

DEATH & AFTERLIFE IN PERSPECTIVE OF WORLD RELIGIONS

HYBRID

TUESDAYS ONLY

10:55 -12:15

Room: HSB 204

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 (8) : 9/5, 9/19, 10/3, 10/17, 10/31, 11/14, 11/28, 12/12

There will be four open book quizzes (online) and three exams (online) during the semester, all well as 6 Forum posts (3 authored, 3 responses). No makeup tests will be given without prior notification and documentation of conflict.

QUIZ DATES: 9/22, 10/27, 11/3, 12/1 (Friday noon - Saturday noon)

Timed: 1 hour

EXAM DATES (Friday noon -- Saturday noon)

10/13, 11/17, 12/15 Timed: 45 min.

ONLINE FORUMS: 9/24, 11/5, 12/10 (Due Sunday 5:00 pm)

GRADE CALCULATION

Class attendance and Forum participation = 25%

4 Quizzes = 25%

3 Exams = 50%

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 (3,5,8,10) will be posted online. You do not need to purchase the ***Obayashi text. Refer to "resources" page on Sakai. These chapters are required reading, as*** is the chapter on Zoroastrians (also on Sakai).

COURSE SCHEDULE:

UNIT ONE

Early Peoples, Non-Literate Cultures, Ancient Near East

- Neanderthal, Early Modern Humans burial customs
- Ancient Mesopotamia (Babylon) concept of the underworld
- Ancient Egyptian notions of the soul
- Ancient Greek mythology and philosophy

- Africa and African diaspora
- Zoroastrian funeral rites

Required reading: Bregman: chap. 1, 2, 11; Obayashi: chap. 3

Will be covered on Quiz 1, Exam 1

UNIT TWO

Death and Afterlife in Western Religion

- Biblical Eschatology
- Hebrew Outlook
- Apocalypticism
- Individual and Corporate Resurrection
- Rabbinic Teachings
- The Christian Answer to Death
- Islamic Images of the Afterlife
- Seven Levels of Heaven & Hell

Required reading: **Quiz 2:** Bregman, chap. 3, 4; Obayashi, chap. 5

Quiz 3: Bregman, chap. 5,6 ; Obayashi, chap 8

Exam 2: all

UNIT THREE

Eastern Religious Concepts and Practices

Death and Reincarnation in India

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

Death in Buddhist Thought

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

Death and Afterlife in China

- Ancient Chinese Concepts of the Soul—Hun and P’o
- Taoism and Confucianism

Required reading: **Quiz 4:** Bregman, chapters 7, 8, 9

Obayashi, chap. 10

Exam 3: all