THEO116101 The Religious Quest 1; 3 credits
Boston College Summer Session 2016
Summer 1, May 17-June 23
Tuesday and Thursday 6-9:15 PM

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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
This is the first session of a two-part course exploring the individual and communal search for wisdom about human nature, the world, ultimate realities and God, secrets of love and death, enduring values to live by, and paths to spiritual maturity. Although each section is different, likely themes include symbols, myths, doctrines, rituals, holy texts, saints, comparisons and contrasts among traditions, relevance of classical religious traditions to issues in today's world, interreligious dialogue today, and religious diversity in the Boston area. Each section brings the Biblical and Christian tradition into conversation with at least one other religious tradition.

Textbooks & Readings (Required)

Canvas
Accompanying the textbooks, our course will be using Canvas as a platform to access readings and to submit assignments. Each week will have its own module and content page where students will find non-textbook readings, prompts for mini-assignments, and handouts for the class.
Course Objectives
This course will employ what I call prepositional learning objectives.

1. Through secondary sources, students will learn about and become conversant with the religious worldviews of Hindu and Christian traditions, including their understanding of the world, the human predicament, and solutions to this predicament.
2. Through primary sources, students will learn from Hindu and Christian theologians and philosophers, and become adept in comparative religious and theological thought, including theological, sociological, and anthropological approaches to the study of religion and religions.
3. Through critical reflection, students will learn with Hindu and Christian thinkers, bringing the wisdom and beauty present in Hinduism and Christianity into dialogue with their own worldviews.

Grading

1. Class participation and short written responses to readings (30%). Active and alert class attendance is regulated through guide questions for the week’s reading. These questions will be posted on Canvas. Students are expected to prepare responses to these guide questions in preparation for discussion in class. The written responses should be typed out—one inch margins, name and date single-spaced at the top, 12 point reasonable font (no wing-dings), body of the text double-spaced—as well as uploaded via canvas. Make sure that your papers and your responses are always going back to the text. Bring the assigned text to class so you can read from it. The written responses will be collected, but their main purposes are for your own reference in class discussion and to prepare for exams. For those leading the class discussion on a reading (2-3 persons per assignment) please submit a copy of your reflection by 4 PM the afternoon of the class it is due. Students will be called upon at random to respond to assigned questions. Your participation grade will be based on the quality and consistency of your class participation.

2. Midterm [DUE 6.14] and Final [DUE 6.27] (35% each). The midterm exam will be a take-home exam integrating the foundations of the course with the Hindu and Christian material. The final exam will be a cumulative take-home exam. The exam will assess your comprehension and critical engagement with class discussion, notes, and the texts assigned in class. Reliance on and use of outside sources is discouraged highly.

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
All readings and assignments are to be completed by the class date they are listed. Late work will be accepted and graded with a late penalty of one-third of a letter grade deducted for each day late. For example a paper receiving an A that is a day late will become an A-; an A paper two days late will become a B+.

Course Assignments
Students are expected to spend on the average 12 hours per week on out-of-class assignments and exercises. These are listed below. Please note that some weeks will require more time and some weeks less time but the average is approximately 12 hours a week over the course of the semester.
Texts marked by a * will be available via the course’s Canvas page.

**Course Schedule**

**Class 1 Tuesday 5.17: Introducing the Course**
Discuss: what is 'religion,' why study religion, and how to study religion.

**Class 2 Thursday 5.19: Introducing the Traditions--Hinduism**

Write for class: Reflection on *Excerpts from Narada’s Bhakti Sutras and Vivekacudamani, ‘Crest Jewel of Discrimination.*

**Class 3 Tuesday 5.24: Introducing the Traditions--Christianity**
Read for class: *Christian Theology, ‘What is Theology,’ 3-26 Christian Theology, ‘Revelation and Knowledge of God,’ 49-76; Excerpts from *Aquinas, Summa Theologica; Calvin 100 Aphorisms*

**Class 4 Thursday 5.26: In The Beginning--Time, Creation, and Humanity**
Read for class: Clooney, *Hindu Wisdom, ‘In the Beginning,’ 1-16; *Rg Veda 10.90, 129; Christian Theology, ‘The World as Creation,’ 147-52; 165-76. *Genesis 1-3, John 1*

**Class 5 Tuesday 5.31: The Human Predicament--Hinduism karma, maya, and avidya**

Write for class: One-pager ‘Devi Slays the Buffalo Demon,’ in *Hindu Myths, 238-49.*

**Class: 6 Thursday 6.2: The Human Predicament--Christianity Sin and Evil**

Write for class: One-pager *Slater, Moral Manual; Dostoevsky, ‘The Great Rebellion,’ in *The Brothers Karamazov*

**MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS**

**Class 7 Tuesday 6.7: The Response--Hinduism Liberation and Moksha**

**Class 8 Thursday 6.9: The Response--Christianity--Salvation**

Write for class One-pager: Bonhoeffer, *Costly Grace; *Gospel Selection, parables Kingdom of God*
Class 9 Tuesday 6.14: The Bhagavad Gita (Part 1)

MIDTERM DUE IN CLASS
Read for class: BG ‘Introduction,’ vii-xxxiv, ‘Discourses 1-8’

Class 10 Thursday 6.16: The Bhagavad Gita (Part 2)
Read for Class: BG 'Discourses 9-18'

Class 11 Tuesday 6.21: The Confessions of Augustine Part 1
Read for class: Selections for Books 1-5

Class 12 Thursday 6.23: The Confessions of Augustine Part 2
Read for class: Selections from Books 6-9

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
Because this class depends heavily on student participation, only two unexcused absences are permitted. Arriving late to class is disruptive to both student and instructor alike. Persistent tardiness will result in one unexcused absence. More than two unexcused absences progressively lowers the final grade by five points. If you miss class, you are responsible for submitting the assignment for that class which can be found on Canvas in lieu of class participation. A valid excused absence must be approved by the dean per university guidelines.

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.

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 for more information.