

Draft Syllabus

Course Title: Comparative Religions

Semester III

Code: UACR301

Lectures: 60

Credits: 02

Marks: 100

The objectives of the paper on study of major world Religions are:

- a. To arrive at an informed understanding of the diversity and complexity of World Religions
- b. To develop religious sensitivity necessary to understand the contemporary world
- c. Through this understanding to lay the foundations for inter-faith dialogue, necessary for peace and harmony in the society.

Unit- 1

Zoroastrianism (15 lectures)

Beginnings of the Prophetic and monotheistic tradition. Foundation, rise and spread with reference to geography and cultural milieu. Fundamental belief system—Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu in opposition, Spiritual and Material World, Man, Evil, Eschatology. Practices—Ritual purity, Prayer, Worship, Rituals, Rites of Passage, Unique disposal of the dead and Ecology. Festivals and their significance. Calendar. Canon. Zoroastrianism in confluence and divergence with other World Religions.

Unit- 2 (15 lectures)

Judaism

The Abrahamic tradition. Foundation, rise and spread with reference to geography and cultural milieu. Significance of the Covenants with Abraham and Moses. Fundamental belief system-- God, Man, Creation, Evil, Eschatology. Practices--Prayer, Worship, Rituals, Rites of Passage, Observance of the Sabbath and Kosher. Festivals and their significance. Calendar. Canon, Judaism in confluence and divergence with other World Religions.

Unit- 3 (15 lectures)

Christianity

Continuing the Abrahamic tradition—the new covenant. Foundation, rise and spread with reference to geography and cultural milieu. Life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the apostolic tradition. The development of Christian Theology – The concepts of Trinity, Original Sin, Crucifixion and Redemption. Evil, Eschatology. Practices--Prayer, Worship, Rituals, Sacraments, Festivals and their significance. Calendar. Canon, Christianity in confluence and divergence with other World Religions.

Unit- 4 (15 lectures)

Islam

The place of Abraham in Islam. Socio-political conditions in Pre-Islamic Arabia and the age of jahiliyya. Prophethood and the continuing tradition with other Abrahamic faiths. . The life of the Prophet. Foundation, rise and spread with reference to geography and cultural milieu. Fundamental belief system—Tauhid, Rasul, Kutub, Qiyamat. Practices—the five pillars of Islam, transactions: nikah, talaq, virasat, Mystical tradition-Sufism. Festivals and their significance. The two Jihads. Calendar. Canon. Islam in confluence and divergence with other World Religions.

References and reading list

- Breuilly, Elizabeth, Joan O'Brien and Martin Palmer. *Religions of the World: The Illustrated Guide to Origins, Beliefs, Traditions & Festivals*. Checkmark Books. 2005
- Burke, T. Patrick. *The Major Religions*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers. 1996
- Eastman Roger. *The Ways of Religion*. Oxford 1993
- Hinnells, John Red. *A New Dictionary of Religions*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers. 1997
- Hinnells, John Red. *A New Handbook of Living Religions*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers. 1997
- Hopfe, Lewis M. *Religions of the World*. (6th Ed). New York: Macmillan College Publishing. 1994
- Markham, Ian S (ed.). *A World Religions Reader*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers. 1996
- Masih, Y. *A Comparative Study of Religions*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. 2010
- Matthews, Warren. *World Religions*. St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Company. 1991
- Muhyaddin, M. A. *A Comparative Study of the Religions of Today*. Vantage Press. 1984.
- Paden E., William. *Religious Worlds: The Comparative Study of Religion*. Beacon Press. 1994
- Radhakrishnan, S. *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1990
- Schade, Johannes P. (ch. ed). *Encyclopedia of World Religions*. Concord Publishing. 2006
- Smith, Huston. *Forgotten Truth: The Common Vision of the World's Religions*. Harper-One. 2009
- Smith, Huston. *The World's Religions* (ed. 2) HarperCollins. 2009
- Tiwari, K.N. *Comparative Religion*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. 1983

Zaehner, R.C.(ed.) *The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. 1959

A Lion Handbook- The World Religions- Lion Publishing, 1992 .

Course Title: Comparative Religions
Semester IV
Code: UACR401
Lectures: 60

Credits: 03
Marks: 100

The objectives of the paper on study of major world Religions are:

- a. To arrive at an informed understanding of the diversity and complexity of World Religions
- b. To develop religious sensitivity necessary to understand the contemporary world
- c. Through this understanding to lay the foundations for inter-faith dialogue, necessary for peace and harmony in the society.

Unit- 1

Hinduism

Debates on constructing the category “Hinduism”, Pre-Vedic religions, origin and antiquity of the Vedas; Vedic Texts (Shruti and Smriti), an introduction to later Vedic scriptures (Brahmanas and Aranyakas). , The emergence and development of the Upanishads, fundamental concepts of Classical Hinduism: Brahman-atman, karma, moksha, and samsara; Epic literature: Mahabharata and Ramayana; the place of the Bhagwad Gita, the early and late Puranas. Classical Hindu Society; the Dharma Shastras-corpus, classification and content; varna-ashrama dharma and the four goals of life (purusharthas); the three paths to salvation. Philosophical worldviews (darshanas) Bhakti Tradition. Religious Expressions (Puja, Vrata, Tirtha). Festivals and their significance. Calendar. Hinduism in confluence and divergence with other World Religions.

Unit- 2

Buddhism

Shramana tradition/ Nastik Darshana Genesis of Early Buddhism: Socio-historical roots, cultural milieu of the rise of early Buddhism and ideological setting; Buddhism as a protest movement? Spread of Buddhism and causes for its decline in India. 20th century. Fundamental Buddhist Thoughts: The Four Noble Truths; The Eight Fold Path (Astamârga), Dependent Origination; philosophy of Non-self (anattâ/anâtman). Concept of nirvâna; Karma/kamma and rebirth and its divergence with the Jaina and Brahmanical notions of karma. Festivals and their significance. Canon. Buddhism in confluence and divergence with other World Religions.

Unit- 3

Jainism

Shramanna tradition/ Nastik Darshana. Genesis of Jainism: Socio-historical roots, cultural milieu of the rise of early Jainism and ideological setting; Jainism as a protest movement? The world, Karma and rebirth, the soul. The triratnas, mahavrattas and anuvrattas. Special place of ahimsa. Fast, worship, pilgrimage. Festivals and their significance. Canon. Jainism in confluence and divergence with other World Religions

Unit 4

Sikhism

Sikhism as a syncretic religion. Socio cultural roots. Foundation and spread. Nanak and the Guru tradition. The practice. Simran, Seva, The formation of the Khalsa, Sangat, Langar Dasvandh. 5 Ks, concept of haumia, liberation, three core values: naam japna, kirt karna, wand chakkna. The ascetic path. Festivals and their significance. Canon. Sikhism in confluence and divergence with other World Religions

References and reading list

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Eastman Roger. *The Ways of Religion*. Oxford 1993

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Hopfe, Lewis M. *Religions of the World*. (6th Ed). New York: Macmillan College Publishing. 1994

Markham, Ian S (ed.). *A World Religions Reader*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers. 1996

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