**RL122B: RELIGION AND THE HUMAN ADVENTURE**

**CENTRAL METHODIST UNIVERSITY – FAYETTE**

**TR 2:25-3:40 in T. BERRY SMITH HALL 409
3 CREDITS, FALL 2017**

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Instructor: Aaron Johnson, PhD

Office Hours: by appointment only

Email: ajohnson@centralmethodist.edu

**MISSION OF CENTRAL METHODIST UNIVERSITY**

Central Methodist University prepares students to make a difference in the world by emphasizing academic and professional excellence, ethical leadership, and social responsibility.

**CREED OF CENTRAL METHODIST UNIVERSITY**

The CMU community believes in:

Seeking knowledge, truth, and wisdom;

Valuing freedom, honesty, civility, and diversity;

Living lives of service and leadership; and

Taking responsibility for ourselves and the communities in which we live.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a one semester, three-credit-hour course introducing the ways in which religion provides meaning and purpose for human life. The course includes a study of a variety of religious traditions, beliefs, and practices. It is a prerequisite to all other courses in religion.

**GENERAL EDUCATION COMPETENCES**

This course falls under the Common Core category of “Understanding Human Nature:” Religion. Students will understand the constituent parts of religious traditions, will be able to compare diverse religious traditions, and will be able to articulate the place of humanity and themselves in relation to religious traditions.

**REQUIRED TEXT**

David Whitten Smith and Elizabeth Geraldine Burr, *Understanding World Religions: A Road Map for Justice and Peace*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

**ASSESSMENT**

This course requires a minimum of two hours of out-of-class work for every one hour of direct faculty instruction.

Students should get out their book, paper, and pen or pencil when they arrive in class and be ready to work when class starts.

I do not take attendance after the first two weeks of class; however, attendance will affect your participation grade and if you do not attend regularly you will miss out on assignments that will be completed in class as well as frequent short quizzes that cannot be made up.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Preparation for and Participation in class, and Completion of Homework 20%

Quizzes 30%

Midterm Exam 20%

Final Exam 30%

**FINAL EXAM**

Thurs., Dec. 14, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE**

Week 1 Course Introduction

Introduction - The Study of Worldviews (in textbook)

Lecture - Studying Religion

Lecture - Defining Religion

Week 2 Lecture - Zoroastrianism

Week 3 Chapter 1 - Hindu Worldviews

Week 4 Chapter 2 - Buddhist Worldviews

Quiz 1

Weeks 5-6 Chapter 3 - Jewish Worldviews

Weeks 7-8 Chapter 4 - Christian Worldviews

Quiz 2

Review and Midterm Exam

Weeks 9-10 Chapter 5 - Muslim Worldviews

Week 11 Chapter 6 - Native American Worldviews

Week 12 Lecture - Evil Explained

Quiz 3

Week 13 Chapter 8 - The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Week 14 Chapter 11 - Active Nonviolence

Week 15 Chapter 12 - Just War Theory

**ACADEMIC CONDUCT POLICY**

Students are expected to follow Central Methodist University's Academic Conduct Policy as outlined in the current CMU catalog and on the CMU website. Forms of academic misconduct that will not be tolerated include, but are not limited to, cheating on tests, examinations or other class/laboratory work; involvement in plagiarism (the appropriation of another’s work and/or the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one’s own); collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with another person); submitting work previously presented in another course; misrepresentation of actions; and falsifying information. It is the student’s responsibility to know what constitutes academic misconduct and to refrain from engaging in such acts. All cases of academic misconduct will be reported to the Chairperson of the Division of Humanities as well as the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Any student found having committed academic misconduct (cheating, plagiarizing, etc.) on any assignment, quiz or exam in this class will earn a zero for that assignment, quiz or exam and may have her or his grade for the course lowered. Repeated or extremely severe academic misconduct will result in failure of the class.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES, CLASS CONDUCT, AND OTHER POLICIES**

1) Students are expected to come to class prepared, by having read the material and being  ready to discuss it. Students are encouraged to ask questions and respond to questions raised by the instructor and classmates. Students are encouraged to bring the assigned book to class.

2) Each student is required to respect the instructor and the other students in class. Disrespectful or inappropriate comments as well as any unnecessary disturbances will not be tolerated.

3) Personal computers are allowed for taking notes and other class relevant usage. If I see you using your computer for any other purpose, you will be asked to leave, you will be counted absent for the day, and you will not be permitted to bring your computer to class again.

4) Cell phones are to be silenced and put away. If I see you doing anything with your phone, you will be asked to leave and you will be counted absent for the day. If this problem persists, you may be removed from the class. If you must use your phone, please step outside of the classroom.

**ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

In addition to announcements made in class, I will communicate with students via university email (Eagle Mail) and myCMU. Students bear the responsibility of checking their Eagle Mail and accessing course web-based materials on myCMU on a daily basis.

**COMPLAINTS/CONCERNS**

If you have complaints or concerns about me or about this class, please follow accepted protocol in seeking solutions and redress: discuss your concerns first and foremost with me. Then, if you feel I have inadequately addressed your concerns, contact my division chair (Dr. Annette Van, avan@centralmethodist.edu).

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY AND DISABILITY ACCOMODATIONS**

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

Central Methodist University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual preference, religion, sex, national origin, age, or federally defined disability/state defined handicap (“disability”). This includes but is not limited to recruitment and admission of students, educational programs, services, activities, financial aid, and scholarship programs. The University complies with all federal and state non-discrimination requirements. The procedures, described in the university’s catalog, are intended to guide and assist faculty, staff, and students in complying with this policy and in determining reasonable accommodations to be made for the federally defined disability claimed. All materials and information regarding disabilities will be governed by the University’s normal policies regarding privacy. To request reasonable accommodations for a disabilities, students must fill out and submit the application and information forms and provide professional documentation of the disability (These forms can be found at <http://www.centralmethodist.edu/academics/learning-teaching/disability-accommodations.php>). The information must be received by the staff of the Center for Learning and Teaching before reasonable accommodations are provided. Please see the website for the Center for Learning and Teaching for more information (<http://disabilitycenter.missouri.edu/faculty/syllabus.php>).