



Nipawin Bible College
Course: MI257 – World Religions
Instructor: Dr. Peter John Barber
Fall 2018
2 Credit Hours
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Today there are dozens of religions around the globe, hundreds if we count all of the individual sects of each religion. In fact, personal opinions and deeply held beliefs regarding the 'big questions' of life are so plentiful and diverse that we could modify an adage: 'Religions are like belly-buttons; everybody's got one!' In actuality, however, the LORD teaches us in His Word, the Bible, that there are really only two religions: God's, and not God's. Put another way, everyone answers life's questions based upon either God's Word, or man's word. These two approaches are the only options.

In this course, students will acquire a grasp of the essential beliefs of all major religions of the world, and consider them through the lens of God's Holy Word. Biblically-based approaches for evangelizing adherents of these religions will be explored. Comparing Biblical Christianity with non-Biblical or partly-Biblical religions is a very fruitful exercise for clarifying the distinctives of Christianity. In the process, students will grow in their understanding of the truly unique nature of Biblical Christianity as the only true religion. We people of every tribe of humanity are lost without the truth revealed to us in the Bible: "O LORD, my strength and my stronghold, my refuge in the day of trouble, to you shall the nations come from the ends of the earth and say: 'Our fathers have inherited nothing but lies, worthless things in which there is no profit. Can man make for himself gods? Such are not gods!'" (Jeremiah 16:19-20).

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

The Holy Bible (A literal translation of your choosing).

Carden, Paul, ed. 2010. *Christianity, Cults & Religions: Side-by-Side Comparison Chart of 20 Groups*. 7th edition. Peabody, Mass.: Rose Publishing. **7 pages.**

Halverson, Dean C., ed. 1996. *The Compact Guide to World Religions*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House. **267 pages:**

Read the entire book and write a three (3) page critique.

Handouts (Required Reading): **84 pages:**

- "The Bible's Scientific Authority" (Morris, *Biblical Basis*, 19-49)

- “The Knowledge of God Amongst the Early Pagans” (Cooper, *After the Flood*, 15-35)
- “God, the Nations, and Babel” (Morris, *Genesis Record*, 245-79)

THE BIG QUESTION

How would you explain to a perishing family-member, friend or stranger that Biblical Christianity is the only true religion, all others are lies, and Jesus is the only way to be saved from sin and death?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- 1) Learn, and be able to describe, what distinguishes Biblical Christianity from all other religions.
- 2) Discover, and be able to identify, the common errors of Man’s religions.
- 3) Explore and recount the centrality of the evolutionary worldview in non-Biblical religions right from their origins.
- 4) Consider and articulate various Biblically-based evangelistic approaches for reaching adherents of world religions with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Participation – 10%

- In addition to general attentiveness and note-taking, students are expected to participate in class by reading Scripture and other religious texts aloud in turn and contributing to class discussions.
- Grading: /10. Students begin with full participation marks, and *may* lose marks only through conspicuous and repeated lack of participation.

Bi-Weekly Scripture Memorization – 20%

- Every two weeks, students will write out Scripture that they have committed to memory:
 - Genesis 11:4, Revelation 17:5 (Friday, October 19th)
 - Jeremiah 16:19-20 (Thursday, November 1st)
 - Romans 1:22-23, 25 (Friday, November 16th)
 - 1 Corinthians 10:20-21 (Friday, November 30th)
 - 2 Corinthians 11:2-3 (Friday, December 14th)
- Grading: /4 per Scripture portion.

Due: 5 Scriptures total, written and submitted at the beginning of class

Book Critique – 15%

- Read *The Compact Guide to World Religions* by Halverson (editor) in its entirety. I recommend underlining and/or highlighting the text as you read, and making notes as desired in the margins. This practice aids in focussing on the text and imbibing its message. Also, your notes will help in writing your critique. Using the guidelines on page 61 of the *Student Handbook*, you will write a three-page (3) critique of the book.
- Grading: /15

Book Critique Due: Wednesday, November 14th at 5:00 pm

Comparative Religion Research Paper – 30%

- Write a seven-page (7) paper comparing one major religion with Biblical Christianity. Please consult 6-8 sources, and include them in your bibliography. Among other things, the paper should compare each religion's views of origins, salvation (however this is conceived), and last days (consummation), as well as other critical events and concepts between. A goal of the paper is to observe how the Biblical LORD Jesus' distinctive and unique activity – from the beginning of the universe until its end – defies the corresponding claims of the opposing world religion. The paper should also sketch out a strategy for evangelizing an adherent of your chosen world religion. See the *Student Handbook* ('Writing a Research Paper,' p. 60) for further guidelines.
- Grading: /20

Comparative Religion Paper Due: Wednesday, December 5th at 5:00 pm

Final Exam – 25%

- **Wednesday, December 19th, 11:20 am**

All written assignments are to be typed in accordance with the NBC Study Guide for papers. Assignments will be graded on the basis of content, clarity, grammar, and spelling. Assignments will be due **no later than 5:00 pm** on the day that they are assigned.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

- Refer to the NBC Handbook [Relevant Academic Year]

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY:

- Refer to the NBC Handbook [Relevant Academic Year]

Reading: 358 pages

Writing: 10 pages

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY ON WORLD RELIGIONS

- Carlson, Ron and Ed Decker. 1994. *Fast Facts on False Teachings*. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House.
- Cooper, Bill. 1995. *After the Flood: The Early Post-Flood History of Europe*. Chichester, Ewng.: New Wine Press.
- Etinger, Judah. 2003. *Foolish Faith: What the 21st Century Says About God*. Green Forest, Ark.: Master Books.
- Hodge, Bodie and Roger Patterson, eds. 2015. *World Religions and Cults*. 3 volumes. Green Forest, Ark.: Master Books.
- Morris, Henry. 2000. *The Long War Against God: The History and Impact of the Creation/Evolution Conflict*. Green Forest, Ark.: Master Books.
- Richardson, Don. 2006. *Eternity in Their Hearts: Startling Evidence of Belief in the One True God in Hundreds of Cultures Throughout the World*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House.