

NVCC COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY

REL 100 - INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF RELIGION (3 CR.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Explores various religious perspectives and ways of thinking about religious themes and religious experience. Lecture 3 hours per week.

GENERAL COURSE PURPOSE

To introduce the student to the general terminology, the recurring themes, and issues common to the religious outlook. To examine basic ideas common to all religions. To look carefully at the religious experience itself from a variety of perspectives.

ENTRY LEVEL REQUIREMENTS

None

COURSE OBJECTIVES

During the course the student will

- Define and discuss relevant religious terminology, such as "religion," "mystery," "the holy," "theism," "atheism," "pantheism," "monotheism," "ultimate reality," "myth," "symbol," "revealed truth," "ritual," etc.
- Explore basic themes of religion, such as the nature of the holy, the sacred and the profane, the nature of religious experience, the place of evil in the world, etc.
- Examine the use of religious language.
- Explore questions about religion raised from within religious commitments, such as the adequacy of religious symbolism, or the role of religious institutions in the religious life, etc.
- Explore questions about religion raised from those outside religious affiliations, such as the role of class in religious oppression, the social functions of religious institutions, the Freudian notion that belief in God is the result of infantile wish-fulfillment, and other similar criticisms.

MAJOR ELEMENTS OF CONTENT

Critical attention will be given to the following problems.

- What is the nature of ultimate reality? Is there more than we can see? What is the nature of our ultimate concern?
- What is the nature of man, as seen from the religious vision of man as created by something other than himself?
- What is the nature of our obligations incurred within a religious context? How must we behave toward the rest of humankind, and the rest of the environment which we inhabit?
- What does religion say about the difficult issues of human life - death, suffering, guilt, chance, evil?
- What role does myth, symbol, and ritual play in human life?
- What is the role of reason in religion?

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