

Instructor: Joel Tibbetts, adjunct professor of religion.

Office hours: M & W 1:30-2:30, and 4:30-5:00, in Ladd 217 (Prof. Smith's Office).

Campus phone: 5407. Home phone: 802-375-9546.

E-mail: jtibbetts@skidmore.edu

As an introductory study of the nature of religion, this course will focus on the interaction of religion and culture, and the function of religious belief in the life of the individual. Considerations will include the nature of myth and ritual, sacred time and space, the human capacity for good and evil, and theories of life after death.

Readings: Textbook, Warren Matthews, *World Religions*, seventh edition

Assignments in various scriptures (any translation)

Handouts will be distributed in class

Films and videos: will be shown in class. Students are responsible for seeing all of them. A written report will be assigned for some of them.

Exams/quizzes:

Two open-book/notes hour exams, on October 3 and October 31 (15% each). A take-home final exam, on December 17, 9 am-noon in the classroom (25%). Any quiz will be announced in advance.

Written work:

A variety of short essays will be assigned, some of which will be based on the questions at the end of every chapter in Matthews; plus a research paper of 10-12 pages, +/- 3000 words, on a topic relevant to some segment of the course, due Wed., Dec 5. List of topics to be circulated later. (Short essays & quizzes 10%; research paper 25%)

Attendance and participation.

(10%) Participation in class discussion is expected of all students, and in order to participate, you have to be in class. Unexcused absences will have a negative effect on your grades. Send an email if you are going to be elsewhere (jtibbetts@skidmore.edu).

Assignments should be completed by the date cited.

September 5: Introduction. Myth, symbol and ritual. Film: "The Primal Mind."

September 10: More symbols and myths. Matthews 1-13. Film: "The First Storytellers." Handouts.

September 12: Tribes and City States. Matthews 17-43, Films: "Way of the Ancestors," "Our Sacred Land."

September 17-October 1. Judaism. Matthews 246-286. In the Bible: Genesis 1-3, 12:1-3, 22, 27-28, 32:22-32. Exodus 1-3; 12-14, 20. Book of Amos.

Films: "The Chosen People", "The Last Revolt."

October 3: First hour exam (open book). Begin study of Christianity after the exam.

October 3-22. Christianity. Matthews, 289-333. In the Bible: Gospel of Mark entire; Matthew 26-28; Letter to the Galatians; Book of Revelation 13, 19-21.

Films: "Protestant Spirit," "Marjoe."

October 24-29. Mormonism. Handouts to be provided and several films viewed.

October 31. Second hour exam (first hour). Begin study of Islam.

October 31-November 14. Islam. Matthews 335-374. Selections from the Koran and other information distributed.

Films: "No God But God," "Inside Mecca."

November 19-December 5. Buddhism. Matthews 109-149. Other info distributed.

Films: "Footprints of the Buddha," "The Disappearing Buddha," "The Practices of Zen."

December 5: Term Paper due.

December 10-12. To be announced. Final exam questions distributed.