Instructors
Kasım Kopuz - 10 weeks (Course Coordinator)
Room: 2021; Office Hours: Tuesday: 11:15-12:15, Wednesday: 16:15-17:15; or by appointment.
E-mail: kasimkopuz@sehir.edu.tr
Phone: (domestic line): 9856

Zübeyir Nişancı – 4 weeks (11th, 12th, 13th, 14th weeks)
Room: Bati 1032, Office Hours, Wednesday: 13:00 to 16:00 PM.
E-mail: zubeyirnisanci@sehir.edu.tr
Phone: (domestic line): 9883

Teaching Assistants: TBA
Suada Zenelhasani: suadazenelhasani@std.sehir.edu.tr
Seyma Nur Temel: seymatemel@std.sehir.edu.tr

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Lecture Schedule: Mondays 12:00-15:00
Classroom: East Campus Conf. Hall
Credit Hours: 3 hrs/week, 3 credits

OVERVIEW

The course will be on two parts. The first part is about history of world religions and the second one is about understanding religion within the context of state and society. After a general introduction to the historiography, methodologies and thematic issues of the History of World Religions, we will discuss the key concepts in the field such as “religion,” “spirituality,” the idea of “sacred,” “primitive religions,” “world religions,” etc. We will study the history of religions as faith traditions? This part of the course will have special attention paid to the historical development of early religious traditions and major world religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Students will be introduced to the belief systems, worldview, ideals, ethics and rituals of each tradition. We will compare certain aspects of religions but we won't focus on theological comparisons, (this is not a course on comparative religions), rather the course will focus on understanding the origin, process of formation, historical development and spread or world religions. A special attention will be paid to religions’ responses to and/or interactions with the larger global changes in the world. Several contemporary issues will be discussed, such as including “fundamentalism,” “radicalism,” “response to modernity,” “women’s spirituality,” and “the future of religion,” and etc. In the second part of the course, we will focus on the interactions between religion and state and between religion and society from the historical, political, and sociological perspectives. The course’s aim is to have students’ developed deeper understanding of various religions and to promote healthy relations amongst the people of the world traditions.
FORMAT AND PREREQUISITES
History of World Religions is a survey course in a lecture format. There will be discussions and presentations. Each student is responsible to complete all the required readings and attend the classes. The students are expected to ask intelligent questions and participate in class discussions. Besides the needs to be open minded, have curiosity for world’s faith traditions, and be ready to engage with challenging questions there are no prerequisites for this class.

READING MATERIALS

MAIN TEXTBOOKS
2-Esposito, John L., Darrell J. Fasching, Todd Lewis, edtr. World Religions Today, (Oxford University, 4th edn.)

SUPPORTIVE TEXTS for SUGGESTED READING
1-Smart, Ninian and Hecht, Richard D.; Sacred Texts of the World.
2-Matthews, Warren; World Religions. (7th Edtn)

SELECTED CHAPTERS FROM FOLLOWING BOOKS
1-Streng, Fredrick; Understanding Religious Life. (3rd ed)
3-Urubshurow, Vitoria Kennick; Introducing World Religions, (Routledge, 2008).

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING POLICY
GENERAL: Attendance is mandatory and will be spot checked. Students should keep up with all the assigned readings. No extensions will be given on written work without cause and documentation. All tests will be given in class. University rules on academic honesty will be strictly enforced. Courteous behavior in class is expected both to the instructor (no cellphone reading/texting, no newspapers/magazines!) and to fellow students. Many different religious traditions as well as non-religious seculars will be present among us. Be sensitive to the deeply held worldviews, convictions, beliefs and traditions of others!

GRADES: Attendance and Homework 20 %, Midterm Exam 40 %, Final Exam 40 %.

PAPERS AND EXAMS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

ALL WRITTEN WORK SHOULD BE TYPED AND DOUBLE SPACED.

Paper:
Review essay: Students are required to write review of a course related book: Review of the book must be an academic book in one of the faith traditions within the syllabus. You must consult with the instructor before making final decision about the book to review

Mid Term Exam: 8th week

ANY CHANGE IN THE SYLLABUS WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN CLASS.
FIRST PART: History of Religion

KASIM KOPUZ

1st Week: Course Introduction, February 15th

2nd week: Overview/Historical Study of World Religions

A-Historiography of the world religions.

B-Approaching world religions: Theory and study of religions.


3rd week: Religions of South and East Asia-I

A-Hinduism-I: Early and Later Hinduism

Required Reading:
Amjad, p. 201-230.
Esposito, p. 301-304

B-Hinduism-II: Hinduism’s encounter with modernity.

Required Reading:
Amjad, p. 230-240
Esposito, p. 301-304; 332-354.

Suggested Reading:
Sacred Text, Smart, p. 276-290
For Hindu Worldview, Warren Matthews, World Religions, (7th Edtn), p. 95-104

4th week: Religions of South and East Asia-II

A-Buddhism: The Life of Buddha, Early Development and Spread of Buddhism;
Buddhism’s Encounter with Modernity.
Required Reading:
Amjad, p. 241-280
Esposito: p. 393-397, 433-434, 441-447

Suggested Reading: Smart, p 164-209
For Buddhist Worldview: Matthews, p. 138-146

B-Confucianism: Confucius and Confucianism’s Encounter with Modernity.

Required Reading:
Esposito, p. 484-487; 518-568

Suggested Reading: Smart, p. 290-303
For Confucian Worldview: Matthews, p. 198-202

5th week: Religions of the Family of Abraham I

A- Judaism-I: History and Early Developments

Required Reading:
Amjad, p. 65-109

B- Judaism-II: Contemporary Judaism, Encounter with Modernity, and Changes within Judaism in Colonial and Postcolonial Era

Required Reading:
Amjad, p. 110-134
Esposito, p. 79-82, 115-140

Suggested Reading:
Smart, p. 45-89.
For Jewish Worldview: Matthews, p. 273-284

6th week: Religions of the Family of Abraham: II

A- Christianity-I: History and Early Development

Required Reading:
Amjad, p. 135-181

B-Christianity-II: Reformation; Encounter with Modernity; Changes within Christianity in Colonial and Postcolonial Era

Required Reading:
Amjad, p. 181- 201
Esposito, p. 152-157, 182-208
Suggested Reading:
Smart, p. 90-125
For Christian Worldview: Matthews, p. 322-331

7th week: Religions of the Family of Abraham: III

A-Islam-I: History and Early Development

Required Reading:
Esposito, p. 224-238

Suggested Reading:
Smart, p. 130-177;

B-Islam-II: Islam and Encounter with Modernity; Islam and Postmodern Trends and Challenges

Required Reading:
Esposito, p. 221-224, 259-295

Suggested:
For Islamic Worldview: Matthews, p. 361-372

8th week: Mid-Term Exam – April 4th, Monday


Required Reading:
Esposito, p. 571-594
Video: TBA

10th week: World Religions within the Context of 20th Century Global Mobility, Religious Diversities and Contemporary Rise of Spirituality.

Required Reading:
Esposito, p. 595-608
Video: Film “Kumare” by director Vikram Gandhi

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Zubeyir Nisanci

11th Week: Religion and Social Order: The Functionalist Perspective


12th Week: Religious Sources of Social Action and Religion as a Meaning System

13th Week: Religion and Modernity: The Secularization Debates


14th Week: Religion and Violence Debates:

