

Antelope Valley College

PHIL 109 World Religions

Asynchronous Online

Instructor: Nate Greely

Email: nathaniel.greely@avc.edu

Office Hours: MW 12:30-1:30pm on Zoom

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/83673642224?pwd=t2mf1ssp1CHRM0fS1izNawcDFJNyGA.1>

Course Description

In this course students will examine the central beliefs, rituals, traditions, and the philosophical foundations of the major world religions, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Mayan Religion.

Textbooks

A History of God by Karen Armstrong (provided on Canvas)

Taoism: An Essential Guide by Eva Wong (provided on Canvas)

The Ancient Maya by Heather McKillop (provided on Canvas)

Lecture

Lectures will be posted to Canvas in video form each morning M-Th. They will help to explain the material covered in the readings and point out opportunities for term paper topics.

Learning Outcomes:

Students should demonstrate their understanding of important topics in world religion by engaging in discussions, completing written exams, and writing an original essay that argues for or against a specific thesis on a topic of their choice.

Assessments:

The assessments in this course are largely designed to keep you engaged with the lectures, readings, and other students in the course. Your grades for discussion, quizzes, and the essay draft total 60% of your grade and it should be easy to do well on these components if you stay engaged. The midterm, and final draft of the essay will be graded on quality, and to get top marks on these components you will be required to demonstrate understanding of the material (for the midterm) and some original insight (for the final essay). Your final grade in the course will be composed of the following:

Attendance and Participation – 20%

Each student is required to post weekly to the Canvas discussion board, **due each Sunday 11:59pm**. The subject of the post will be one of the topics from the past week. The post can be an objection to some claim or argument in the reading, a request for clarification of some claim or argument in the reading, or an extension of some claim or argument from the reading. You should avoid merely summarizing points from the reading. Original thought is the goal. The hope is that these posts will help you begin to formulate an original thesis for your essay.

Quizzes – 20%

At the end of each week, there will be a short quiz on that week's material. The goal of the quizzes is to assess whether students are keeping up with reading and lectures. They are designed to be quite easy for students who do so.

Midterm – 20%

The midterm will consist of two short essays (1-2 pages each). Students will be given four essay prompts and may choose to write on any two of them. The essay prompts will be on topics from the first two weeks of the course. The short essays should demonstrate understanding of the claims and arguments from the readings and lectures on the given topic. **The essay prompts will be posted 1/15 by 11:59pm and the midterm will be due, submitted to Canvas, by 1/19 11:59pm.**

Essay draft – 20%

One of the most important parts of writing an essay is revision. Students will be required to turn in a rough draft of their final essay, **due Sunday, 1/26 by 11:59pm, submitted through Canvas.** The essay should present and develop an original thesis on some topic from the course material. Prompts will be provided, but students are welcome to develop their own essay topics, possibly based on a discussion board exchange. The essay should be narrowly focused on a very specific claim. Provide an original argument for your view about that claim and consider objections to your argument. There is no length requirement, but 5-7 pages is a rough target length. The rough draft will be returned with comments on how the essay might be developed and improved. It should be easy to get full points for your draft so long as it reflects an honest effort to make a cogent argument.

Final Essay – 20%

Students will revise their essay drafts based on the comments they receive. You are almost certainly expected to make significant changes to your essay in order to get top marks. The final draft will be graded on quality, not merely on effort. **The final draft will be due 2/2 at 11:59pm, submitted through Canvas.**

Course Schedule

1/2 – Course Introduction

1/6 – Polytheism; Reading: Armstrong pp. 1-27

1/7 - The Axial Age; Reading; Armstrong pp. 28-39

1/8 – Buddhism; Watch Video on the Life of Siddhartha Gautama

1/9 - Plato and Aristotle; No reading, watch Lecture

1/12 – Quiz 1 Due 11:59pm; Discussion due 11:59pm

1/13 – Mayan Religion; Reading: McKillop pp. 204-226

1/14 – Taoism; Reading: Wong pp. 40-56

1/15 - Monotheism; Reading; Armstrong pp. 40-78

1/16 – God Incarnate; Reading: Armstrong pp. 79-106

1/19 – Quiz 2 Due 11:59pm; Midterm Due 11:59pm; Discussion due 11:59pm

1/20 – Martin Luther King Day Holiday

1/21 – Watch the film *Agora*

1/22 – *Agora* Lecture; Christian Doctrine; Reading: Armstrong pp. 107-131

1/23 – Islam; Reading: Armstrong pp. 132-169

1/26 – Quiz 3 Due 11:59 pm; Essay Draft Due 11:59pm; Discussion due 11:59pm

1/27 - The God of the Philosophers; Reading: Armstrong pp. 170-208

1/28 – A God for Reformers; Reading: Armstrong pp. 257-292

1/29 – Enlightenment; Reading: Armstrong pp. 293-345

1/30 – The Death of God?; Reading: Armstrong pp. 346-376
2/2 – Quiz 4 Due 11:59pm; Essay Due 11:59pm; Discussion Due 11:59pm

Grading

Numeric	Grade	Numeric	Grade
Over 93%	A	73% to 76%	C
90% to 92%	A-	70% to 72%	C-
87% to 89%	B+	67% to 69%	D+
83% to 86%	B	63% to 66%	D
80% to 82%	B-	60% to 62%	D-
77% to 79%	C+	<60%	F

Diversity and Inclusion

Antelope Valley College is a comprehensive community college in the California Community College System dedicated to providing services to a broad range of students with a variety of educational goals. Antelope Valley College is dedicated to providing educational programs and services as expressed in the California Master Plan for Higher Education. The College is committed to equal educational opportunity and reinforces that commitment through a program of active affirmation of diversity. Antelope Valley College is dedicated to meeting the dynamic needs of a changing community. The College addresses the educational needs of a diverse and evolving population. The College recognizes that it is uniquely capable of responding to the requirements of regional business, industry, and public service, as well as the social and cultural needs of the Antelope Valley. Antelope Valley College affirms the rights of the individual and respects human dignity. The programs and activities of the College foster the individual's ability to think clearly, critically, and independently to meet the demands of an increasingly complex society. The student is the primary concern of the College. The curriculum, activities, and services of the College help students understand their physical, cultural, ethnic, and social environment. The preservation of academic freedom provides a college environment in which students and faculty can examine ideas freely. This philosophy is reflected in the curriculum, the student-faculty relationships, the services and resources, and the policies of the College.

Academic Integrity

Violation of the Academic Honesty Policy: Dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating, or plagiarism. Plagiarism—from the Latin word for “kidnap” ---involves using another’s work without giving proper credit, whether done accidentally or on purpose. This includes not only words and ideas, but also graphs, artwork, music, maps, statistics, diagrams, scientific data, software, films, videos and the like. Plagiarism is plagiarism whether the material is from published or unpublished sources. It does not matter whether ideas are stolen, bought, downloaded from the Internet, or written for the student by someone else—it is still plagiarism. Even if only bits and pieces of other sources are used, or outside sources reworded, they must still be cited. To avoid problems, students should cite any source(s) and check with the instructor before submitting an assignment or project. Students are always responsible for any plagiarism in their work. An instructor who determines that a student has cheated or plagiarized has the right to give an “F” grade, or the numerical equivalent, for the assignment or examination only. You cannot drop the student from class or fail them from the class for a single violation of the Academic Honesty Policy.

For detailed information on Antelope Valley College’s Academic Honesty Policy and plagiarism:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QneJvu80MUO2Md9oc4pLI7_PIZVIHi12vzw_p-QSXIU/edit#heading=h.tpv2ymb61nhg

Disability Statement

The OSD program provides support services, specialized instruction, and educational accommodations to students with disabilities so that they can participate as fully and benefit as equitably from the college experience as their non-disabled peers. An Academic Accommodation Plan (AAP) is developed for each student which links student's goals, curriculum program, and academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, services and/or instruction to his/her disability related educational limitation. If you need academic accommodations please contact the OSD office at OSD@avc.edu.

Religious Accommodation:

If you require any accommodation on religious grounds, please alert me in writing as soon as possible.