

840:112 DEATH & AFTERLIFE : 01

HYBRID

Fall 2014

Cook/Douglass Lecture Hall

10:55—12:15

FRIDAYS ONLY

3 College Farm Road

Professor Kathleen Bishop (kathbish@rci.rutgers.edu)

Office Hours: *by appointment only* Room 118 Loree Hall

Douglas Campus

Religion Department website: religion.rutgers.edu

IN-CLASS MEETINGS: 9/02, 9/9, 9/16 = Unit One

10/14, 10/21, 10/28, 11/4 = Unit Two

11/11, 11/18, 12/9, = Unit Three

ONLINE EXAMS: 9/19--20, 11/7--8, 12/12--13

Requirements:

There will be three ONLINE EXAMS during the semester. No makeup tests will be given without prior notification and documentation of conflict.

ONLINE FORUMS

Due dates for posting: TBA

Each student is required to post once and respond once (to another student's post) before each of these deadlines. Your assignment will be to comment on a YouTube video from the Sakai website that relates to the unit of study we are in at that time. You may select from a variety of videos. Your comment should take the form of a "movie review."

GRADE CALCULATION

Class attendance and Forum participation = 25%

Tests = 25% each (total 75%)

TEXTBOOKS (required reading):

Lucy Bregman, ed., Death and Dying in World Religions

*H. Obayashi, ed., Death and Afterlife: Perspectives of World Religions

* **NOTE: Selected chapters will be posted online**

COURSE SCHEDULE:

UNIT I—Early Concepts and Practices

1. *Death and Reincarnation Among the Early Humans and Indigenous peoples*

- Cro-Magnon and Neanderthal burial
 - Animism and Death
 - Indigenous People
- Required reading: Bregman, chap. 11 pages 153-159

2. *Death and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt and Near East*

- Mesopotamian (Babylonian) Concept of the Underworld
 - Mummification
 - Egyptian Notions of the Soul
 - Zoroastrian Funeral Rites
- Required Reading: Bregman, Chap. 1
Obayashi Chap. 3
Online handout: see “resources” for Zoroastrian chapter

3. *Death and Immortality in Greek Thought*

- Greek Mythology and Tragedy
 - Socrates
 - Plato
- Required reading: Bregman, Chap. 2

UNIT II – Western Religious Concepts and Practices

4. *The Biblical Understanding of Death and Resurrection – The Hebrew Outlook*

- Pre-Exilic concept of Death and the Underworld
 - Eschatology
 - Apocalypticism
 - Messianic Kingdom
 - Individual and Corporate Resurrection
- Required reading: Bregman Chap. 3
Obayashi Chap. 5

5. *The Christian Answer to Death*

- Crucifixion and Resurrection
- The Kingdom of God
- The Eternality of Human Personhood
- Immortality or Resurrection

Required reading: Bregman, Chaps. 4 & 5, Chap. 11, pages 159- 164
Obayashi, Chap. 8

6. *Islamic Images of the Afterlife*

- Seven Levels of Heaven and Hell
- *Isra'* and *barzakh*

Required reading: Bregman, Chap. 6

UNIT III – Eastern Religious Concepts and Practices

7. *Death and Reincarnation in India*

- The Land of the Fathers
- Karma Reincarnation
- The Ultimate Fate of the Soul

Required reading: Bregman, chap. 7
Obayashi, chap. 10

8. *Death in Buddhist Thought*

- Buddhist Interpretation of “Reincarnation”
- “Nothingness” and “Extinction”

Required reading: Bregman, chap. 8
Obayashi, chap. 12

9. *Death and Afterlife in China and Japan*

- Ancient Chinese Concepts of the Soul—Hun and P’o
- Taoist Cult of Immortality
- Shintoism and Deification

Required reading: Bregman, chap. 9