

DEATH AND AFTERLIFE SYLLABUS

Fall 2016

840:112:01

DEATH & AFTERLIFE IN PERSPECTIVE OF WORLD RELIGIONS

HYBRID

TUESDAYS ONLY: 9:15 -10:35

Room: HSB 201

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) : 9/6, 9/20, 10/4, 10/18, 11/1, 11/15, 11/29, 12/13

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):
9/30-10/1, 11/4-5, 12/16-17**

ONLINE FORUMS: Due 5:00 pm: 9/18, 10/23, 12/11

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 (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

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”
- “Nothingness” and “Extinction”

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