

Term Information

Effective Term Autumn 2016

General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area African American & African Std
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org African-Amer & African Studies - D0502
College/Academic Group Arts and Sciences
Level/Career Undergraduate
Course Number/Catalog 4342
Course Title Religion, Meaning, and Knowledge in Africa
Transcript Abbreviation Rlgn in Africa
Course Description While the practice of religion in Africa is as diverse as its people, three major belief systems define the practice: African Traditional Religion, Islam, and Christianity. This course will examine classical and contemporary definitions of African Traditional Religion/s and the introduction and adaptations of Islam and Christianity in Africa.
Semester Credit Hours/Units Fixed: 3

Offering Information

Length Of Course 14 Week, 12 Week
Flexibly Scheduled Course Never
Does any section of this course have a distance education component? No
Grading Basis Letter Grade
Repeatable No
Course Components Lecture
Grade Roster Component Lecture
Credit Available by Exam No
Admission Condition Course No
Off Campus Never
Campus of Offering Columbus

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites
Exclusions

Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings

Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code 05.0201
Subsidy Level Baccalaureate Course
Intended Rank Sophomore, Junior, Senior

Requirement/Elective Designation

General Education course:

Culture and Ideas; Global Studies (International Issues successors)

Course Details

Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- Students understand some of the political, economic, cultural, physical, social, and philosophical aspects of one or more of the world's nations, peoples and cultures outside the U.S
- Students recognize the role of national and international diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values as global citizens.
- Students analyze and interpret major forms of human thought, culture, and expression.
- Students evaluate how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms, which guide human behavior.

Content Topic List

- African Traditional Religions
- Islam in Africa
- Christianity in Africa

Attachments

- AFAMAST 4342 syll-African Religions.pdf: Syllabus
(Syllabus. Owner: Seagraves,Tanina Ryan)
- GE_AssessmentPlan_AfricanReligions_Brodnicka.pdf: GE Assessment Plan
(GEC Course Assessment Plan. Owner: Seagraves,Tanina Ryan)
- Concurrence 4342.pdf: Concurrence
(Concurrence. Owner: Igeleke,Ekundayo)

Comments

- Concurrence from the Dept of Comparative Studies is attached. *(by Igeleke,Ekundayo on 02/22/2016 01:46 PM)*
- - Please request concurrence from the Dept of Comparative Studies (since they have both a major in Religious Studies and a course listing in Religious Studies).
- If this course can count toward your major (as a core course or an elective), please check off box on form and upload updated curriculum map for the major. *(by Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal on 06/16/2015 12:13 PM)*

COURSE REQUEST
4342 - Status: PENDING

Last Updated: Heysel,Garett Robert
03/01/2016

Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Seagraves,Tanina Ryan	05/12/2015 11:54 AM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Austin,Curtis J	05/12/2015 10:50 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Heysel,Garett Robert	06/05/2015 07:05 PM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	06/16/2015 12:13 PM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Igeleke,Ekundayo	02/22/2016 01:47 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Austin,Curtis J	02/22/2016 03:03 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Heysel,Garett Robert	03/01/2016 11:45 AM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Nolen,Dawn Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal Hanlin,Deborah Kay Jenkins,Mary Ellen Bigler Hogle,Danielle Nicole	03/01/2016 11:45 AM	ASCCAO Approval

Religion, Meaning, and Knowledge in Africa
AFAMAST 4342

Time: W/F 9:35 – 10:55 AM
Room: University Hall 90
Instructor: Monika Brodnicka
Office: University Hall 486K
Office Hours: W/F 2:30-4:00 PM and by appointment
Contact: brodnicka.1@osu.edu
(614) 292-0453

Course Description

While the practice of religion in Africa is as diverse as its people, three major belief systems define the practice: African Traditional Religion, Islam, and Christianity. This course will examine classical and contemporary definitions of African Traditional Religion/s and the introduction and adaptations of Islam and Christianity in Africa. The course will also put the three religious traditions in context through relevant novels that will highlight the influences, complexities, and conflict between these religions. Some questions that will be addressed are: What is African Traditional Religion? Is it singular or plural? What is Black Islam and is the term accurate? What types of Christianities exist in Africa? What is the role of colonialism in the practice of these religions?

Required Readings (available at Barnes & Noble or Carmen)

<i>Decolonizing African Religion</i>	Ocot P'Bitek	
<i>African Religions: A Very Short Introduction</i>	Jacop Olupona	
<i>Of Water and the Spirit</i>	Malidoma Some	
<i>Muslim Societies in African History</i>	David Robinson	
<i>A Spirit of Tolerance: The Inspiring Life of Tierno Bokar</i>	Amadou Hampaté Bâ	(Carmen)
<i>A History of Christianity in Africa</i>	Elizabeth Isichei	
<i>Arrow of God</i>	Chinua Achebe	
"Living Tradition"	Amadou Hampaté Bâ	(Carmen)
"Ori: The Ifa Concept of Consciousness"	Awo Fa'lokun Fatunmbi	(Carmen)
"Ire lona Ikole Orun"	Awo Fa'lokun Fatunmbi	(Carmen)

Course Requirements

This course requires student participation in the form of preparation and discussions, so your timely presence and active engagement in the classroom are crucial. I expect everyone to finish the assigned reading prior to the beginning of each class and be capable of critical analysis of the text, as well as of its application to contemporary situations, through vibrant class discussions!

Participation

Your participation grade includes your attendance record, submitted discussion questions, and discussions in class.

Discussion questions

You will be expected to **type and print out (before class)** two questions about the reading, which could be used in class discussion. These are questions that help develop/encourage discussion in class on topics found in your reading. The questions will be part of your participation grade. Hand written questions and late submissions will NOT be accepted.

Presentations

There will be student presentations on designated readings, which should include: 1) presentation of **one theme** from the reading 2) reflection on the theme that includes **your point of view**, 3) comparison to current realities, and 4) **one** question to the class that would initiate discussion. Presentations should take about 15 minutes.

Reflection Papers

You are expected to write three reflection papers, one for each religious tradition. Each reflection paper should be at least **four pages** long, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font, and with one-inch margins all around. These papers should include: 1) a summary of the readings for the particular religion, 2) discussion of one of the themes in detail, 3) the development of your point of view on the reading. More details on the papers will be provided in class.

Final Paper

There will be a final paper due during the exam week. This paper will be an elaboration of one of your reflection papers. Additional research is required. The final paper should be at least **seven pages** long, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font, and with one-inch margins all around. More details about the content and format of the final paper will be provided before the due date.

General Policy

All submitted work must be your own. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated (see below for details). Late assignments will not be accepted except in special circumstances.

- Absences
More than **two** unexcused absences, late arrivals, or early departures will negatively impact your participation grade. Half a grade will be taken off for each additional absence. Every three late arrivals and/or early departures without previous arrangement with professor will be counted as one absence. Excused absences are given if I receive notes/letters from your doctor, counselor, or coach. All other absences are considered unexcused.
- Use of electronics
The use of cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices is not permitted during class. Half a grade will be taken off (from participation) for each unauthorized use of electronic equipment.

Grading

Participation	20%
Presentations	20%
Reflection Paper 1	10%
Reflection Paper 2	10%
Reflection Paper 3	10%
Final Paper	30%

General Education Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes

Diversity Goals (Global Studies):

Students understand the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States and across the world in order to become educated, productive, and principled citizens.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students understand some of the political, economic, cultural, physical, social, and philosophical aspects of one or more of the world's nations, peoples and cultures outside the U.S.
2. Students recognize the role of national and international diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values as global citizens.

Cultures and Ideas:

Students evaluate significant cultural phenomena and ideas in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; and interpretation and evaluation.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students analyze and interpret major forms of human thought, culture, and expression.
2. Students evaluate how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms, which guide human behavior.

The course on African Religions fulfills the Diversity goals and learning objectives of Global Studies, as it pertains to the study of the diverse religio-cultural practices on the African continent. Learning about Traditional Religions, Islam, and Christianity in Africa will enable students to better comprehend African cultural and religious diversity and how it informs their own attitudes and values as global citizens.

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).

Disability Notice

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1: Challenges and Approaches to Studying African Religion

P'Bitek, Ocot. *Decolonizing African Religion: A Short History of African Religions in Western Scholarship*. New York: Diasporic Africa Press, 2011.

TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS

Week 2: Introduction to African Religions

Olupona, Jacob K. *African Religions: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Week 3: Major Concepts in African Traditional Religions (presentations)

Fatunmbi, Awo Fa'lokun. "Ori: The *Ifa* Concept of Consciousness." In *Ori: The Ifa Concept of Consciousness*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2014. (Carmen)

Bâ, Amadou Hampaté. "The Living Tradition." In *General History of Africa*, vol. 1, *Methodology and African Prehistory* (1980): 166-205.

Week 4: Major Concepts – Moving beyond the Rationalist Gaze (presentations)

Some, Malidoma. *Of Water and Spirit*, chapters 10-13. New York: Penguin Books, 1994.

Fatunmbi, Awo Fa'lokun. "Ire Iona Ikole Orun: The return from Earth to the Realm of the Immortals." *Ela: The Ifa Concept of Altered States*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2014.

Week 5: The Experience of Other Dimensions (presentations)

Some, Malidoma. *Of Water and Spirit*, chapters 14-25. New York: Penguin Books, 1994.

ISLAM

Week 6: Muslim Societies in Africa – Introduction and Examples (reflection paper #1)

Robinson, David. *Muslim Societies in African History*, chapters 1-4. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Robinson, David. *Muslim Societies in African History*, chapters 7-9. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Week 7: Muslim Societies in Africa – Case Studies

Robinson, David. *Muslim Societies in African History*, chapters 10-11. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Robinson, David. *Muslim Societies in African History*, chapters 12-13. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Week 8: Sufi Brotherhoods (presentations)

Bâ, Amadou Hampaté. "His Teachings." In *A Spirit of Tolerance: The Inspiring Life of Tierno Bokar*, 167-207. Indiana: World Wisdom, 2008.

Brenner, Louis. "The Spiritual Discourses." In *West African Sufi: The Religious Heritage and Spiritual Search of Cerno Bokar Saalif Taal*, 142-186. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984.

Week 9: Ambiguous Adventure – Virtues of Islamic Education (presentations)

Kane, Cheikh Hamidou. *Ambiguous Adventure*, part one. New York: Melville House Publishing, 2012.

Week 10: Ambiguous Adventure – Pitfalls of Colonial Influence (presentations)

Kane, Cheikh Hamidou. *Ambiguous Adventure*, part two. New York: Melville House Publishing, 2012.

CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA

Week 11: History of Christianity in Africa – Early Presence (reflection paper #2)

Isichei, Elizabeth. *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present*, chapters 1-3. Michigan: Africa World Press, 1995.

Week 12: History of Christianity in Africa – The Colonial and Post-Colonial Period

Isichei, Elizabeth. *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present*, chapters 8-12. Michigan: Africa World Press, 1995.

Week 13: Arrow of God (presentations)

Achebe, Chinua. *Arrow of God*, chapters 1-10. New York: Anchor Books 1989.

Week 14: Arrow of God (presentations and reflection paper #3)

Achebe, Chinua. *Arrow of God*, chapters 11-19. New York: Anchor Books 1989.

a) How do the course objectives address the GE category expected learning outcomes?

The course Religion, Meaning and Knowledge in Africa invites students to explore three main religions on the African continent – Traditional Religions, Islam, and Christianity – to reflect on their cultural significance, and to understand their relationship to knowledge. While the focus is on the historical, cultural, and philosophical dimensions of these religions, the study cannot be extracted from the larger context of political, economic, geographical, and social aspects. Learning about Traditional Religions, Islam, and Christianity in Africa will enable students to better comprehend African cultural and religious diversity and how it informs their own attitudes and values as global citizens, as well as how this diversity influences the character of human beliefs and the perception of reality. At the end of the course, the students will be able to identify the particularities of the three major religions in Africa, trace the nuances of their evolution historically and geographically, recognize their relationship to culture, and identify the knowledge that originates from the practice of these religions.

b) How do the readings assigned address the GE category expected learning outcomes?

The course readings will provide the socio-historical context to the evolution of each religious tradition, introduce students to the major concepts of each religion, and illustrate these concepts through a novelization of certain practices. The illustration will help to contextualize the cultural realities of each practice. The texts range from introductions to Traditional Religion, Islam, and Christianity in Africa, tracing their evolution in time and space, through readings that develop the major themes, to novels that apply each form of religious knowledge in particular societies. Through these texts students will be able to identify the relationship between the particularities of each religion and their cultural representations, compare the diversity of each religion in practice with their shared elements in theory, and imagine the lived aspect of certain religious traditions in relation to their own religious experiences.

c) How do the topics address the GE category expected learning outcomes?

There will be three main topics, Traditional Religion, Christianity, and Islam, divided into three sections on the syllabus that will cover both the diversity and cultural GE learning outcomes. The study of each religious tradition explores not only their diverse expression in different cultures at different times, but also how each tradition expresses its beliefs and perception of reality. In addition to the three main topics, each tradition will address smaller topics that include a historical overview, specific concepts inspired by the religious tradition and the culture where they are expressed, and the particular type of knowledge born out of these religious traditions. The course will also address the colonial influence that affected the trajectory of each tradition as well as the cultural applications of these religions.

d) How do the written assignments address the GE category expected learning outcomes?

Each type of writing assignment will help students engage in both categories of expected learning outcomes on different levels, through culture and diversity. First, writing down discussion questions will allow students to engage directly and question the texts they are assigned to read. Writing discussion questions for each reading will encourage students to think about the issues addressed in the text, particularly those issues with which they are most unfamiliar. Second, reflection papers will allow students to communicate their own interpretations of each of the three religions and their cultural contexts and express their own point of view on a particular theme addressed by the material. Finally, writing a final paper about one of the religious traditions will allow the students to analyze the role of diversity and culture within the religion of choice on a more profound level.

e) How does the course aim to sharpen students' response, judgment, and evaluation skills?

The material assigned for the course is at once challenging and engaging since it deals with some generally unfamiliar religious traditions and concepts, which demand a different way of thinking about reality. These religious traditions and their cultural applications will require wading through uncharted territory, which can be accessed with focus, judgment, and evaluation. The different types of readings chosen to introduce students to the material and to develop their understanding will encourage the sharpening of those skills. Since texts for each religious tradition include an overview, case studies, theory, and contextual application of these traditions, they will help students to progressively develop these critical responses. Each text will need to be approached differently, for optimal understanding. Most importantly, the four types of assignments required – discussion questions, presentations, reflection papers, and final paper – are intended to hone students' ability to respond, judge, and evaluate the texts they are reading and discussing.

A GE assessment plan which explains how the faculty will assess the effectiveness of the course in achieving the GE expected learning outcomes over time, rather than how individual student grades will be assessed. Successful assessment plans include the following:

a) Description of the specific methods the faculty will use to demonstrate that the aggregate of his/her students are achieving the goals and expected learning outcomes of this GE category. Thus, if the faculty plans to use direct measures such as embedded questions on exams, pre- and post-tests, or a particular essay assignment, provide some examples. If the faculty plans on using indirect measures such as opinion surveys or student self-evaluations, give concrete examples as well. (Ideally, a plan should include both direct and indirect measures.)

The course will have several forms of evaluation that will help determine if the students are achieving their goals and expected learning outcomes of “Diversity” and “Culture and

Ideas.” Daily discussion questions will be the most direct and immediate indication if the students understand the material and whether they are achieving the GE goals and learning outcomes. These questions will show the instructor if the students understand the diversity and cultural issues in the texts. Student presentations, which require the students to address one theme from the reading, state and explain their point of view in relation to the theme, offer an example from their current reality that would support their argument, will show the instructor whether they are understanding the material and if they are capable of engaging critically with the diverse religio-cultural traditions. The reflection papers and the final paper will show the instructor whether students are capable of engaging with diversity and culture on a more profound level. For the reflection papers, students will be asked to explain and develop an important theme from each religious tradition and to state their own point of view on this theme in relation to their own traditions. The final paper will engage in a similar critical analysis but with more research. Before turning in the final paper, the instructor will ask students to write a self-evaluation of their effort and final product based on the criteria given for the final paper.

b) Explanation of the level of student achievement expected: What will the faculty define as “success” in terms of student achievement of learning outcomes? For example, for an embedded question, he/she might define “success” as a certain percentage of students answering the question correctly. For an essay, he/she might define success as a particular average overall score based on a scoring rubric.

Successful achievement of the goals and learning outcomes will be determined by regular submission of discussion questions, successful presentations, critical reflection papers that address issues of diversity and culture, and a final paper that takes one important theme and develops it in depth. It is expected that everyone (100% of the students) submits questions in discussion format and that the questions are relevant to the text (indicated by a check minus, a check, or a check +). It is expected that the majority of the students (90%) receive at least a check. It is expected that at least 85% of the students receive a C or better on their presentations and reflection papers, based on whether or not they included all of the required presentation or reflection elements effectively. The final essay, which includes a detailed description of the theme, an effective analysis of it, and its interpretation, will be considered a success if 85% of the students receive a C or better.

c) Description of follow-up/feedback process: Once the faculty collects the data on student achievement, how will he/she use this information to make course improvements? How will the information be archived?

Once the data is collected from discussion questions, presentations, reflection papers, and the final paper, the faculty instructor will record the results and archive them for future instructors. The instructor will review the data from the different assignments and evaluate whether responses were successful or not. The successful assignments will be studied to determine what made them successful. Those assignments that will be deemed less successful will be analyzed to determine how to make them better for the next course. It will be decided whether these assignments need better explanation, modeling from the instructor, or adaptation in form or content based on the needs of the students.

This information on student achievement will be filed in the instructor's office and stored in the instructor's office computer.

From: [Barry Shank](#)
To: [Igeleke, Ekundayo](#)
Cc: [Horn, David](#); [Johnston, Sarah](#); [Brodnicka, Monika](#); [Marsch, Elizabeth](#)
Subject: Re: Concurrence
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2016 5:58:33 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Dear Ekundayo and Monika,

We conducted some research into the history of our offering of RS 3674 (formerly CS 3674 and before that CS 324). It seems that it has only been taught twice in the past ten years, both times by Monika (2010 and 2012). Even though our website lists it as cross-listed with AAAS, your website does not list the course and we can find no evidence that the AAAS version was taught any more frequently than the the CS/RS version has been.

Given these facts, I see no reason not to provide concurrence for your new course. I do ask that you be sure to let us know any time that you offer this course, because we would to make sure that all the Religious Studies students would know about it.

Best of luck with the remainder of the curriculum process.

Yours,

Barry

On Tue, Feb 16, 2016 at 12:47 PM, Igeleke, Ekundayo <igeleke.2@osu.edu> wrote:

Dear Barry and Undergraduate Committee,

Thank you for your quick response to my request. The way I envision the Religion, Meaning, and Knowledge in Africa course is very different from the course description of African Religions 3674. The planned course is not a survey of African religions but an examination of the theory behind African religion in its Indigenous, Islamic, and Christian expressions. As such the emphasis does not fall directly on cosmologies, myth, ritual, ethics, or witchcraft, but rather on the philosophy inspired by them. This includes deconstructing the colonial interpretations of African religions, recognition of their metaphysics, ontologies, and epistemologies, as well as understanding their connection to mysticism.

The course that you offer is an introduction to Indigenous African religions and their influence on Islam and Christianity as practiced on the continent and in the diaspora, as well as an introduction to the fundamental themes involved in indigenous belief systems. The course I am proposing would be valuable to Comparative Studies students because it delves more deeply into the meaning and knowledge offered by African religions in their various

expressions. It develops the original themes and questions their interpretation by Western scholars. In many ways, Religion, Meaning, and Knowledge is a logical progression to the course that you offer.

Please feel free to contact me should the committee have other concerns about the course.

Best wishes,

Monika

Monika Brodnicka

Assistant Professor



African American and African Studies

486 University Hall, 230 North Oval Mall

Columbus, OH 43210

From: Barry Shank [mailto:barryshank@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, February 15, 2016 11:43 AM

To: Igeleke, Ekundayo

Cc: Horn, David; Johnston, Sarah

Subject: Re: Concurrence

Dear Ekundayo,

The coordinator of Religious Studies, Sarah Johnston, and the Director of Undergraduate Studies, David Horn, along with the full UGS Committee have reviewed this course proposal. One major question has arisen. How exactly will this proposed course, AFAMAST 4342, be different from this course RELSTDS 3674 (cross-listed in AFAMAST)? We want to make sure that students have a clear understanding of the two and why two different courses at two different levels in this area would be valuable for students to take.

Religious Studies 3674 African Religions

Survey of African traditional religions and their interaction with Islam and Christianity in Africa and the diaspora; emphasis on cosmologies, myth, ritual, ethics, and witchcraft. Cross-listed in AfAmAST.

Yours,

Barry

On Mon, Feb 8, 2016 at 5:50 PM, Igeleke, Ekundayo <igeleke.2@osu.edu> wrote:

Thank you.

From: Barry Shank [mailto:barryshank@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, February 08, 2016 5:28 PM

To: Igeleke, Ekundayo

Subject: Re: Concurrence

Dear Ekundayo,

I have passed this on to our Undergraduate Studies Committee for their review. We will get back to you when that is complete.

Yours,

Barry

On Mon, Feb 8, 2016 at 5:13 PM, Igeleke, Ekundayo <igeleke.2@osu.edu> wrote:

Greetings,

I have attached a course in which we are seeking concurrence. At your convenience, could you approve or deny this concurrence?

Thank you!

Ekundayo Igeleke

Program Coordinator

College of Arts and Sciences Department of African American and African Studies

486 University Hall, 230 North Oval Mall, Columbus, OH 43210-1319

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"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots" -Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Jr

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Barry Shank
Professor & Chair
Department of Comparative Studies
The Ohio State University

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