

COURSE OUTLINE

**Philosophy 113 (C-ID Number: PHIL 100)
Comparative World Religions: Near East**

I. Catalog Statement

Philosophy 113 is a comparative study of the salient ideas and philosophical developments in Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and prehistoric and national religions of the past.

Total Lecture Units: 3.0

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Total Lecture Hours: 48.0

Total Faculty Contact Hours: 48.0

Requisite Skills: Eligibility for English 101 recommended.

II. Course Entry Expectations

Skills Level Ranges: Reading 5, Writing 5, Listening/Speaking 5, Math 1.

Prior to enrolling in the course, the student should be able to:

1. organize and write thesis-based essays;
2. use detailed examples, facts, logical explanations, and other appropriate support or thesis statements;
3. critically analyze selected prose works dealing with important contemporary issues;
4. summarize, analyze, and synthesize information, express and apply standards for judgment, compare and contrast, and evaluate evidence in order to form and state reasoned opinions;
5. gather and organize information through library research;
6. demonstrate a command of grammar, diction, syntax, and mechanics sufficient for college level work: control of standard English at the sentence level, with few major errors in grammar and punctuation.

III. Course Exit Standards

Upon successful completion of the required coursework, the student will be able to:

1. read short primary texts with comprehension;
2. write discursive/exploratory essays which summarize and argue for a philosophical position;
3. sustain informed, engaged, and tolerant critical discussions;

4. identify and cogently summarize some of the philosophical and theological theories held by members of each of the religions covered in class;
5. speak and write intelligently about some contemporary philosophical and theological issues;
6. develop the skills to listen carefully to opposing viewpoints and to offer a philosophical response to them;
7. compare and contrast aspects of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

IV. Course Content

Total Faculty Contact Hours = 48 hours

A. Introduction to Philosophy and Theology	1 hour
1. A theological approach	
2. A philosophical approach	
3. A historical approach	
B. Religions of the Past	4 hours
1. Prehistoric religions	
2. National religions	
C. Zoroastrianism	3 hours
1. Iranian religion before Zoroaster	
2. Zoroaster's life and teachings	
D. Judaism	12 hours
1. History	
2. Holidays	
3. Texts	
E. Christianity	18 hours
1. Jesus	
2. Early Christian disputes	
3. Orthodox Christian doctrine	
4. Medieval Christian theology and philosophy	
5. The reformation	
6. Post-reformation theological developments	
F. Islam	10 hours
1. Muhammad's life	
2. Muslim theology	

V. Methods of Instruction

The following methods of instruction may be used in the course:

1. lecture and class discussions;
2. group discussion;

3. small group projects and presentations;
4. multi-media presentations.

VI. Out of Class Assignments

The following out of class assignments may be used in the course:

1. a five to ten page paper attempting to solve a philosophical and/or theological problem (e.g. “Did Jesus probably perform miracles?” or, “Assuming the Bible is God’s word, do humans have free will?”);
2. construction of careful, sustained and useful critiques of peer’s first drafts (e.g. restate a thesis, raise unaddressed questions, construct plausible counter-examples);
3. rethinking and rewriting papers in response to criticism (e.g. consider a given counter-example, draw out its implications, and revise the theory or argument in response);
4. group work preparation for graded group work presentations (e.g. divide essays amongst groups, meet to discuss arguments for each position, present as a debate);
5. readings to be discussed and tested in class;
6. review of practice quizzes in preparation for in-class examinations.

VII. Methods of Evaluation

The following methods of evaluation may be used in the course:

1. minimum of 10 pages of writing assignments;
2. regularly scheduled in class essays;
3. final examination;
4. an optional extended research paper.

VIII. Textbook(s)

Smith, Huston. *The World’s Religions*. New York: Harper Collins, 2010.
12th Grade Textbook Reading Level. ISBN: 978-0-06-166018-4.

Segal, Alan and Willard G. Oxtoby. *A Concise Introduction to World Religions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Print.
13th Grade Textbook Reading Level. ISBN: 9780195437744

IX. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the required course work, the student will be able to:

1. read short philosophical and/or theological primary texts with comprehension;
2. write discursive/exploratory essays which summarize and/or argue a philosophical or theological position;
3. sustain informed, engaged, and tolerant critical discussions;
4. identify and cogently summarize some of the philosophical and theological theories of the Near East religions covered in the course;
5. speak and write intelligently about issues raised by contemporary and historical philosophers and theologians;

6. develop skills to listen carefully to opposing viewpoints and analyze the nature of the support used within these viewpoints.