

DEATH AND AFTERLIFE IN PERSPECTIVE OF WORLD RELIGIONS

SYLLABUS SUMMER 2015

840:112:01 HYBRID

TUESDAYS ONLY: 8:10 -9:55 MU-112, CAC

Professor: Kathleen Bishop, Ph.D. (kathbish@rci.rutgers.edu)

Office Hours: *by appointment only* Room 118 Loree Hall
Douglas Campus
Religion Department website: religion.rutgers.edu

(5) IN-CLASS MEETINGS: 6/23, 6/30, 7/7, 7/14, 7/21

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

ONLINE EXAM DATES

7/10-11, 7/31-8/1

(2) ONLINE FORUMS: Due 5:00 pm, 7/5, 7/25

GRADE CALCULATION

Class attendance and Forum participation = 20%

Tests = 40% each (total 80%)

TEXTBOOKS (required reading):

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

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

*** NOTE: Selected chapters 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:

1. Early Peoples, Non-Literate Cultures, Ancient Near East

Neanderthal, Cro-Magnon burial

Ancient Mesopotamia (Babylon) concept of the underworld

Ancient Egyptian notions of the soul

Ancient Greek mythology and philosophy

Zoroastrian funeral rites

Required reading: Bregman: chap. 1, 2 ; Obayashi: chap. 3, Zoroastrian religion (see Sakai site)

2. Death and Afterlife in Judaism

Biblical Eschatology

Hebrew Outlook

Apocalypticism

Individual and Corporate Resurrection

Rabbinic Teachings

3. Christianity and Islam

Early Christianity

Roman Catholic/Protestant treatment of afterlife

Islamic Images of the Afterlife

Seven Levels of Heaven & Hell

Required reading: Bregman, chap. 3, 4, 5, 6; Obayashi, chap. 5, 8.

4. Eastern Religious Concepts and Practices

Death and Reincarnation in India

The Land of the Fathers

Karma Reincarnation

The Ultimate Fate of the Soul

5. *Death in Buddhist Thought*

Buddhist Interpretation of “Reincarnation”

Tibetan Buddhism: Living and Dying

6. Death in Chinese thought

The role of ancestors

Boundaries between life and death

Health and wellbeing in life and death

Realms of the afterlife

Required reading: Bregman, chapters 7, 8, 9

Obayashi, chap. 10, 12