As a phenomenon in the history of the human race, religion is inescapable: most people who have ever lived, and most people on the earth today, construe reality in terms one would describe as religious. If to be educated is to understand and analyze matters basic to human life, then the educated person must be religiously literate, that is, must be familiar with the diverse world views, beliefs, and literatures of the world's great religions. The purpose of this course is to "intro-duce"—literally to lead us into—the disciplined academic study of religion. We will begin by discussing the nature of religion, various attempts to define it, and the modes of study applied to it, and then move on to encounters with the beliefs and practices of particular world religions, with special reference to their holy writings. As in any intellectual undertaking, one hopes that the outcome will not merely be a command of data, but an experience of self-discovery. I hope you will seize this opportunity to think seriously and critically about your own religious orientation.

Expected Learning Outcomes
At the conclusion of this course, the student should be equipped to discuss, compare, and contrast the religious beliefs and practices of two eastern and three western religious traditions, and demonstrate familiarity with their historical development and some of their sacred texts.

Course Requirements
Three short-essay examinations, legibly handwritten in blue examination books (to be supplied by the student, obtainable at the bookstore) will each account for 33.333% of the course grade. In the case of borderline grades, I will be guided by my own perception of the quality of your participation in the class.

Required Texts
Additional primary source readings supplied as handouts or on the web.

Attendance Policy
The attendance policy rests on the two premises (1) that students are adults, and (2) that they have freely chosen the responsibilities of university life. Accordingly, while I call roll to determine who is present, I do not compute a formal attendance figure into the course grade. You are expected to arrive at class for each meeting, on time and prepared; persistent tardiness will severely prejudice the instructor in matters of
evaluation. Those who miss class time will almost certainly perform worse on examinations than those who participate regularly. Students should also bear in mind the following:

(1) This course is heavily dependent on lecture/discussion content, and any word or idea expressed in a lecture, or arising in discussion, may appear on an examination.
(2) Quality of class participation, which determines borderline grades, depends directly on your presence in the classroom.

Grading Scale and Policy
Grades will be assigned on the following scale: 100-89.5 = A; 89.4-86.5 = B+; 86.4-79.5 = B; 79.4-76.5 = C+; 76.4-69.5 = C; 69.4-66.5 = D+; 66.4-59.5 = D; < 59.5 = F. N.B.: Grades are intended to reflect the quality of your command of course material; they are not awarded on the basis of effort, sincerity, or personal need.

Beeping Devices
Cellular telephones, pagers, iPods, and other annoying electronic contraptions shall be turned off and put away prior to class sessions. Unless you are a brain surgeon whose patient is lingering on death's door, nothing in the universe is important enough to warrant interrupting our class. A breach of this rule constitutes disruptive classroom behavior, and the offender shall be subject to removal from the classroom (see Undergraduate Bulletin, pp.44-45).

Academic Dishonesty
Please be aware of the university policy on cheating and plagiarism as contained in the University Bulletin, pp. 45-47. Plagiarism—representing the words or ideas of others as your own—is a very serious offense, as is cheating in any manner on an examination. I will penalize any student who cheats or plagiarizes with penalties ranging from a failing grade on the assignment to a failing grade for the course. A notation will be made on the academic record, and a second offense at any time will subject the student to permanent dismissal from the university.

Course Itinerary
(subject to change)

1. Introduction; Syllabus Overview

Reading: Eastman 1-11

3. Hinduism, Jainism
Reading: Eastman 13-74 (selections from S. Radhakrishnan, Rig Veda, Upanishads, Bhagavad-Gita, M. Gandhi).

TEST # 1 : Thinking About Religion, Hinduism
4. Buddhism (including Zen)
Reading: Eastman 77-165 (The Roar of Awakening; H. Zimmer, "Buddahood;"
selections from Buddhist Scriptures; selections from Dhammapada; Mahayana and the
Ideal of the Bodhissattva; Dalai Lama; D.T. Suzuki, "The Essence of Zen;" S. Suzuki,
"Be Like a Frog.")
5. Judaism
Reading: Eastman 287-335 (N. de Lange, "What is Judaism?" L. Finkelstein, "Nothing Is
Ordinary;" selections from the Holy Scriptures; A. Steinsaltz, "The Essential Talmud;" E.
Fackenheim, "Holocaust.")

TEST # 2 : Buddhism, Judaism

6. Christianity
The Gospel of Thomas; Augustine, selections from Confessions; S. Kierkegaard, "The
Anguish of Being a Christian.")
7. Islam
Reading: Eastman 397-445 (J. Esposito, "Muhammad, Prophet of God;" selections from
the Qur'an; F. Rahman, "The Qur'anic Teaching;" I. al-Faruqi, "Moments of the Religious
Life;" S. H. Nasr, "Male and Female in Islamic Perspective.")

Dec. 9: Last Class Day.
TEST # 3 (FINAL): Christianity, Islam FINAL EXAMINATION will be given
on Thursday, December 16 from 9:00-11:00. No early or make-up exams will be
given except as provided in university regulations.