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RELS370 – South Asian Religions

Course Summary

Course: RELS370 – South Asian Religions

Length of Course: 8

Prerequisites:[RELS201] **CreditHours:**3

Course Description:

Course Description:

This is a survey course for students to understand South Asian religions. The course will use primary and secondary texts, videos, and first-person accounts for instruction to generate class discussions. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism are major religions practiced in South Asia and by their diaspora in the West. This course will invite students to think deeply about different perspectives and how various religions have emerged or accepted teachings from each other to evolve as independent religions. The course covers contemporary applications of the religions with particular attention to the cultural, social, and political structuring of their practices.

(Prerequisite: RELS201)

Course Scope:

As we begin this study of South Asian Religions, let's understand that this region consists of nations of Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Maldives Island, and India, which is the largest country in this region. Usually, the study of Eastern religions consists of only those religions that originated in this region. Therefore, this course will focus on Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism.

It is important that when we study South Asian religions, we should not just discuss those religions that originated in this region, but we should give a larger picture of the religions practiced in the region. All Abrahamic religions have built roots and have been practiced in this region for many centuries. In the process of assimilation, these religions have incorporated the local characteristics and practices of South Asia so that these religions have distinct characteristics. Among these religions are South Asian Judaism,

Christianity, and Islam.

The reasons for such occurrences are historical. Islam and Christianity influenced many in India and Pakistan, one country before 1947. Islam came to India with Muslim emperors who ruled India from 1200-1700 CE. Christianity was the religion of British colonists who ruled India from 1757-1947 CE. However, the root of Christianity goes back to the Apostle Saint Thomas who was sent to India to spread the gospel of Christ. The Christians who follow him are known as Syrian Christians. The origin of this school of Christianity goes back to 50–100 AD and is a flourishing school of Christianity today. Besides this, Protestant and Catholic schools are also part of current Christianity in the South Asian region. Sikhism, the youngest religion we will study during this course, is an important South Asian Religion that originated after Christianity and Islam took hold and grew in this region. Therefore, when we look at the South Asian region, we find all these major religions have existed together for many centuries.

Objectives

- CO1: Evaluate the existence, survival, and teachings of South Asian Tribal Religions.
- CO2: Identify specific teachings and traditions of Hinduism in South Asia.
- CO3: Examine the history, traditions, and unique aspects of both Jainism and Theravada Buddhism.
- CO4: Identify the teachings and history of the Abrahamic religions through the process of assimilation in South Asia.
- CO5: Define the origin, history, and teachings of Sikhism, the youngest religion in South Asia.

Outline

Week 1: Tribal Religions

Learning Objectives:

CO1: Evaluate the existence, survival, and teachings of South Asian Tribal Religions.

- LO1: Describe the key beliefs and characteristics of Tribal Religions.
- LO2; Examine the differences between the tribal religions and major religions of South Asia.
- LO3: Analyze the history and struggles of tribal religions.

Readings:

See Readings & Resources for all materials.

Assignments:

Week 1: Lesson

Week 1: Discussion

Week 2: Hinduism

Learning Objectives:

CO2: Identify specific teachings and traditions of Hinduism in South Asia.

- LO1: Define the teachings of Hinduism and their development.
- LO2: Examine the current Hinduism in South Asia.
- LO3: Discuss the global impact of Yoga.

Readings:

See Readings & Resources for all materials.

Assignments:

Week 2: Lesson

Week 2: Discussion

Week 3: Jainism

Learning Objectives:

CO3: Examine the history, traditions, and unique aspects of both Jainism and Theravada Buddhism.

- LO1: Discuss the origin and development of Jainism.
- LO2: Investigate the teachings of non-violence towards all living beings.
- LO3: Examine Jain teachings and practices.

Readings:

See Readings & Resources for all materials.

Assignments:

Week 3: Lesson

Week 3: Discussion

Week 3: Tourist Presentation

Week 4: Theravada Buddhism

Learning Objectives:

CO3: Examine the history, traditions, and unique aspects of both Jainism and Theravada Buddhism.

- LO4: Examine the history of Buddhism in South Asia.
- LO5: Discuss the traditions, practices, and meditations of Theravada Buddhism.

Readings:

See Readings & Resources for all materials.

Assignments:

Week 4: Lesson

Week 4: Discussion

Week 5: South Asian Judaism

Learning Objectives:

CO4: Identify the teachings and history of the Abrahamic religions through the process of assimilation in South Asia.

- LO1: Examine the history of South Asian Judaism.
- LO2: Discuss the traditions, practices, and current approaches to South Asian Judaism.

Readings:

See Readings & Resources for all materials.

Assignments:

Week 5: Lesson

Week 5: Discussion

Week 5: Essay

Week 6: South Asian Christianity

Learning Objectives:

CO4: Identify the teachings and history of the Abrahamic religions through the process of assimilation in South Asia.

- LO3: Discuss the history and practices of South Asian Christianity.
- LO4: Contrast South Asian and Western Christianity.

Readings:

See Readings & Resources for all materials.

Assignments:

Week 6: Lesson

Week 6: Discussion

Week 7: South Asian Islam

Learning Objectives:

CO4: Identify the teachings and history of the Abrahamic religions through the process of assimilation in South Asia.

- LO5: Explain the significance of Islam in South Asia.
- LO6 Discuss the history, teaching, practices, and schools of Islam in South Asia.

Readings:

See Readings & Resources for all materials.

Assignments:

Week 7: Lesson

Week 7: Discussion

Week 7: Presentation

Week 8: Sikhism

Learning Objectives:

CO5: Define the origin, history, and teachings of Sikhism, the youngest religion in South Asia.

- LO1: Examine the major teaching, ethics, and Gurus of Sikhism
- LO2: Discuss the importance of Sikhism in its country of origin and its popular expressions.

Readings:

See Readings & Resources for all materials.

Assignments:

Week 8: Lesson

Week 8: Discussion

Evaluation:

| | | |
|--------------------|--------|------------|
| Discussions | | 70% |
| | Week 1 | 12.5% |
| | Week 2 | 12.5% |
| | Week 3 | 12.5% |
| | Week 4 | 12.5% |
| | Week 5 | 12.5% |
| | Week 6 | 12.5% |
| | Week 7 | 12.5% |
| | Week 8 | 12.5% |
| Assignments | | 30% |
| | Week 3 | 33.3% |
| | Week 5 | 33.3% |
| | Week 7 | 33.3% |

Materials

All materials for this course are Open Access Electronic sources. Students can link to these within the Classroom or will be guided to them in tandem with weekly Lesson material.

Course Guidelines

Citation and Reference Style

Students will follow MLA format as the sole citation and reference style used in written assignments submitted as part of coursework to the Humanities Department.

Please note that no formal citation style is graded on discussion assignments in the School of Arts & Humanities—only attribution of sources (please see details regarding discussion communication below).

Tutoring

Tutor.com offers online homework help and learning resources by connecting students to certified tutors for one-on-one help. AMU and APU students are eligible for 10 free hours of tutoring provided by APUS. Tutors are available 24/7 unless otherwise noted. Tutor.com also has a SkillCenter Resource Library offering educational resources, worksheets, videos, websites, and career help. Accessing these resources does not count against tutoring hours and is also available

Late Assignments

School of Arts & Humanities Late Policy

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals, I understand you must manage competing demands on your time. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment, please contact me before the due date so we can discuss the situation and determine an acceptable resolution.

Work posted or submitted after the assignment due date may be reduced by 10% of the potential total score possible for each day late up to a total of five days, including discussion posts/replies, quizzes, and assignments. Beginning on the sixth day late through the end of the course, late work, including discussion posts/replies, quizzes, and assignments, will be accepted with a grade reduction of 50% of the potential total score earned.

Turnitin

Assignments are automatically submitted to Turnitin.com within the course. Turnitin.com will analyze an assignment submission and report a similarity score. Your assignment submission is automatically processed through the assignments area of the course when you submit your work.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic Dishonesty incorporates more than plagiarism, which is using the work of others without citation. Academic dishonesty includes any use of content purchased or retrieved from web services such as CourseHero.com or Scribd. Additionally, allowing your work to be placed on such web services is academic dishonesty, as it is enabling the dishonesty of others. The copy and pasting of content from any web page, without citation as a direct quote, is academic dishonesty. When in doubt, do not copy/paste, and always cite.

Artificial Intelligence

The use of Artificial Intelligence without letting the reader know what words were generated by the program is considered Academic Dishonesty. This includes not only papers but discussion posts as well. Having a computer program generate your posts or papers is just like paying someone else to write them and is cheating. Such cheating could be met with sanctions up to and including a zero on the posts/assignments with no chance to produce your own work. Do your own writing.

Text generated by any AI like ChatGPT must be treated like a quotation and properly formatted, cited, and referenced according to APA or MLA protocols treating the program as an author.

Submission Guidelines

Some assignments may have very specific requirements for formatting (such as font, margins, etc) and submission file type (such as .docx, .pdf, etc). See the assignment instructions for details. In general, standard file types such as those associated with Microsoft Office are preferred unless otherwise specified.

The student is responsible for ensuring all submitted work can be accessed and opened by the instructor.

Disclaimer Statement

Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of a particular group or class.

Communicating on the Discussion

Discussions are the heart of the interaction in this course. The more engaged and lively the exchanges, the more interesting and fun the course will be. Only substantive comments will receive credit. Although there is a final posting day/time after which the instructor will grade and provide feedback, it is not sufficient to wait until the last day to contribute your comments/questions on the discussion. The purpose of the discussions is to actively participate in an ongoing discussion about the assigned content.

“Substantive” means comments that contribute something new and important to the discussion. Thus, a message that simply says “I agree” is not substantive. A substantive comment contributes a new idea or perspective, a good follow-up question to a point made, offers a response to a question, provides an example or illustration of a key point, points out an inconsistency in an argument, etc.

As a class, if we run into conflicting viewpoints, we must respect each individual's own opinion.

Hateful and hurtful comments towards other individuals, students, groups, peoples, and/or societies will not be tolerated. Students must post a response to the weekly discussion prompt and post the required number of replies to other students – refer to the grading rubric and/or discussion instructions for specific expectations on the number of replies and requirements.

The main response to the discussion is due mid-week – refer to the grading rubric and/or discussion instructions for specific expectations. Late main response posts to a discussion may not be accepted without prior instructor approval. Replies must be posted in the week due and replies after the end of each week may not be graded.

Be sure to look for announcements for any deviations from these statements concerning discussions. Instructors do have leeway to modify requirements and timing.

University Policies

Please follow [this link for access](#) to the APUS Student Handbook.

APUS Mission Statement

American Public University System's mission is to provide high-quality higher education with emphasis on educating the nation's military and public service communities by offering respected, relevant, accessible, affordable, and student-focused online programs that prepare them for service and leadership in a diverse, global society.