



**JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.  
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY EXAMINATION FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN RELIGION**

**1<sup>st</sup> YEAR 1<sup>st</sup> SEMESTER 2017/2018 ACADEMIC YEAR**

**MAIN CAMPUS – SCHOOL BASED**

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**COURSE CODE: ARE 824**

**COURSE TITLE: COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGION**

**EXAM VENUE:**

**STREAM: (M.A IN RELIGION)**

**DATE:**

**EXAM SESSION:**

**TIME: 3 HOURS**

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**Instructions:**

- 1. Answer Question ANY 3 questions**
- 2. Candidates are advised not to write on the question paper.**
- 3. Candidates must hand in their answer booklets to the invigilator while in the examination room.**

1. a) Trace and discuss the “History of the Study of Religion” with special focus on the ‘Earliest evidence of religious ideas’ (10 marks)

b) Discuss John Bowker (1934- ) and Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648) views on how the earliest history of religion could be written in the contemporary times. (10 marks)

2. Religion of the Indigenous Americans, African Religion and Religion of the Indigenous Eskimos are “primitive”, “pagan” and “archaic”. Discuss. (20 marks)

3. Examine the importance of the fundamental teachings of Buddhism in the contemporary times by exploring the four noble truths. (20 marks)

4. Ninian Smart (2002) states: “Islam, the religion of submission ... to one God.” Discuss your understanding of the statement by taking *Umma* as your point of reference. (20 marks)

5. a) Provide an adequate analysis of the Vedas as taught in Hindu Religion. (12 marks)

b) Discuss the four parts of the Vedas. (8 marks)

**JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**  
**School of Humanities and Social Sciences: Department of History, Religion and Philosophy**  
**Master of Arts in Religion**

Course Outline ARE 824: COMPARATIVE RELIGION

Year 1, Semester 1, 2016/2017; Contact Hours: 56; Lecture Hours: 56; Credit Hours: 3

Pre-requisites: ARE 824

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**Purpose:** To teach a Comparative Study of Religion by exploring the historical development of Religions from the “primitive” times to the contemporary institutionalized World Religions.

**Expected Learning Outcomes:** By the end of the course unit the learners should be able to:

- Make a comprehensive analysis of the notion, etymological and scholarly meaning of the term religion.
- Study the evolution and development of Religions from Pre-historic times (man) through Religious Traditions of various peoples of the world, Classification of Religions, to contemporary World Religions.
- Be equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills gained in the research and scholarly approach to the Comparative Study of Religions which is required for relevant work environment in the contemporary Kenyan Society.
- Appreciate the African heritage by studying African Religion abreast of other religions of the world, without historical religious prejudices, denigration and exaggerations.
- Examine the various scholarly tools used in the reconstruction of the Comparative Study of Religions.

**Teaching Methodologies:** A combination of Lectures; Tutorials; Class/Group discussions, Class seminar presentations, Book review, Assignments and Internet research.

**Instructional Material/Equipment:** Handouts; Chalk/white boards, World Maps.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS, ASSESSMENT AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION**

1. Informed class participation. Classroom discussions are an integral part of learning discourse. This class will be built around intense class presentations, seminars, case studies and discussions. To do this successfully students will be required to read (research) the assigned text prior to every class. All assignments will be given in class.

2. Students will be required to write term paper (research) of a maximum of twenty (20) pages and a minimum of fifteen (15) on topics to be assigned during the course. This will constitute 15% of the 40% C.A.T. marks. Each student will be required to sit for a C.A.T. This will also constitute 15 % of the 40% C.A.T. marks, and End Semester Examination - 60%; Total 100%.

### **COURSE CONTENTS: Topics and Sub-Topic**

#### **0 INTRODUCTION**

0.1 History of Religion

0.2 The Goal of the Study of Religion

#### **1. THE CONCEPT AND ETYMOLOGICAL DEFINITIONS OF RELIGION**

1.1 Attempts to define Religion (*c/f. ZRE 3111: Introduction to Religion*)

1.1.1 Etymological and General Definitions of the Term Religion

1.1.2 Scholarly Definitions of the Term Religion

1.1.3 Definition of Living Religion

#### **2. HISTORY OF RELIGION**

- 2.1 History of the Study of Religion
  - 2.1.1 School of History of Religion
  - 2.1.2 Overview
  - 2.1.3 Origin
  - 2.1.4 The Goal of the Study of Religion
- 2.2 Methodological Perspectives in History of Religions
- 2.3 Approaches that enabled Scholars Study the History of Religion in Different Contexts
- 2.4 The Meaning and Scope of Comparative Religions

### **3. EARLIEST RELIGION**

- 3.1 The Problem of Origins
- 3.2 The Patterns of Prehistoric Life
- 3.3 The Dimensions of Prehistoric Religion
- 3.4 The Early History of Religion

### **4. THEORIES OF THE ORIGIN OF RELIGION** (cf. *ARE 802: Theories of Religion. However, class to discuss briefly on the Theories of Religion as given by Mugambi<sup>2</sup>2010*)

### **5. CLASSIFICATIONS OF RELIGIONS** (cf. *Albert Einstein (1879-1955: German-born theoretical physicist)*)

- 5.1 Natural Religions
- 5.2 Cosmic Religions
- 5.3 Revelatory Religions
- 5.4 Topological classifications of World Religions in the categories of:
  - 5.4.1 Natural
  - 5.4.2 Historical
  - 5.4.3 Revelatory, and
  - 5.4.4 Traditional Religions
- 5.5 Demographical classification of World Religions in the categories of the religions of
  - 5.5.1 Africa
  - 5.5.2 Asia
  - 5.5.3 Europe
  - 5.5.4 America and
  - 5.5.5 Australia
- 5.6 Classification of the World Religions in the categories of:
  - 5.6.1 Monotheistic
  - 5.6.2 Polytheistic
  - 5.6.3 Pantheistic
  - 5.6.4 Dualistic
  - 5.6.5 Monistic
  - 5.6.6 Animistic, and
  - 5.6.7 Atheistic Religion

### **6. RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS OF VARIOUS PEOPLES OF THE WORLD** (cf. *Mugambi<sup>2</sup>2010*)

- 6.1 Religions of Pre-Historic Man and Selected Pre-Literate Peoples
  - 6.1.1 Characteristic Features of Religion in Primitive Cultures
  - 6.1.2 Special Attention to:
    - 6.1.2.1 Religions of the Indigenous Australians
    - 6.1.2.2 Religions of the Indigenous Eskimos
    - 6.1.2.3 Religions of the Indigenous Americans

### **7. RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD**

## 7.1 The Largest

- 7.1.1 Hinduism
- 7.1.2 Buddhism
- 7.1.3 Judaism
- 7.1.4 Christianity
- 7.1.5 Islam.

## 7.2 Well-established Independent Religions

- 7.2.1 Zoroastrianism
- 7.2.2 Sikhism
- 7.2.3 Jainism
- 7.2.4 The Baha'i Faith
  
- 7.2.5 Chinese Religion
- 7.2.6 Japanese Religions
- 7.2.7 Ethnic, Tribal or Traditional Religions: A Case of African Religion
- 7.2.8 Ancient or Archaic Religions
- 7.2.9 New Religious Movements
- 7.2.10 Cults, Sects, and Churches (*cf: ARE 802: Theories of Religion*)
  
- 7.2.11 Religions of India
  - 7.2.11.1 Hinduism
  - 7.2.11.2 Jainism
  - 7.2.11.3 Buddhism
  - 7.2.11.4 Sikhism

## 8. A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY OF RELIGIONS

### 8.1 Within the World Religions on the concepts of:

- 8.1.1 God
- 8.1.2 Man
- 8.1.3 Creation
- 8.1.4 Sin and Salvation (see Mugambi, 335)
- 8.1.5 Man's Responsibility in Society
- 8.1.6 End Things

## REFERENCES

1. Bowker, J., (ed.), *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Religions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
2. Dosick, Wayne D., *Living Judaism: The Complete Guide to Jewish Belief, Tradition, and Practice*. A New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995.
3. Eliade, M., *The Quest: History and Meaning of Religion*. Chicago University Press, 1959.
4. Evans, Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965.
5. \_\_\_\_\_, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976.
6. Idowu Bolaji, *African Traditional Religion*. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1973.
7. Mugambi, J. N.K. (ed.), *A Comparative Study of Religions*. Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press, 2010.
8. Ninian, Smart, *The Religion Experience of Mankind*. New York: Collins, 1969.
9. \_\_\_\_\_, *The World's Religions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
10. Noss, John, *Man's Religion*. London: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1980.
11. Parrinder, E. G., *The World's Living Religions*. London: Pan, 1964.

**Books for Further Reference**

1. Durkheim, Emile, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1915.
2. Colledge, Ray, *Masterin World Religions*, New York: Palgrave Macmilla, 1999, 116.
3. Eliade, M., (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987.
4. Figl, Johann (Ed.), (2003). *Handbuch Religionswissenschaft: Religionen und ihre zentralen Themen*. Innsbruck-Wien: Tyrolia-Verlag.
5. Harris, Stephen and Platzner, Gloria, *Classical Mythology: Images and Insights*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004.
6. James, E. O., *Comparative Religion and Introduction and Historical study*. London. Methuen, 1961.
7. Larson J. Edward, *The History of Science Religion in the Western Tradition: Encyclopedia*, 2000.
8. Mbiti, J. S., *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann, 1969.
9. \_\_\_\_\_, *An Introduction to African Religion*. London: Heinemann, 1975.
10. Olupona, Jacob K., (ed.,) *African Traditional Religions in Contemporary Society*. New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1991
11. Partridge, Christopher, *Introduction to World Religion*. Minneapolis: Fortress Publishing, 2005.

**Course Instructor: Dr. Naila Napoo**

**Sign:**

**Date:**