

CHOWAN UNIVERSITY
Religions of the World
REL 268 A / PHIL 268 A
School of Arts and Sciences
Department of Religion
Tuesdays and Thursdays – 11:00am – 12:15pm
3 Credit Hours
Spring 2016

He Who Knows One [Religion], Knows None – Max Müller

Professor: Dr. Paul R. Gilliam III (Trey), Assistant Professor of Religion
Office Hours (Robert Marks Hall 312A):
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays – 11am-12:00pm and 1:30pm-2:30pm
Tuesdays and Thursdays – 8:30am-10:30am
Phone Number and Email Address: 252-398-6582 / gillip@chowan.edu
Class Location: Robert Marks Hall 203

Attendance Policy: University policy does not allow for more than a 25% absentee rate (see the class attendance policy in the online 2015-2016 Chowan University Catalog, under “Academic Policies and Regulations”). This class meets 29 times this semester. Therefore, even with excused absences, you cannot miss more than 7.25 class sessions.

Tardies are not allowed. Once I call the roll, the classroom door will be closed. Once the roll is called and the door is closed, you are not allowed to enter the class. All students who have not arrived to class once the roll is called and the door closed are absent for the day. Come to class on time!

*** In order to be marked present for class, you must remain in the class from the beginning of class until the end of class. If you leave class early, you will be marked absent. ***

Course Description: An examination of the essential character of religion through the study of the teachings and practices of various significant religious traditions of the world.

This course is built on the presumption that the religions of the world are a fascinating area of academic inquiry for people of all faiths and none. Therefore, we will carry out our investigation of world religions in a manner appropriate to an academic approach to religion within a church-affiliated liberal arts university. That is, while we are free to discuss theological issues when they arise, our study of the religions of the world will be primarily descriptive in nature. Our goal is not to affirm or deny the claims that different religions have made through the centuries. Rather, our goal is to understand what those claims are and how various communities make sense of the world in which they live via their religious beliefs and practices.

Therefore, this course will facilitate two broad areas of learning for the industrious student: 1) an introduction to the academic study of religion and 2) an introduction to the foundational beliefs and practices of a broad sampling of religions from around the globe.

Textbook:

James W. Laine. *Meta-Religion: Religion and Power in World History* (Oakland, CA.: University of California Press, 2014). ISBN# 978-0-520-28137-0

Student Learning Outcomes:

Program Outcome	Student Learning Outcome	IDEA Objective	Assessment
	At the conclusion of the course, students will:		
Students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of religion as an academic endeavor.	Have a foundational understanding of the academic study of religion	Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, and theories	Exam #1
Students will demonstrate a mastery of the skills and knowledge in the fields of biblical studies, church history, and theology.	Have a sophisticated understanding of important persons, events, and dates related to the religions of the world.	Gaining factual knowledge	Exam #1 Exam #2 Book Review
Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate their ideas logically, coherently, concisely, and clearly, both orally and in writing.	Have the ability to express your ideas about the religions of the world orally via classroom discussions and in writing via the required book review.	Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing	Book Review Reflection Papers
Students will develop a plan for their professional goals through preparation for professional success or through education in graduate school, divinity school, or seminary.	Have the ability to integrate the material learned from the religions of the world with your own professional and/or future educational goals.	Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course	Exam #1 Exam #2 Book Review Reflection Papers

*** To meet the identified student learning outcomes of this course, the expectations are that this 3 credit-hour course, delivered over a 16-week term will approximate 3 hours/week classroom or

direct faculty instruction. In addition, the out-of-class student work will approximate a minimum of 6 hours each week.

Grading and Evaluation: Each component of the course is worth 25% of your final grade.

1 – Exam #1. The first exam is scheduled for Thursday, March 31.

2 – Exam #2. The final exam is scheduled for Monday, May 2 (8:00am).

3 – Reflection Papers. Each Tuesday you will turn in a 1 to 2 page reflection paper on the assigned reading for that week’s class sessions. For example on Tuesday, January 26 your reflection paper will be on something from the reading assignments for Tuesday, January 26 and Thursday, January 28 (Laine “Preface” and “Introduction”).

This is not a research paper. Rather you are to pinpoint a particular section of the reading that you found interesting. Next, you are to reflect on that area of interest. What struck you as interesting? Why? What did you learn? Are you troubled by something you read? The reflection papers are to be in Times New Roman font, 12 point, and double spaced. Do not start the paper half way down the first page! You may include a brief one line title at the top if you like and then your name. After this start writing! I want 1 to 2 pages full of written text, not empty spaces.

In order to promote an atmosphere of academic integrity and honesty, the following statement must be typed on the last page of each reflection paper: “I am 100% responsible for the work found in this paper. I am the author of this paper. No one else has written the paper for me.” After you have typed this statement you are then to sign below the statement using a pen with either black or blue ink. This statement does not count towards the 1 to 2 page length requirements.

Per the class calendar, there are 10 reflection papers due this semester. Each reflection paper will be assigned a numerical and a letter grade. The 10 grades will be averaged for one grade. It is the average of all the reflection papers that will count as 25% of the final class grade.

4 – Book Review. By Tuesday, March 1, you are to hand in a four to five page book review. A book review should be approximately 75% descriptive and 25% evaluative. You are to describe the basic contents of the book in order to inform someone who has never read the book. What is the book’s thesis? What are the main lines of argument? What is the target audience of the book? Next, give your scholarly opinion of the book. Did the author accomplish what s/he set out to do? Was the argument persuasive? Who will benefit from reading this book? You should read sample book reviews from academic journals to get a feel for how one is written. I will also bring in a couple of samples for your benefit.

You are to pick the book on a topic related to any of the religious traditions we will discuss this semester. However, you are to choose a book that is not centered on your own religious tradition, or the religious tradition you are most familiar with. In other words, I want this experience to significantly expand your understanding of a religion you know little about. You can find the religions under discussion on the course schedule. By Tuesday, February 2, you must make me aware of the book you plan to review. You can find your book via a search on the Chowan

University Library catalogue. Or you may choose to purchase a book. Or you may obtain a book to review via interlibrary loan. Whatever book you decide on, you must have my approval to use that book for your book review.

Weekly Class Format

During class, we will discuss the religious tradition scheduled for the day. You will want to pay attention and take good notes as the material covered in class will not necessarily be the same as that covered in the textbook. Rather, the textbook will complement the class lectures and discussions. Class time then will be focused on my lecture materials as well as the material from the textbook readings.

It is important that you come to class prepared. Your preparation will enhance the quality of the class. In other words, you shoulder a significant amount of responsibility towards a high quality classroom atmosphere. Your weekly reflection papers should help you focus and contribute to the classroom discussion.

If your final grade for the course is on the verge of the next letter grade up, I will evaluate your participation in class and your class participation will be the deciding factor in whether or not you earn the higher grade. For example, if you have a 92/B, a good level of class participation may bump you up to a 93/A. Or if your final grade is a 59/F, a good level of class participation may bump you up to a 60/D. Come to class prepared to make a contribution!

Grading

A = 93-100

B = 84-92

C = 73-83

D = 60-72

F = 59 and below

A (Outstanding) – Above and beyond the requirements of the assignment; outstanding effort, significant achievement, and personal improvement are clearly evident. Some measure of remarkable skill, creativity, or energy is also evident.

B (Above Average) – Fulfills all aspects of the assignment and goes a bit beyond minimum competence to demonstrate extra effort, extra achievement or extra improvement.

C (Average) – Fulfills all aspects of the assignment with obvious competence and grace. Assignments are completed exactly as assigned.

D (Below Average) – Below average either because some aspect of the assignment has not been fulfilled or because a preponderance of errors (more than one or two per page) interferes with clear communication. A “D” may also indicate failure to follow directions, failure to follow specific recommendations, or failure to demonstrate personal effort and improvement.

F (Not Acceptable) – Not acceptable, either because the student did not complete the assignment as directed, or because the level of performance is below an acceptable level for college work.

Policy for Assignments, Papers, Projects, and Exams: Book reviews and reflection papers turned in late will be penalized one letter grade for each week they are late. Be aware: even if the assignment is turned in one day late, you will still lose one letter grade. **No book reviews or reflection papers will be accepted after Tuesday, April 19.** Make-up exams will be considerably more difficult than the initial exam. The reason for this is because the student who makes up an exam has more time to prepare than the other students who took the exam at the scheduled time. Make-up exams will be given only if the class absence has been excused by the registrar's office (located in the Columns Building). **Make-up exams must be taken within one week of the initial exam date.** After a week has expired, I will not give a make-up exam. For example, if you miss the first exam on Thursday, March 31 you will not be allowed to take the make-up exam after Thursday, April 7. If the exam is not made up within a week, the grade will be a 0 (zero).

Additional Classroom Policies / Classroom Misconduct Policy:

- 1) There is to be no talking while I am talking. Likewise, there is to be no talking while other students are contributing to class discussions. If you do either or any combination of the two, on the first offense you will be marked absent for the day. On the second offence, you will lose three (3) points from your **final class** grade. On the third offence, you will lose six (6) points from your final grade. If the problem persists, you may be dropped from the class and receive the grade of "F".
- 2) All cell phones must be put away during class. They must be out of my sight and your sight. If you bring a cell phone with you to class, it must be in your backpack, pocketbook, etc... If you use your cell phone in class, on the first violation you will lose three (3) points from your **final** grade for the class. On each violation after the first, the amount of points deducted from your **final** grade will double. Thus, on the second violation you will lose six (6) points from your **final** grade. On the third violation, you will lose twelve (12) points from your final grade, and so on. If the problem persists, you may be dropped from the class and receive the grade of "F".
- 3) All backpacks and pocketbooks and other toting materials must be placed on the floor during class. Only notebooks, pen, pencil, and paper are allowed on the desktop and/or tabletop.
- 4) Computers are **not** allowed.
- 5) Respect for all persons is expected. This includes respect for the professor. If respect for one another as well as the professor is not being upheld, you may be asked to leave the classroom.

Additional Student Responsibilities: 1) Students are responsible for reading Chowan University emails on a daily basis. 2) Students are responsible for visiting the Blackboard course site for course news, changes, etc. on a daily basis. 3) Students can view mid-term grades and final grades on MyCU. 4) GradesFirst is a program used by Chowan University in a variety of ways, including reporting attendance and academic performance, to assist students in achieving their educational goals.

Academic Appeals (Grievance) Policy: Should a student have a grievance that is academic in nature, the student should consult the “academic appeals” section (found under “Academic Policies and Regulations”) of the 2015-2016 online Chowan University Catalog.

Accommodation Policy: It is the policy of Chowan University to accommodate students with disabilities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation, for example in arrangements for examination, note-taking, or seating, should inform the professor at the beginning of the course. To receive accommodations, students with disabilities must self-identify and complete the eligibility process with Dr. Modlin of the School of Education in Camp Hall 110; her phone extension is (398)-6570.

Academic Assistance: The Office of Academic Assistance serves to help students resolve issues affecting their academic success such as absences and illness. The office is located on the third floor of the Columns Building. The office is open Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Writing Center: Kerri Albertson is the director of the Writing Center. Her office is Marks 105. Her extension is (398)-6262. The center is located in Marks Hall 118. It is open from 9:00am – 9:00pm Monday – Thursday and 9:00am – 3:00pm on Friday.

Tutoring Center: Dr. David Ballew is the coordinator of the Tutoring Center. The center is located in Marks 118. Tutors are available from 7:00pm to 9:00pm. An appointment is not necessary.

Academic Integrity Policy: All students should be familiar with and observe the Academic Integrity Policy which can be found under the “Academic Policies and Regulations” section of the online 2015-2016 Chowan University Catalog. This policy forbids cheating, collusion, fabrication, and plagiarism. The penalty for academic cheating may range from a “0” on the assignment to dismissal from the university.

COURSE SCHEDULE

***** All reading assignments are to be completed BEFORE class *****

***** I reserve the right to change the course schedule as the needs of the class demand *****

Tuesday, January 12: Syllabus

Thursday, January 14: No Class – Professor out of town

Tuesday, January 19: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Introduction to the Academic Study of Religion

Thursday, January 21: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Introduction to the Academic Study of Religion

Tuesday, January 26: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** What is Religion?

READ: Laine “Preface” and “Introduction”

Reflection Paper #1 Due

Thursday, January 28: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** What is Religion?

READ: Laine “Preface” and “Introduction”

Tuesday, February 2: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Indigenous Religious Traditions

READ: Laine Chapter 1, “Alexander and Ashoka: Cosmopolitan Empires and Religious Policy from Egypt to India, 330-230 B.C.”

Reflection Paper #2 Due / * Book Selection for Book Review Due (type the name of the book and the author at the end of your reflection paper) *****

Thursday, February 4: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Indigenous Religious Traditions

READ: Laine Chapter 1, “Alexander and Ashoka: Cosmopolitan Empires and Religious Policy from Egypt to India, 330-230 B.C.”

Tuesday, February 9: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Judaism

READ: Laine Chapter 2, “Imperial Religion: China to Rome, 250 B.C-250 A.D.”

Reflection Paper #3 Due

Thursday, February 11: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Judaism

READ: Laine Chapter 2, “Imperial Religion: China to Rome, 250 B.C-250 A.D.”

Tuesday, February 16: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Judaism

READ: Laine Chapter 3, “The Debate over *Dharma*” Hindus and Buddhists Compete for Ideological Dominance in South Asia”

Reflection Paper #4 Due

Thursday, February 18: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Judaism

READ: Laine Chapter 3, “The Debate over *Dharma*” Hindus and Buddhists Compete for Ideological Dominance in South Asia”

Tuesday, February 23: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Christianity

READ: Laine Chapter 4, “Confessional Religion and Empire before the Rise of Islam”

Reflection Paper #5 Due

Thursday, February 25: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Christianity

READ: Laine Chapter 4, “Confessional Religion and Empire before the Rise of Islam”

Tuesday, March 1: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Christianity

READ: Laine Chapter 5, “The Rise of Islam and the Early Caliphate, 622-711

***** BOOK REVIEW DUE *****

Thursday, March 3: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Christianity

READ: Laine Chapter 5, “The Rise of Islam and the Early Caliphate, 622-711

Tuesday, March 8: No Class – Spring Break

Thursday, March 10: No Class – Spring Break

Tuesday, March 15: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Islam

READ: Laine Chapter 6, “Imperial Islam”

Reflection Paper #6 Due

Thursday, March 17: No Class – Passport to Fall

Tuesday, March 22: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Islam

READ: Laine Chapter 7, “The Great Islamic Empires of the Early Modern Era”

Reflection Paper #7 Due

Thursday, March 24: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Islam

READ: Laine Chapter 7, “The Great Islamic Empires of the Early Modern Era”

Tuesday, March 29: Loose Ends and Review for Exam #1

Thursday, March 31: **Exam #1**

Tuesday, April 5: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Hinduism

READ: Laine Chapter 8, “Putting Religion in Its Place: Reformers, Kings, and Philosophers Challenge the Church”

Reflection Paper #8 Due

Thursday, April 7: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Hinduism

READ: Laine Chapter 8, “Putting Religion in Its Place, I: Reformers, Kings, and Philosophers Challenge the Church”

Tuesday, April 12: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Buddhism

READ: Laine Chapter 9, “Putting Religion in Its Place, II: Revolution and Religious Freedom”

Reflection Paper #9 Due

Thursday, April 14: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Buddhism

READ: Laine Chapter 9, “Putting Religion in Its Place, II: Revolution and Religious Freedom”

Tuesday, April 19: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Chinese and Korean Religions

READ: Laine Chapter 10, “The Contemporary Era: The Worldwide Regime of Meta-Religion”

Reflection Paper #10 Due

*** LAST DAY TO TURN IN LATE WORK ***

Thursday, April 21: **CLASS DISCUSSION:** Chinese and Korean Religions

READ: Laine Chapter 10, “The Contemporary Era: The Worldwide Regime of Meta-Religion”

Tuesday, April 26: Loose Ends and Review for Final Exam

READ: Laine, “Conclusion”

Thursday, April 28: Follow Monday, Wednesday, Friday Class Schedule

Friday, April 29: Reading Day

Monday, May 2: **FINAL EXAM** at 8:00am