

Ancient World Religions and Philosophy

Fall 2019



Instructor: Nicholas Cross, Ph.D. (ncross@imsa.edu)
Office hours in A120

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri
Module 1					
Module 2	In Class (AWRAP)			In Class (AWRAP)	In Class (AWRAP)
Module 3	Office Hour		Office Hour	Office Hour	Office Hour
Module 4	In Class (AWRAP)		Office Hour	In Class (AWRAP)	In Class (AWRAP)
Module 5		Office Hour			
Module 6	In Class (AWRAP)	Office Hour		In Class (AWRAP)	In Class (AWRAP)
Module 7	In Class (AWRAP)	In Class (AWRAP)			In Class (AWRAP)
Module 8					

** You can also meet with me by appointment

Course Description

What are the major religious and philosophical traditions of human history? How did they emerge and what can they teach us about living in the modern world? In this course you will be introduced to the development, practices and beliefs, and impacts of the major world religions and philosophies throughout history, including Animism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In addition to learning about these belief systems, you will learn how to read beyond the words on the page. You will develop skills that will enable you to engage with the material critically and to articulate your thoughts in class, from group discussions of primary source material to a full-length research project. By the end of the course, you should have a better understanding of and tolerance for the idiosyncrasies of the different ideas, peoples, and cultures that have shaped our world.

Course Objectives

- To create an environment that is conducive to free expression and to respect for the diversity of ideas.
- To gather information from a variety of sources and points of view, and to evaluate that evidence critically or analytically.
- To understand the numerous forces that contributed to the creation of world religions and philosophies and, where possible, identify recurring themes.
- Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

Course Evaluation

Participation	20%
Oral Presentation	10%
Creation/Apocalypse Poster	10%
Primary Source Notebook	15%
Research Project	45%
o Proposal (5%)	
o Primary Source Essay (10%)	
o Final Paper (20%)	
o Paper Presentation (10%)	

Participation (20%)

- *Participation:* Participation points are gained by coming to class on time, putting forth a good faith effort in class to discuss and answer questions of the readings, and completing all assignments. Participation points are deducted for sleeping, rude and disrespectful comments towards other students or the professor, and conversation irrelevant to the class. *No headgear* (i.e. baseball caps, bandanas, or earbuds) is allowed in class.

* *Electronic devices:* No electronic devices are necessary during class time. If your phone or device goes off during class, I will take it, and you can get it from me the following day, in my office. If you are caught on any social network platform during class, you will be given a “0” for the day. That is a “first” warning. The second time you will be asked to leave the classroom and be given an “unexcused absence.” Take this seriously, as three unexcused absences will result in withdrawal from the course.

- *Tardiness and Absences:* Class is mandatory (as per IMSA’s Handbook). Anyone late up to five minutes will receive a “tardy” mark and after five minutes, an “absent” one. Any unexcused absence will result in “no credit” for that class period. If you leave the classroom during class and do not return, it is considered an absence. If you are absent for any reason, you are still expected to keep up with the assigned readings, and to consult your classmates’ notes. Late assignments will be accepted (within a week of the due date), only with a valid excuse.

Oral Presentation (10%)

At some point in the semester you will present a **5-10 minute** analysis of an important religious or philosophical figure from antiquity. You should include few biographical details but your focus should be on their **ideas** and their **influence** in history. Your presentation should go beyond the assigned readings for the class. Make sure to include a bibliography of your source materials.

Creation/Apocalypse Poster (10%)

Choose a creation OR apocalypse myth from any ancient religion, and create a poster detailing this myth for display. **Consult “Creation/Apocalypse Poster Guidelines” on Moodle.**

Primary Source Notebook (15%)

The notebook assignment is designed to develop your skills for working with primary sources (in translation) and will prepare you for class discussions. Before each class with a reading assignment, you must answer the questions in your notebook designated for that reading. You are required to bring your completed notebook questions to each class with the corresponding reading assignment. At the beginning of seven class periods, chosen at random, I will inspect your notebook and award up to 3 points towards your notebook grade. Because only five notebook inspections will count, you may miss two inspections.

Research Project (Total 45%)

- *Project Proposal* (2-3 pages): First, decide on a topic relating to ancient religions and philosophy to begin your preliminary research. As you learn more about your topic, you will narrow your research down to a specific thesis upon which to write your research

proposal. The proposal should include a description of the topic, why you chose it, a provisional thesis statement, and a rough outline of the paper. You must also include an extra one-page bibliography of works you plan to consult in your research. **Consult “Writing a Research Proposal” on Moodle.**

- *Primary Source Essay* (2-3 pages): You will summarize and respond to one primary source selection (to be determined by your research topic). You should summarize the selection but more importantly analyze the rhetorical features and functions of the text (what it does, how, and why). Make sure to cite the selection with Book, Chapter, and/or Lines. **Consult “How to Evaluate Primary Sources” on Moodle.**
- *Final Draft* (7-8 pages): You should demonstrate within your paper the skills of summary, synthesis, analysis, and argument. The paper must demonstrate your ability to craft a cohesive paper guided by a clear thesis and substantial research to support that thesis. You will also give a 10-minute presentation of your work to the class. **Consult my Grading Rubric and a Sample Research Paper on Moodle.**

* Papers should be double spaced, typed in 12 point Times New Roman font, and stapled. You must submit your papers in hardcopy to me and to www.turnitin.com by each due date. (You MUST receive a **receipt** from turnitin.com and confirm that your assignment was turned in. If you are unsure, mail it before the deadline to my inbox. I will have no patience for claims that turnitin didn't work, and the late papers will be subject to the late paper policy above.)

* Academic Integrity:

All of the work submitted for this course is understood to be your own original work. In cases where academic dishonesty (the fraudulent submission of another's work, in whole or part, as your own) is detected, you will be subject to a failing grade (no credit) for the assignment and referral to the Principal's Office for disciplinary action. See the IMSA Student Handbook for specific details. Such activity can result in being dismissed from IMSA, so if you are in doubt, come see me. As part of this course, we will discuss strategies for adhering to standard conventions for responsible source use and for maintaining academic integrity.

Extra Credit

There is an opportunity for you to receive up to two extra credit points towards your overall course grade. In order to receive one extra credit point, watch one of the movies listed below and write a character analysis. That is, isolate one character from the movie and identify, in a 1-2 page paper, how the movie portrays the character and his/her religious beliefs and behavior. Be sure to make connections to specific class readings and classroom discussions. For a second extra credit point, do the same for a character from a second movie. *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971); *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973); *Life of Brian* (1979); *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988); *The Matrix* (1999); *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter... and Spring* (2003); *Water* (2005); *Avatar* (2009)



Course Schedule

Topic	Readings	Assignments
Wk 1: Introduction to Ancient World Religions and Philosophies		
Wk 2: The Origins of Religion	<p>8/26: Jean Clottes’s “Spirituality and Religion in Paleolithic Times” Karen Armstrong’s “In the Beginning . . .” (pp. 3-6)</p> <p>8/29: Sharon Steadman’s “The First Spark of Religion: The Neanderthals”</p> <p>8/30: Charles C. Mann’s “The Birth of Religion”</p>	
Wk 3: Animism	<p>9/2: NO CLASS: Labor Day</p> <p>9/5: Mircea Eliade’s <i>From Primitives to Zen</i> (pp. 3-20)</p> <p>9/6: Harvey Graham’s “From Primitives to Persons” (pp. 3-17)</p>	
Wk 4: Sumerian and Egyptian Religions	<p>9/9: <i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> Tablet I-VII</p> <p>9/12: <i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> Tablet VIII-XII</p> <p>9/13: “Sumerian and Egyptian Religious Texts” (pp. 21-24, 36-48) Karen Armstrong’s “In the Beginning . . .” (pp. 6-10)</p>	9/12: Creation Poster Due (displayed on Parent Day)
Wk 5: Hinduism	<p>9/16: Research Project Workshop I</p> <p>9/19: Selections from the <i>Rig-Veda</i> 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Creation” (72, 90, 121, 129-130) ○ “Gods” (5, 51, 73, 108, 124) ○ “Death” (14, 16, 56, 135, 154) <p><i>Bhagavad-Gita</i> Chapters 2 and 3</p> <p>9/20: <i>Laws of Manu</i> Chapters 1-2, 10</p>	9/20: Bring Research Paper Proposal draft for peer review
Wk 6: Buddhism	<p>9/23: <i>The Four Noble Truths</i> (§§ 5-6, 17-24, 29-46)</p> <p>9/26: Selections from <i>The Dhammapada</i> Karen Armstrong’s “In the Beginning . . .” (pp. 27-34)</p> <p>9/27: Movie and worksheet on Buddhism [in class]</p>	9/26: Research Paper Proposal Due
Wk 7: Chinese Philosophies	<p>9/30: Confucius’s <i>Analects</i> Books 2, 12, 19-20</p> <p>10/3: Laozi’s <i>Tao Te Ching</i> Chapters 1-10</p> <p>10/4: Han Feizi’s “Way of the Ruler” and “On Having Standards”</p>	
Wk 8: Research/Paper Writing	<p>10/7: Research Project Workshop II</p> <p>10/10: Meet in Library; order research materials for research paper</p> <p>10/11: NO CLASS: Faculty Development</p>	

Wk 9: Greek Religion	<p>10/14: NO CLASS: Indigenous Peoples' Day (aka Columbus Day)</p> <p>10/17: Homer's <i>Iliad</i> 1, 6</p> <p>10/18: Hesiod's <i>Theogony</i></p>	10/18: Bring Primary Source Essay draft for peer review
Wk 10: Greek Philosophy	<p>10/21: Excerpts from the Presocratics</p> <p>10/24: Plato's <i>Republic</i> 514a–520a Karen Armstrong's "In the Beginning . . ." (pp. 34-39)</p> <p>10/25: Lucretius' <i>De rerum natura</i> Book 1.1-418</p>	10/25: Primary Source Essay Due
Wk 11: Judaism	<p>10/28: Selections from the <i>Hebrew Bible</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Genesis 1-4, 6-9, 12 <p>Karen Armstrong's "In the Beginning . . ." (pp. 11-27)</p> <p>10/31: Selections from the <i>Hebrew Bible</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exodus 19-20 ○ Psalm 104 ○ Daniel 1-7 <p>11/1: Research Project Workshop III</p>	
Wk 12: Christianity	<p>11/4: Selections from <i>The New Testament</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Matthew 1-7, 13 ○ John 18-21 <p>11/7: Selections from <i>The New Testament</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Romans 8 ○ I Corinthians 15 ○ Revelation 1, 12-14, 17-22 <p>11/8: Eusebius's <i>Life of Constantine</i> 1.27-32; 3.4-24</p>	
Wk 13: Christianity	<p>11/11: Selections from Augustine's <i>City of God</i></p> <p>11/14: Martin Luther's <i>95 Theses</i></p> <p>11/15: Research Project Workshop IV</p>	11/15: Bring Research Paper draft for peer review
Wk 14: Islam	<p>11/18: <i>Qur'an</i> 1-2, 19</p> <p>11/21: Al-Ghazali's <i>Deliverance from Error</i></p> <p>11/22: Ibn Hazm's <i>The Ring of the Dove</i></p>	
Wk 15:	<p>11/25: Ancient Religions and Modern America Lecture</p> <p>11/28-11/29: NO CLASS: Thanksgiving</p>	11/25: Research Paper Due
Wk 16:	<p>12/2: Research Project Workshop V</p> <p>12/5-12/6: Research Paper Presentations in Class</p>	
Wk 17:	<p>12/9, 12/12: Research Paper Presentations in Class</p> <p>12/13: Semester Recap</p>	