

# **COURSE OUTLINE**

## **PHIL-201**

### **Religions of the World**

**3 Semester Hours**

**Humanities Core Course**

## **HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

### **Description**

A study of the major religions of the world with emphasis on their origins, development and significance in the modern world as well as their sacred texts. Focus is on Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Prerequisite: Eligible to enroll in ENGL-121. (3 hours weekly)

### **Statement on General Education and Liberal Learning**

A liberal education prepares students to lead ethical, productive, and creative lives and to understand how the pursuit of lifelong learning and critical thinking fosters good citizenship. General education courses form the core of a liberal education within the higher education curriculum and provide a coherent intellectual experience for all students by introducing the fundamental concepts and methods of inquiry in the areas of mathematics, the physical and natural sciences, the social sciences, the arts and the humanities, and composition. This course is part of the general education core experience at Howard Community College.

### **Overall Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, the students will be able to:

1. Define a religion and explain its purposes.
2. Define a scripture and explain its function within a religion.
3. Compare and contrast the worldviews of the major religions.
4. Analyze scriptures in order to understand articles of belief.
5. Interpret the psychological, sociological, historical, phenomenological (form) and hermeneutical (interpretation) components of religions.
6. Describe the cultural origins of the major religions.
7. Analyze the contributions of major religious figures.
8. Identify and discuss instances of conflict based on religion.
9. Compare and contrast the methods and focuses of religion/theology with those of philosophy.
10. Discuss similarities and dissimilarities among Indian, Asian, and Near Eastern religions.
11. Analyze religion's role in shaping and being shaped by other cultural forces (politics, economics, philosophy and the arts).
12. Describe the role of secularism/humanism as an alternative to religion.

### **Major Topics**

- I. Religions that have their Origin in India
  - A. Hinduism
  - B. Buddhism

- C. Jainism
  - D. Sikhism
- II. Religions that have their Origin in China/Japan/Australia
- A. Confucianism
  - B. Taoism
  - C. Shinto
  - D. Zen Buddhism
  - E. Primal Religions
- III. Religions that have their Origin in the Near East/Middle East
- A. Zoroastrianism
  - B. Judaism
  - C. Christianity
  - D. Islam
- IV. Tools for Understanding the World's Religions
- A. Role of Belief/Creed
  - B. Role of Practice/Ritual
  - C. Role of Scripture
  - D. Role of Charismatic Founder
- V. Alternatives to Religion
- A. Spirituality/Spiritual Practices
  - B. Humanism
  - C. Secularism

### **Course Requirements**

Grading/exams: Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member but will include:

- At least a third of the course grade will be based on essay exams.
- Course assignments/exams will include at least 1000 words of formal writing.
- Each student will write a reflective paper on a religion (not his/her own) as seen from the inside.
- Each student will write an analytic paper, comparing an Asian religion with one of the three Religions of the Book (Judaism, Christianity, Islam).
- Final grades will be based on class participation, informal writings, leadership of a small group discussion, essay examinations, a reflective paper and an analytic paper.

### **Other Course Information**

This course is a Humanities Core course. This course is a Humanities and an Arts and Sciences elective.