PHIL 4470 01  Philosophy of World Religions
Boston College Summer Session 2017
Summer 1, May 16 – June 22
Tues & Thurs.  6:00 – 9:15 p.m.,

Instructor Name:  peter Kreeft
BC E-mail:  Kreeft@bc.edu
Phone Number:  617-552-3871
Office:  Maloney Hall 369
Office Hours:  By Arrangement

Boston College Mission Statement
Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

Course Description
The purpose of this course is as follows: (1) to familiarize students with the teachings of each of the world's major religions; (2) to understand, empathize with, and appreciate them; (3) to appreciate one's own religion (or lack of one) better by comparison; (4) to philosophize critically and rationally about a subject that is not in itself critical and rational; and (5) to question and search for a universal nature of core of religion, if possible.

Textbooks & Readings (Required)
Required Books (all in BC Bookstore, all hardcopy, no Kindle or e-format):
1. "The World's Religions" by Huston Smith (the main textbook)
2. "Siddhartha" by Hermann Hesse
3. "Tao Te Ching" by Lao Tzu (Hackett publ.)
4. "Between Heaven & Hell" by Peter Kreeft
5. "Between Allah & Jesus" by Peter Kreeft

There will also be a few short handouts. You are also expected to have a Bible for classes 8 and 9. If you don't have a Bible, steal one.
Canvas
Canvas is the Learning Management System (LMS) at Boston College, designed to help faculty and students share ideas, collaborate on assignments, discuss course readings and materials, submit assignments, and much more - all online. As a Boston College student, you should familiarize yourself with this important tool. For more information and training resources for using Canvas, click here.

Course Objectives
The purposes of this course are:
1. to familiarize students with the religious data, i.e. the teachings of each of the world's major religions
2. "to enter into the heart of the world's religions" by understanding, empathy, and appreciation
3. to appreciate your own religion, or lack of one, better by contrast, like appreciating your own native language better by studying a foreign language
4. to philosophize critically and rationally about a subject that transcends reason
5. to search for a possible universal nature or core of religion
6. to raise and explore the question of religious truth-claims: what is the relation between religions and truth?
7. to raise the issue of comparing religions: are they logically exclusive, inclusive, or simply plural (neither)?
8. to raise the question of how one decides what to believe
9. to explore similarities and differences (there will probably be many more of both than you expect!) between religions, and between East and West
10. to find and compare common patterns or structures in religious belief systems
11. to foster dialogue, especially between Christianity and other world religions
12. to explore the relation between religion and morality
13. to explore the relation between religion and cultural life
14. to explore the relation between religion and personal fulfillment or happiness
15. to seek and hopefully find truth!

Grading
Prerequisites: none
Requirements: Daily quizzes, final exam, and 5-page original paper on some aspect of comparative religions

The undergraduate grading system for Summer Session is as follows:
A (4.00), A- (3.67)
B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67)
C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67)
D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67)
F (.00)

All students can access final grades through Agora after the grading deadline each semester. Transcripts are available through the Office of Student Services.

Deadlines and Late Work & Course Assignments
The class will decide on day 1 whether to have daily quizzes or not and whether the final exam should be in-class or take-home. If in-class, it will be mixed format (true-false, multiple choice, short essays, long essays) with some choice of format (3 of those 4). If take-home, it will be all original essay.
In addition to the final exam (and daily quizzes, if we opt for them), you are required to write an original essay of approximately 5 pages on the fundamental problem of this course, viz. the problem of comparative religions (how to compare the world's religions), which is due by 6/29. Additional original (not research) essays on any topic in the course are also welcome for extra credit (no-risk, no-lose): any number, any time, any length, any style, also due by 6/29.

Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Chapter in Smith</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5/16</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5/18</td>
<td>Primitive religions</td>
<td>1(Intro) &amp; 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5/23</td>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5/25</td>
<td>Hinduism/Buddhism</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Siddhartha&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5/30</td>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6/1</td>
<td>Confucianism &amp; Taoism</td>
<td>4 &amp; 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6/3</td>
<td>Taoism</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;Tao Te Ching&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>6/8</td>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>assigned chapters in Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>6/13</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>assigned chapters in Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>6/15</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Between Heaven &amp; Hell&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>6/20</td>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;Between Allah &amp; Jesus&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>6/22</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Written Work

Summer Session students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed and submitted in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA or CLA style per your instructor’s requirements. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation and spelling. For writing support, please contact the Connors Family Learning Center.

Attendance

Attending class is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all class sessions. When circumstances prevent a student from attending class, the student is responsible for
contacting the instructor before the class meets. Students who miss class are still expected to complete all assignments and meet all deadlines. Many instructors grade for participation; if you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Makeup work may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class.

Consistent with BC’s commitment to creating a learning environment that is respectful of persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing their academic status. Students are responsible for reviewing course syllabi as soon as possible, and for communicating with the instructor promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. Students are responsible for completing all class requirements for days missed due to conflicts with religious holidays.

**Accommodation and Accessibility**
Boston College is committed to providing accommodations to students, faculty, staff and visitors with disabilities. Specific documentation from the appropriate office is required for students seeking accommodation in Summer Session courses. Advanced notice and formal registration with the appropriate office is required to facilitate this process. There are two separate offices at BC that coordinate services for students with disabilities:

- **The Connors Family Learning Center (CFLC)** coordinates services for students with LD and ADHD.
- **The Disabilities Services Office (DSO)** coordinates services for all other disabilities.

Find out more about BC’s commitment to accessibility at [www.bc.edu/sites/accessibility](http://www.bc.edu/sites/accessibility).

**Scholarship and Academic Integrity**
Students in Summer Session courses must produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to cite references is plagiarism. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on exams or assignments, or submitting the same material or substantially similar material to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work. Please see the [Boston College policy on academic integrity](http://www.bc.edu/sites/accessibility) for more information.