of a religious studies student/scholar. The paper must have a thesis. Students will consult at least 4 academic sources (Journal articles or chapters in book) related to the subject of the website or the topic that emerges. (see description first & second assignments above.)
Write a 6-8 page paper related to the website in short essay form.
Your paper should include:
1. Name of the person/group that maintains this website and something about them.
2. What is it the site wants to convey? How often is it updated?
3. A brief description of your assessment of this site: What kind of information does it provide? What approach does it take to religion? In what ways might the site be used for the academic study of religion? What are its strengths? What are its limitations? (Review A. 5-7 above.) Remember that the main thing you want to communicate in your paper is that you have analyzed the site from the perspective of a scholar of religious studies (not just a generally informed or interested person). So ask yourself, why would a scholar access this site? What might the scholar in religious studies use from this site in his/her research? Why? This involves more analysis than merely assessing the site as "biased." Give yourself some time to think about it, and give specific examples to back up any claims you make.
4. Proper citation of the website using footnotes (not endnotes) following the style outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style* on the Library website: [http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/chicago.html#docnote](http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/chicago.html#docnote)

5. The paper must have a **title**. The title should provide your reader with a clue to your thesis. For example, "Web Site Assignment" or "The 'Let Us Reason' Website" are both clueless. Make the title more specific, such as "Cult Fascination and Politics: An Analysis of the 'Let Us Reason' Website."

6. The paper must have a **thesis**. The **thesis** is the main point you make in the paper. It should not be overly general nor self-evident. Often the thesis is the first sentence of a paper. It should, in any case, appear in the first paragraph of the paper and catch your reader's attention. Your reader should know from the start the main point you will make throughout the paper. You should return to this main point in the conclusion of the paper. An example of an **overly general, self-evident thesis** is “The world wide web offers a unique resource for the academic study of religion.” This is a thesis that doesn’t really say anything. It could be written by anyone and doesn’t show that the writer has given any serious consideration to the topic. A more **specific thesis** would be: “In spite of the obvious biases of the Hawaiian based Christian ‘Let Us Reason’ website and its obsession with so-called cults,’ this site, nevertheless, offers the scholar of religion an example of one contemporary Christian group’s preoccupation with politics.” Which of these statements clues the reader into a specific topic? Which of these papers would you rather read? For more information on formulating a thesis see the writing guide for religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: [http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/argument.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/argument.html)

7. **Other information:**
   
a. Your assignment should be typed using standard font on 8x11 white paper, double spaced, one inch margins, numbered consecutively, with all pages *stapled* together. Maximum font size 12 pt Minimum 11pt. Include a cover page with your title, name and student number.
   b. Wikipedia is not an accepted source for academic work.
   c. Here is a website that offers further information about critically analyzing information sources: [http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill26.htm](http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill26.htm)