Andrew O. Fort **RELI 20523** Office Hours:

TBH 313 **Finding the Founders** M-F: 11-11:45

Phone: 257-6448 **Fall 2014** or by appointment

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**Course Description:** In this course, we will look at the founders of three important religious traditions. We will consider them both in their own right and as examples of what happens during the creation of a religious tradition. To assist our understanding, we will begin by considering the question “what is religion?”, and looking at how diverse the definitions of and approaches to religion are. We then turn to reports of the lives of Confucius, the Buddha, and Jesus Christ. We will inquire into how their cultural context shapes them, and how our cultural heritage affects the way we look at them. Questions will include: How were they shaped by their environment? What did they teach, and what questions were important to them? How are they alike, and how different? What can we really know about them?

**Outcomes:** Through midterm and final exams, short papers and eCollege journal entries, and an in class presentation, as well as class participation, you will be assessed on your ability:

To comprehend concepts and ways of understanding from religious studies and to understand that “religious studies” is itself a historical product. As prospective majors or minors, this awareness is important to carry forward in your studies.

To become more informed about the three founders and more generally about the worldviews of others, past and present.

To identify and articulate the value of understanding other worldviews (“mental migration”), and by so doing, take the opportunity to reflect on your own.

To read critically, think analytically, speak persuasively, and write effectively through the description, analysis and evaluation of an array of texts and ideas by and about the founders.

**Expectations:** You are expected to come to all classes, and to read (and think about) the assignments before class. Lectures and discussion are central, and demand preparation; the uninformed or absent student hinders the whole class. There is no specific point penalty for absences, or for late or missed work. If these matters become an issue, I will let you know, but more than three absences are likely to indicate a problem. You should bring the relevant books to class, as we shall analyze the readings. Be ready to listen, think, question, and speak. All topics are open, but civil and respectful discourse is required.

**Assignments:** There will be mid-term and final exams (25% of grade each). The exams will cover material from lectures and readings, and are intended to bring out both academic information and personal reactions to what you are learning. During the unit on the Buddha, you will undertake a precept observation project (required, graded high pass/pass/no credit, 10%), At semester end, you will also make a 15 minute presentation, followed by a reflection paper, addressing how the founders and their teachings are alike or different, or what you have learned about studying founders of religions (25%).

There will also be written responses due weekly, either via short (1-2 page) response papers or in a computer journal on eCollege/Learning Studio. They are mandatory, but individual responses are ungraded. They are informal reflections, meant to encourage reflection on course readings and lectures. Finally, presence and participation in class is also part of your grade; each student is expected to be prepared to engage in the day’s discussion of the reading. Both quantity and quality of class contributions will count. These various forms of class participation will cumulatively count 15%.

A=always present, contributed often (in class and journal) thoughtfully and intelligently; consistently assumed responsibility for keeping discussion going; B= almost always present, contributed mostly thoughtfully and intelligently; aided in keeping discussion moving but did not always assume responsibility; C= usually present, contributed sporadically without taking much responsibility; D=missed a number of classes, contributed occasionally; did not take ownership of class discussion.

***Grades: A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, F=below 60. I use +/-, and use the following grade scale: .0-.3=grade minus, .31-.7=grade, .71-.99=grade plus***

***You may check in with me about your course standing at any time.***

If you have a problem affecting your course participation, or must miss class, let me know. Also, if you have a disability which may affect your class performance, please inform me during the first week of class. Here are some policy statements:

*Disability Statement approved Fall 2007 by the Undergraduate Council / Revised Summer 2011*: Texas Christian University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities.  Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator of Student Disabilities Services in the Center for Academic Services located in Sadler Hall, 1010.  Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Further information can be obtained from the Center for Academic Services, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at (817) 257-6567.

Adequate time must be allowed to arrange accommodations and accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the academic term for which they are seeking accommodations.  Each eligible student is responsible for presenting relevant, verifiable, professional documentation and/or assessment reports to the Coordinator.  Guidelines for documentation may be found at <http://www.acs.tcu.edu/disability_documentation.asp>.

Students with emergency medical information or needing special arrangements in case a building must be evacuated should discuss this information with their instructor/professor as soon as possible.

**Academic Misconduct**

Academic Misconduct (Sec. 3.4 from the Student Handbook) –Any act, such as cheating or plagiarism, that violates the academic integrity of the institution is considered academic misconduct. The procedures used to resolve suspected acts of academic misconduct are available in the offices of Academic Deans and the Office of Campus Life and are listed in detail in the Undergraduate Catalog (Student Policies>Academic Conduct Policy Details; <http://www.catalog.tcu.edu/current_year/undergraduate/>).

Finally, feel free to see me after class or in my office.

**RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**

Campus Life (257-7926, Sadler Hall 2006); TCU Library (257-7117); Center for Academic Services (257-7486, Sadler Hall 1022); Writing Center (257-7221, Reed 419); Student Development Services (257-7855, BLUU 2003); Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (257-7830, Jarvis Hall) and Counseling, Testing, and Mental Health Center (257-7863, Brown Lupton Health Center).

**REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the TCU Bookstore)**

H. Fingarette, Confucius: The Secular as Sacred

W. Rahula, What the Buddha Taught

H. C. Kee, What Can We Know About Jesus?

M. Borg, ed., Jesus at 2000

We will also read parts of Founders of Faith (in .pdf or from Amazon or equivalent), and other readings found in Doc Sharing.

**DAILY CLASS ASSIGNMENTS**

26 Aug. Introduction to course and its participants

28 Aug. What is religion? Definitions of religion

Livingston, 3-10 (found in Doc Sharing)

2 Sept. What is religion? Why and how to study

Livingston, 11-31, Smart, 1-7

4 Sept. What is religion? How to study

Smart, 8-19

9 Sept. introduction to Chinese culture

Thompson, 1-13 Video on Confucius

11 Sept. Chinese culture (the family)

Dawson, 91-119 (preparing for Confucius)

16 Sept. Who is Confucius? Dawson, 120-52

18 Sept. What did Confucius teach? (li) Fingarette, 1-36

23 Sept. What did Confucius teach? (jen) Fingarette, 37-79

25 Sept. Is Confucianism a religion? Taylor, 7-22, Dawson, 153-75

30 Sept. Indian culture at Buddha’s birth Carrithers, 9-30

2 Oct. Video and discussion on the Buddha Carrithers, 31-56

7 Oct. Who is the Buddha? (before the awakening)

Rahula, 1-34, 125-36 (choose 2 favorites)

9 Oct. What did the Buddha teach? (The Noble Truths)

Carrithers, 56-69 Rahula, 35-50, 91-4, 136-38

Introduce precepts exercise

**14 Oct. Fall break**

16 Oct. What did the Buddha teach? (meditation)

Rahula, 51-75, 99-101, 109-15

**Precepts exercise due**

21 Oct. What did the Buddha teach? (social relations) metta exercise

Rahula, 76-89, 97-99, 119-25 Carrithers, 70-85

23 Oct. **EXAMINATION**

28 Oct. Studying Jesus and his sociocultural setting Borg, 121-47

Britannica online, “Christianity,” from “the essence and identity of Christianity” through “early views” http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/115240/Christianity/.

30 Oct.. Who is Jesus? Borg, 7-29, 55-72

4 Nov. video on Jesus discuss presentations Borg, 33-53

6 Nov. Who is Jesus? (sources through Q) Kee, 1-51 Carpenter, 187-202

(if you wish, you may bring a copy of the Bible or New Testament)

11 Nov. What did Jesus teach? read Gospel of Mark Carpenter, 245-58

13 Nov. What did Jesus teach? (Mark) Kee, 51-88

18 Nov. What did Jesus teach? (other Gospels) Kee, 89-114, Borg, 107-19

20 Nov. TBA professor at conference

25 Nov. Student presentations. Address one of the following questions: How are the founders alike? How are they different? What can we really know about them? What did I learn from the academic study of the founders?

(see handout for more)

**THANKSGIVING BREAK**

2 Dec. more student presentations

4 Dec. “ “ “

9 Dec. “ “ “

**FINAL EXAM Thursday Dec. 18, 3 pm**