

LISGAR COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE



DEPARTMENT: Canadian and World Studies
COURSE NAME: World Religions and Belief Traditions:
Perspectives, Issues, and Challenges
COURSE CODE: HRT3M

Course Description/Overview

In HRT3M, we explore the different approaches taken to studying religions and belief traditions, their historical context, their beliefs, their sacred texts and oral teachings, and their rituals. This course provides students with opportunities to examine ways in which religions and belief traditions meet various human needs, and to learn about the relationship between belief and action. Students further discover how different perspectives manifested by varying spiritual outlooks are brought to bear in contemporary society and embodied in popular culture, and what challenges, issues, and opportunities arise as a result.

What is the role of religion and belief traditions in contemporary society? What is the significance and function of sacred places, rites, writings, and teachings in diverse world religions and belief traditions? What are the connections between religion and belief traditions and social, ethical, and philosophical issues, as well as personal psychological needs and concerns? How do various religions and belief traditions conceptualize the journey of life as a spiritual journey and a quest for meaning? How do concepts of time and place influence different religions and belief traditions? What is your own sense of the religious in relation to your own personal experience and the ideas and viewpoints to which you are exposed throughout the course?

These are just some of the questions in which HRT3M at Lisgar will engage you and your critical and creative thinking skills as you explore the world's religions and belief traditions - and the spiritual (and other) impulses that drive them.

General Topics

- Introduction: Thematic Exploration and Approaches to Religious Studies
- The Religious Impulse Through Time
- Comparative Studies: historical context, beliefs, sacred texts and oral teachings, rituals, and contemporary issues
- Contemporary Issues
- Religion and Belief Traditions in Popular Culture
- Summative Tasks: World Religions and Belief Traditions Roundtable Conference (Preparation and Participation)

Formative (70%)

Class Engagement, Independent Work, and Project-Based Learning

Over the course of the year, students will, in addition to engaging in class activities and other assigned independent work, complete several creative, formative projects of their own choosing and design. These projects will take into account as wide a range of learning styles as possible, including verbal/auditory, rhythmic, visual/artistic, problem-solving, bodily/kinesthetic, inter/intrapersonal, technological, and sensual/spiritual. The goal of each project is to select a topic of personal interest and appeal, think critically and creatively about the knowledge content connected to (and significance of) the topic through properly-sourced research and analysis of the subject matter, and communicate their learning in a creative and interesting way to the class. Students will have extended periods of time to complete these projects in and out of class, conference with the teacher as needed, and present their learning to the class.

Summatives (30%)

The course's culminating, summative tasks include the preparation of a proposal for (and participation in) a World Religions and Belief Traditions Roundtable Conference on the development (or modification) of a religion/belief tradition/philosophy that reflects a consensus of our class' individual and collective knowledge and understanding of the work we have done throughout the course, as well as students' own, individual "take" on religion/belief traditions/philosophy moving forward.

Learning and Teaching Strategies

Students are encouraged to develop their skills and construct their own meaningful knowledge and understanding of world religions and belief traditions as much as possible through authentic, 'real life' learning experiences. Our goal is to develop and enhance our critical thinking, creative, and imaginative skills and to practice the communication of our learning through a variety of media – all in a way as much as possible that suits the differentiated learning needs, IEPs, interests, dreams, and motivations of the individual student. Students are encouraged to explore the course content and demonstrate their learning through engagement in and completion of teacher-directed class activities and independent tasks; through the planning, development, production, and presentation of differentiated creative products, and preparation for and participation in the course's culminating summative tasks.

Assessment and Evaluation

Evaluations of student work are all based on the extent to which they have achieved a demonstration of their learning, linked to the Ministry of Education's curriculum expectations. Term evaluation will be balanced equally between the following four categories: Knowledge/Understanding; Thinking/Inquiry/Problem Solving; Communication; and Application. See below for category explanations and sample descriptions, as well as for curriculum connections.

Learning Objectives

Overall Curriculum Expectations - By the end of this course, students will:

Strand A: Research and Inquiry Skills

- A1. Exploring:** explore topics related to world religions and belief traditions, and formulate questions to guide their research;
- A2. Investigating:** create research plans, and locate and select information relevant to their chosen topics, using appropriate social science research and inquiry methods;
- A3. Processing Information:** assess, record, analyse, and synthesize information gathered through research and inquiry;
- A4. Communicating and Reflecting:** communicate the results of their research and inquiry clearly and effectively, and reflect on and evaluate their research, inquiry, and communication skills.

Strand B: Approaches to the Study of the Sacred

- B1. Why Study World Religions and Belief Traditions?:** demonstrate an understanding of various reasons for the study of world religions and belief traditions;
- B2. Terms and Concepts in the Study of the Sacred:** demonstrate an understanding of terms and concepts related to the study of world religions and belief traditions;
- B3. Approaches:** demonstrate an understanding and assess the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches to the study of world religions and belief traditions.

Strand C: Religious and Spiritual Impulse

- C1. Functions of Human Belief Traditions:** explain some of the ways people use religions and belief traditions to meet human needs;
- C2. The Search for Meaning:** analyse ways in which various religions and belief traditions conceptualize the journey of life as a spiritual journey and quest for meaning.

Strand D: Sacred Teachings and Principles

D1. Tenets, Practices, and Teachings: outline the central tenets, practices, and teachings of various religions and belief traditions;

D2. Sacred Writings and Oral Teachings: analyse the role of sacred writings and oral teachings in various religions and belief traditions;

D3. Prescribed Roles and Influential Figures: analyse how individuals with specific roles have influenced the development of various religions and belief traditions.

Strand E: Rites and Observance

E1. Daily Living as Sacred Reality: demonstrate an understanding of the type of daily observances associated with various religions and belief traditions and of the role of these observances in the lives of adherents;

E2. Rites and Rituals: demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which rituals and rites reflect the understandings and principles of various religions and belief traditions.

Strand F: Social and Cultural Contexts

F1. Cultural Contexts: identify and analyse ways in which various religions and belief traditions are embodied in cultural forms;

F2. Social Contexts: analyse the interaction between society and various religions and belief traditions;

F3. Social Challenges: demonstrate an understanding of the challenges that adherents of various religions and belief systems experience in society;

F4. Religion, Civil Society, and Popular Culture: describe and analyse ways in which various religions and belief traditions are interpreted and adapted within civil society and popular culture.

The full curriculum document is available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/ssciences9to122013.pdf>

Category explanations and sample descriptions (see next page)

