

840:112 DEATH & AFTERLIFE : 01

HYBRID

Spring 2014

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: 1/21, 2/4, 2/18, 3/4, 3/11, 4/8, 4/15, 4/29

ONLINE EXAMS: 2/24-25, 4/11-12, 5/12-13

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Office Hours: (by appt only) Tuesday 1:00—3:00 rm 118 Loree Hall Douglas Campus

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: 2/7, 2/21, 3/7, 3/28, 4/11, 4/25

Each student is required to post once during these 2-week periods. 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 Races 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