

**Course Description:** This course examines the six most predominant stories within contemporary theology: Buddha, Muhammed, Jesus, Brahma, Israel, and Atheist. The course is designed to introduce students to the stories that formed these theologies and the roles they play in shaping the religious consciousness of the modern world.

This course is designed to meet the needs of students on several levels. It is a non-credit course. Students will find it helpful to engage in current events by identifying underlying 'story' and theology. Clergy will find it very helpful in formulating an Evangelical response to modern theologies encountered in their ministry. This course is designed to engage older adults in lively discussions.

A supportive learning community encourages expression of thoughts and feelings, deepening of understanding and openness to new ideas and divergent perspectives. The course develops effective communication skills and enhances the quality of life.

**Snapshot of Course Requirements:**

OA505 encourages timely completion of the following, as well as individual engagement of a suggested reading list for deeper discussion and understanding:

1. Suggested Reading List
2. Response Paper - Personal Theology Statement (due at end of semester)
3. Interactivity - students are encouraged to speak from their experience, without judgment or negativity
4. Course Suggestions - topics and/or areas you'd like to engage in upcoming semesters

**Student Learning Outcomes:** as a result of taking this class, you will be able to...

1. Engage in discussions with all generations.
2. Demonstrate ability to communicate ideas.
3. Engage the mind for improved awareness and alertness.
4. Establish supportive connections with people.
5. Communicate emotions effectively.
6. Develop a more positive attitude toward life.

**Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, students will be able to accomplish some or all of the following:

1. Identify world theologies and communicate the main story behind them
2. Engage in diverse social environments through understanding story
3. Listen effectively and paraphrase other students' statements.
4. Use "I" statements to communicate personal opinions.
5. Research events and issues, past and present.
6. Apply critical thinking skills to form opinions and modern applications.
7. Increase self-esteem and confidence through learning and participation.

**Topics and Scope:** All OAP courses accommodate varying levels of ability and participation and may include, but are not limited to the following: communication, exploration of ideas and meanings, topics for discussion, enhancement of quality of life.

**Course Requirements**

Please Note: There are no pre-requisites or graded requirements for this class, as it is a non-credit course. However, there are class expectations, including several response papers and class dialogue.

**Suggested Reading List**

The World's Religions, by Huston Smith (Harper San Francisco, 1991).

The Joy of Sects: A Spirited Guide to the World's Religious Traditions, by Peter Occhiogrosso (Image Books, Doubleday, 1996.)

Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time, Marcus Borg (New York, HarperCollins, 1994)

Braiding Sweet Grass, by Robin Wall Kimmerer (Minneapolis, MN, Milkweed Editions, 2014).

The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying, by Sogyal Rinpoche (NY, Harper Collins, 1993)

G-d Is a Verb, Rabbi David Cooper (Riverhead Publishers, 1997)

## OA 505 Discussion Group: WORLD THEOLOGY

## Course Syllabus

The Sapphire Staff, Megan Wagner, PhD.

Essential Sufism, ed. James Fadiman and Robert Frager (Harper San Francisco, 1999)

InterSpiritual Mandala by Edward Bastian, PhD

The Mystic Heart: Discovering a Universal Spirituality in the World's Religions, Wayne Teasdale (New World Library, 2002).

The Bhagavad Gita

Embracing Cultural Competency, by Patricia St. Onge (Fieldstone Alliance, 2009)

### Personal Theology Paper

Students will prepare a written reflection of their personal theology. Theology papers should briefly outline the main theme of your life through a theological/spiritual lens, the primary assertions or beliefs you hold, and the major reasons for the theology considered. As much as possible, discuss the similarities and differences of your particular theology and other theologies, making use of the lecture material, readings, and Scripture. Papers should be 1-2 pages in length, typed, and double spaced.

### Course Outline

SCHEDULE	TOPIC(S) COVERED	SUGGESTED READING
Jan 19-20	Registration, Syllabus and Course outline	
Jan 26-27	The story before God - Isis & prehistoric gods	
Feb 2-3	The story of Israel	Genesis 17-22
Feb 9-10	The story of Israel: Patterns	Genesis 25
Feb 16 & 24 (Feb 17 - NO CLASSES)	The story of Ishmael	Genesis 15, 17, 25 and Quran 2:136, 3:84, 4:163, 6:84-86, 21:5-86, 37:100-111, 38:48
Feb 23/Mar 3	The story of Muhammed, life in Mecca	The Life of Muhammed, A Guillame
Mar 2-3	The story of Muhammed, Medina & beyond	The Life of Muhammed, A Guillame
Mar 9-10	The story of Christ	Genesis 3, 17, Isaiah 9, Matthew 1
Mar 16-17	The story of Christ	<b>GUEST LECTURE</b>
Mar 23-24	<b>NO CLASSES, SPRING BREAK</b>	
Mar 30-31	The story after Christ, modern movements	Acts; A New Kind of Christianity, Brian McLaren
April 6-7	The story of Brahma	The Brahma Knowledge, Lionel Barnett
April 13-14	The story of Brahma	Buddha and Brahma, Henry Adams
April 20-21	The story of Sikh (reformation and unification)	The Sikhs, Patwant Singh
April 27-28	The story of Buddha	Buddha and Brahma, Henry Adams
May 4-5	The story of Buddha, Shinto	The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying, by Sogyal Rinpoche
May 11-12	The story of a-Theism	Atheism Tapes, BBC
May 18-19	The story of a-Theism	Atheism Tapes, BBC
May 25-26	Final Class, Personal Theology Statements	

**Two varying timelines of world theology.** These are included to give the student an overview of various religions and religious perspectives, but not all of these will be covered in class.

