

**840:112 DEATH & AFTERLIFE – SPRING 2013**  
**(Sections 02&03)**

Dr. Thomas Myladil

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday: 12.30 - 1:00pm, Loree 112, Douglas Campus

**Description**

The course looks at the beliefs and practices on the topic of death and afterlife in major religious traditions of the world.

**Requirements**

Exams (90% of final grade):

Test #1: Monday, February 18, in class

Test #2: Monday, April 1, in class

Test #3: Monday, May 6 in class

No make-ups will be given on these three tests already scheduled as above, unless arrangements are made prior to the scheduled dates with documentation for the reasons for requesting make-ups.

Class Attendance and Participation (10% of the final grade):

You are expected to attend every class meeting. If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to you. Every session missed, without proper explanation provided through the dean's office, will result in 1 point reduction of your final grade.

**Textbook** (required reading)

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

**Course Schedule**

1. Death and Reincarnation among the Early Races and Non-Literate Cultures

Primitive Pan-vitalism and Death

Animism and Death

Totemism and Death

Required reading: Text, Intro. and Chap. 1

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: Text, Chaps. 2&3

3. Death and Immortality in Greek Thought

Greek Mythology and Tragedy

Socrates

Plato

Required reading: Text, Chap. 4

#### 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: Text, Chaps. 5 & 7

#### 5. The Christian Answer to Death

Crucifixion and Resurrection

The Kingdom of God

The Eternality of Human Personhood

Immortality or Resurrection

Required reading: Text, Chaps. 6 & 8

#### 6. Islamic Images of the Afterlife

Seven Levels of Heaven

Seven Levels of Hell

Required reading: Text, Chap. 9

#### 7. Death and Reincarnation in India

The Land of the Fathers

Karma Reincarnation

The Ultimate Fate of the Soul

Required reading: Text, chap. 10

#### 8. Death in Buddhist Thought

Buddhist Interpretation of “Reincarnation”

“Nothingness” and “Extinction”

Required reading: Text, Chaps. 11 & 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: Text, Chap. 13