

World Religions
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“For he who does reverence to his own sect while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment to his own, with the intent to enhance the splendor of his own sect, in reality by such conduct inflicts the severest injury to his own sect.” - Buddhist Emperor Ashoka, 3rd century BC

“If we are to respect others' religions as we would have them to respect our own, a friendly study of the world's religions is a sacred duty.” — Mahatma Gandhi

Welcome to World Religions. In a 2010 survey, the Pew Forum asked more than 3,000 Americans some simple questions about the world’s religions. Most respondents could answer only half of them correctly. A 2005 study conducted for the Bible Literacy Project tested teenagers’ ability to name the five world religions of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Only 10 percent could name all five and 15 percent could not name any of them. The world’s religious traditions are woven into the very fabric of human history and culture. Not only are religiously illiterate students ill equipped to compete in a global marketplace, they are deprived of the cultural heritage that is their birthright as human beings. Without some understanding of the world’s religions, students will not know the traditions and values of their neighbors and coworkers, understand literary and cultural references, or be able to interpret claims about religion made by politicians and the media. (Laycock, 2014)

Required Materials: Pencil, paper, and an open mind. We will be studying primary texts of various scriptures in class. These will be provided in class.

Expectations: Titans love, respect and protect one another.

This class will be positive and successful for all of us if you:

- Respect your own spiritual beliefs (or lack thereof) and, at the same time...
- Respect the spiritual beliefs (or lack thereof) of all your classmates.
- Mr. Drake will not attempt to disparage or to proselytize beliefs...students need to take the same approach.
- It is good to discuss our differences—that’s how we learn—but do so respectfully!
- Treat all your classmates—and their ideas—the way that you wish to be treated (that’s the prime moral teaching for most religions)
- Think of your beliefs the way you think of your mother...you probably like your Mom a great deal, right? But that doesn’t mean you can’t acknowledge that your friends have great mothers also. Think of religions the same way.

Grading:

Participation: 20% Quizzes: 10% In-class work: 30% Projects: 20% Tests: 20%

Course Content Overview: Because this is a one semester elective, we will of necessity be painting with a broad brush. Think of each unit as an introduction to the religion that only scratches the surface of what could be learned. You could spend your entire life studying any one of these religions and still not learn everything there is to know. While we will be touching on eleven different religions, we will more deeply study the five you are most likely to encounter as an American: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The religions have been organized based on chronology, geography, and internal similarities.

- Unit 1:
 - Intro to Comparative Religious Studies
 - The Sacred
 - Prothero's Religious Commonalities
 - Religious Vocabulary
- Unit 2: Escaping Illusion
 - Hinduism
 - Buddhism
 - Jainism
- Unit 3: Harmony
 - Confucianism
 - Daoism
 - Shinto
- Unit 4: Dualism and the Cosmic Struggle
 - Zoroastrianism
 - Yoruba
- Unit 5: The People of the Book
 - Judaism
 - Christianity
 - Islam

Attendance: Because this class is so short and the amount of content is so vast, it is important that you show up on time. Please make arrangements with me if you are absent. The standard TCA tardy policy will apply.

Late/Make-up Assignments/Quizzes/Tests: Assignments turned in late can be turned in for 80% credit until the end of the unit. After that they will receive a zero. Students are responsible to see me for make-up quizzes and tests. Any quizzes not made up after their chapter test will receive a zero.

I have read and understand the syllabus. I will email Mr. Drake with any further questions or clarifications at ddrake@asd20.org

Student Signature

Parent Signature
