THEO116201 The Religious Quest 2; 3 crs.
Boston College Summer Session 2016
Summer 2, June 28-August 4
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
Religious Quest courses present Christianity and at least one other world religious tradition. Students are strongly encouraged to take both semesters of the same Religious Quest class. If circumstances require switching sections, students need permission of the instructor of the spring term course and may be asked to do additional background reading and writing for the religious tradition(s) not covered in their first semester of the course.

The Religious Quest explores the individual and communal search for wisdom about human nature, the world, ultimate realities and God, and secrets of love and death, as well as 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 between 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.
4. Student will become conversant with the spiritual practices and techniques of Christianity and Hinduism, the ways in which those who have had religious experiences relate these to the tradition, and how religion informs and inspires ethical and political commitments.

**Grading**

1. **Class participation and short written responses to readings (25%).** Active and alert class attendance is expected. Rather than one-pagers students will be assigned throughout the semester to help lead class discussion. Bring the assigned text to class so you can read from it. Students will be called on at random to respond to assigned questions. Your grade will be based on the quality and consistency of your class participation. Should reading and/or participation wane during the semester, the instructor may issue a ‘pop-quiz’ as needed.

2. **Three Mini-Papers (15% each; 45% total):** The first three sections of the course will have an accompanying written assignment. These assignments will be posted on Canvas. Papers are to be approx. 5 pages in length.

3. **Final Oral Exam (30%):** The final will be a comprehensive oral exam scheduled during Finals Week (20 minutes). A list of 8 possible questions will be provided ahead of time from which 2 will be selected at the start of the exam. Students may prepare for the exam in groups, but the exam itself will be taken individually.

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 6.28: Introducing the Course

Class 2 Thursday 6.30: Yoga Sutras I
Read for Class: YS, Samadhi Pada, p. 25-58; Sadhana Pada, p. 59-94

Class 3 Tuesday 7.5: Yoga Sutras 2
Read for class: Feuerstein, YS, Vibhuti Pada, p. 95-124 YS, Kaivalya Pada, p. 125-145; *The Yoga Debates

ASSIGNMENT 1 DISTRIBUTED

Class 4 Thursday 7.7: Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius 1
Read for class: T 2.9 Spiritual Exercises (SE), 'Introduction and Introductory Explanations, 1-29, The First Week, 31-51

Class 5 Tuesday 7.12: Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius 2
Read for class: T 2.16 SE, The Second Week, 53-80, The Third and Fourth Week, 81-95, and 'Supplementary Matter'

Class 6 Thursday 7.14: Devotional Poetry Andal

ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE, ASSIGNMENT 2 DISTRIBUTED

Class 7 Tuesday 7.19: Devotional Poetry Andal and Mirabai
Read for class: NT) Songs 9-14, Hawley, Morality Beyond Morality in the Lives of Three Hindu Saints, 52-59; * excerpts from Mirabai

Class 8 Thursday 7.21: Devotional Poetry Hildegard
Read for class: Introduction to Christian Mystical and Devotional Theology, *McGinn, Foundations of Mysticism, 'General Introduction; *Hildegard of Bingen: Scito vias Domini [aka Scivias] (Know the Ways of the Lord) 'Opening Declaration'; Visions I.1,2; 2.1; 3.8; Ordo Virtutum

Class 9 Tuesday 7.26: Devotional Poetry Mechthild
Read for class: Mechthild of Magdeburg (1210-1285): The Flowing Light of the Godhead (Das fließende Licht der Gottheit) (From Book 1 sections 1.1-5, 13-34, 44-end of 1; 2.17-19, 25-26; 6.5-6, 20, 23, 25, 30-32, 35, 41; 7.2-9, 24-25, 39-40, 42, 48, 52,57, 62, 64-5
Class 10 Thursday 7.28: Gandhi

Assignment 2 Due, Assignment 3 Distributed

Class 11 Tuesday 8.2: King
Read for class: *James Cone, 'Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr;' 'Letter from Birmingham Jail'

Class 12 Thursday 8.4: Final Oral Exam to be scheduled with professor

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.