

REINHARDT UNIVERSITY

RELIGION 105: MORAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE 21st CENTURY

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Course Description: Welcome! This on-line course examines the different components that create and develop our responsibility, both personal and social. This sense of responsibility emerges in dialogue with God, ourselves, our neighbors, and the environment. We then can act in loving and just ways to respond to and transform the twenty-first century world.

Yet, rather than merely talk about responsibility in general, I want to focus on responsibility in two ways. On the one hand, I will try to help you understand other local religious communities. We need to always remember that it is actual people who seek to be responsible. I think you will be amazed at the religious diversity in Georgia. On the other hand, I will initiate discussion about five different issues. My working sub-title for this course is as follows: "Georgia's Religious Communities and Sex, Sweat, Shrubs, Strangers, and Sickness." A little too cute I admit. But, these words, of course, are code words for all sorts of moral issues that we face as Americans. When you finish this course, I hope you have gained some further understanding about your own ideas of responsibility as well as those who are your religious neighbors as it pertains to these issues.

Learning Outcomes: Reinhardt College's courses do not stand alone. Each course is linked to various learning outcomes. In order to help students understand the significance of what occurs in the class.

General Education Learning Outcomes: The General Education Learning Outcomes are expected of every student who graduates from Reinhardt College. In this class, the following learning outcomes are emphasized and required:

- A. Effective communication of ideas through writing, demonstrated through reading responses, papers, and essays on tests. (CLO1; A&HO1)
- B. Effective communication of ideas through speech, demonstrated through oral analysis and class discussion. (CLO1; A&HO1)
- C. Integrative, critical thinking and inquiry-based learning using evidence, logic, reasoning, demonstrated in reading responses, papers, and tests. (CLO2; A&HO2)
- D. Knowledge of various research methodologies and information and technological literacy, demonstrated through research for papers. (CLO3; A&HO3)
- E. Independent thought and imagination, demonstrated through reading responses, essays on tests, papers, oral analysis, and class discussion. (CLO4; A&HO4)
- F. Knowledge of the traditions of Western civilization, demonstrated through an understanding of literary texts and their historical background in reading responses, papers, tests, oral analysis, and class discussion. (CLO5; A&HO5)
- G. Knowledge of the diversity of societies and cultures and the ability to view oneself and others from cultural and historical perspectives other than one's own, demonstrated through

an understanding of literary texts and their cultural and historical background in reading responses, papers, tests, oral analysis, and class discussion. (CLO6; A&H06)

H. Integrity and ethical responsibility, demonstrated in the attribution and citation of source material.(CLO7; A&H07)

I. Awareness of the role of emotions and spirituality in human life, demonstrated in the understanding of the human condition with its aspirations as presented in works of literature through reading responses, papers, tests, oral analysis, and class discussion. (CLO8; A&HO)

J. Ability to work collaboratively with others to achieve a common goal, demonstrated in group work devoted to analyzing works of literature and articulating that analysis for the rest of the class. (CLO9; A&HO9)

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR COURSE

1. Students will describe important features of the contemporary Georgia, American and global context. (GELO G)
2. Students will understand various features of responsibility as shaped by various moral and religious codes and worldviews. Students will be familiar with themes of moral motivation, moral reasoning, moral failure, moral change, moral exemplars, and moral ends. (GELO F,G, I)
3. Students will discuss practical ways to act and be responsible. (GELO E,H,I, J)
4. Students will demonstrate “the effective expression of ideas in writing, orally, and through various media.” (GELO A,B,C,D,J)

Requirements

- 1. Read Posted Lectures.** I have written material for this course in order to make it relevant to our lives in Georgia. Thus, besides learning in general about different religions, I want you to learn about these religious communities in Georgia. As much as possible, I have sought to include specific statements and material from these communities and their members.
- 2. On-line Participation.** Forums. A significant portion of your course grade depends upon your active and timely participation in on-line exchanges of ideas, personal observations, and questions among all the students and the instructor. As seen on the weekly schedule of course events, there are regular activities requiring all students to post responses, engage in virtual classroom exchanges and complete writing assignments. Please be attentive to these assignments and plan on meeting the following expectations:
 - You are required to visit the course site several times (4-5 times) a week. This will ensure your timely response to Forum (discussion board) topics and engagement in small group work as assigned.
 - Each Weekly Unit begins on Monday mornings. All on-line work for the week must be posted by midnight on Sunday evenings. You are responsible for completing all Forum

work within the assigned week. There is no make-up work to replace incomplete or missed Forums.

- All INITIAL comments to the weekly Forum thread MUST be posted by Wednesday evening. This will give everyone time to read and respond to posted comments by the weekly deadline.

2. **Self- Quizzes.** Weekly self-testing quizzes must be submitted by the Sunday midnight deadline.

3. **Exams.** There will be a **mid-term** and a **final exam**. I expect that you will be able to show familiarity with course content as well as applying these ideas and your thoughts to different situations.

Forums (Threaded Discussions)

Forums are the on-line equivalents of traditional classroom discussions. As you may already know, Forums are set up to allow the exchange of observations, questions, and ideas whenever a student can log on to participate. Sometimes these are referred to as bulletin boards. Participation in this activity, as scheduled, is required of all students. I will be monitoring your discussions and will be noting the number of responses and the quality of the responses to each discussion. All postings to the forums are considered formal writing and should follow the rules of good grammar and spelling. As mentioned above, all initial comments to a thread must be posted no later than Wednesday evening.

The following guidelines will apply to Forums. If we agree to the same ground rules as a class, we might feel freer to express our ideas without worry of ridicule or embarrassment. It is hoped that by the end of the class you will be thinking about issues in a very different way—one that might make you more confident of your ability to express your thoughts more freely.

In both exchanges, we, the class, agree:

- that all posting to the Forums should be formal short essays reflecting articulate thoughts and critical thinking;
- to proof-read and spell check our contributions before posting to the Forum.
- to participate and stay on track with the topic.
- to politely challenge the ideas of others without becoming personal; it is only by engaging differences of opinions that we develop our ideas.
- to please avoid side conversations; these are group endeavors.
- to respect one another's ideas.
- to avoid slang and non-academic styles of expression.

- that our discussions need to be built on our interpretation of historical evidence, which means that we must be knowledgeable of that evidence; be able to support our opinions with facts.

In the Forums you are required to make an initial comment and 2-4 additional comments to your classmate's comments. Once again, a reminder that your initial comment must be made no later than Wednesday midnight of each week that forum is scheduled. Remember, your participation grade is made up not only of the number of times you participate in discussions, but also by the quality of your responses.

How Much Time Should I Spend on This Course?

A good rule of thumb in a collegiate setting is to spend one to two hours outside of class for every hour spent in class. Our course is the equivalent of a traditional class that would meet five hours each week for half a semester. Therefore you should anticipate spending five to ten hours PLUS the equivalent of five classroom hours each week (a total of ten to fifteen hours) engaged with the on-line course materials, reading assignments, completing learning exercises, writing papers and studying for tests.

The Need for Academic Honesty

Education thrives in an atmosphere of honesty and trust. Students who do not do their own work degrade education, demonstrate a lack of respect for themselves and the college, and rob themselves of the opportunity to improve their own thinking and writing. In this course, all work must be your own. Cheating will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, the use of someone else's ideas or words without acknowledging them as such, is a serious academic offense. Any suspected cases of academic misconduct will be dealt with strictly, normally resulting in a failing grade in the course. The Academic Catalog of Reinhardt College details what constitutes academic dishonesty. If you are ever uncertain about whether or not your actions are academically honest, please consult your instructor, who will be glad to advise you.

Evaluation of Learning Outcomes and Grade Computation

Grading is based upon a 1000 point scale. The crucial grade is the accumulation of points throughout the semester. If you want to determine where you stand, each exercise's letter grade as well as the final letter grade is determined according to the following criteria: 90+=A; 89-80=B; 79-70=C; 69-60=D; 59-=F. To determine any particular grade you have to use your math skills! For example, if you get 80 out of 100 points for the critical book review, then convert the grade to a fraction 80/100 and then divide 80 by 100. Remember your simple math equations

280 Formal Forum Submissions (each forum of the 7 forums is worth 40 points)

280 Quiz (each of the 7 quizzes is worth 40 points)

220 Mid-Term Exam

220 Final Exam

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK ONE

Begin January 8th. All material must be finished by midnight Sunday, January 14th

Lesson One: Who Are We At the Crossroads of Ga. 140 and Ga. 108

READING ASSIGNMENTS

- a) Read Lectures posted on site

LEARNING ASSIGNMENT

- a) Discussion: Forum submissions
- b) Forum: Identity Essay
- c) Multiple-choice quiz

WEEK TWO

Begin January 14th. All material must be finished by midnight Sunday, January 21st.

Lesson Two: Responsible Individuals

READING ASSIGNMENTS

- a) Read Lectures posted on site

LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS

- a) Discussion: Forum submissions
- b) Forum: Themes Essay
- c) Multiple Choice quiz

WEEK THREE

Begin January 21st. All material must be finished by midnight Sunday, January 28th.

Lesson Three: Hindu Communities of Faith and Responsibility

READING ASSIGNMENTS

- a) Read Lectures posted on site

- b) Assigned websites

LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS

- a) Discussion: Forum submissions
- b) Forum: Sickness in Hinduism
- c) Multiple-choice quiz

WEEK FOUR

Begin January 28th. All material must be finished by midnight Sunday, February 4th.

Lesson Four: Buddhist Communities of Faith and Responsibility

READING ASSIGNMENTS

- a) Read Lectures posted on site
- b) Assigned websites

LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS

- a) Discussion: Forum submissions
- b) Forum: A local Buddhist and Moral Responsibility.
- c) Multiple-choice quiz

WEEK FOUR

Mid-term Exam

Must be finished by February 4th. No exceptions

WEEK FIVE

Begin February 4th. All material must be finished by midnight Sunday, February 11th.

Lesson Five: Jewish Communities of Faith and Responsibility

READING ASSIGNMENTS

- a) Read Lectures posted on site
- b) Assigned websites

LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS

- a) Discussion: Forum submissions
- b) Forum: Sexuality and Judaism
- c) Multiple-choice quiz.

WEEK SIX

Begin February 11th. All material must be finished by midnight Sunday, February 18th.

Lesson Six: Christian Communities of Faith and Responsibility

READING ASSIGNMENTS

- a) Read Lectures posted on site
- b) Assigned websites

LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS

- a) Discussion: Forum submissions
- b) Forum: Shane Claiborne and Moral Responsibility. Krista Tippett interview
- c) Multiple-choice quiz

WEEK SEVEN

Begin February 18th. All material must be finished by midnight Sunday, February 25th.

Lesson Seven: Muslim Communities of Faith and Responsibility

READING ASSIGNMENTS

- a) Read Lectures posted on site
- b) Assigned websites

LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS

- a) Discussion: Forum submissions
- b) Forum: Ramadan and Moral Responsibility. Krista Tippett interview
- c) Multiple-choice quiz

WEEK EIGHT

Begin February 25th. All material including the **FINAL EXAM** must be finish by midnight Wednesday, February 28th. **NOT A WHOLE WEEK**

Lesson Eight: Final Thoughts on Understanding, Comparing, and Evaluating Communities of Faith and Their Sense of Responsibility

Read Lectures posted on site

FINAL EXAM