DEATH AND AFTERLIFE SYLLABUS  

840:112:01  DEATH & AFTERLIFE IN PERSPECTIVE OF WORLD RELIGIONS

HYBRID  
TUESDAYS ONLY: 9:15 -10:35
Room: LOREE 020

Professor: Kathleen Bishop  (kathbish@rci.rutgers.edu)  
Office Hours: by appointment only  Room 118 Loree Hall  Douglas Campus  
Religion Department website: religion.rutgers.edu

[8] IN-CLASS MEETINGS: 1/19, 2/2, 2/16, 3/1, 3/22, 4/5, 4/19, 4/26

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

ONLINE EXAM DATES (Friday noon -- Saturday noon): 2/26-27, 4/8-9, 5/13-14

ONLINE FORUMS: Due 5:00 pm: [TBA]

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. 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, Cro-Magnon burial
- 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

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

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”
- Tibetan Book of Living and Dying

**Death and Afterlife in China**
- Ancient Chinese Concepts of the Soul—Hun and P’o
- Taoism and Confucianism

Required reading: Bregman, chapters 7, 8, 9
Obayashi, chap. 10