WREL 216 PHILOSOPHY OF WORLD RELIGIONS IDEAL PROGRAM COURSE SYLLABUS

Dear Student,

Please read the following course syllabus carefully, especially the course dates, times and location. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to communicate with the IDEAL office, your academic advisor, or the instructor.

The IDEAL degree-completion program is designed with the adult learner in mind. Adult learners approach learning with specific goals, want to be able to directly apply new learning to their work and personal lives, and tend to learn best when the coursework is problem-centered so that they are actively engaged in the learning process. In addition, adults bring rich and varied experience to the classroom, which becomes a valuable learning resource for other students.

The IDEAL Program assumes joint responsibility in the learning process. The activities and assignments in our classes build on the shared experience of all learners in each class. This is why each student's preparation, participation and interaction in class activities and discussions are critical to the success of each course. The accelerated format of each course requires a significant amount of time outside the classroom to prepare for and complete the course assignments. This varies between students and courses; however, students typically spend a minimum of ten-twelve hours per week on course material.

To participate in the IDEAL Program, it is expected that you will do the following:

- 1. Attend every class session. Be on time.
- 2. Obtain the required course materials prior to the first class session.
- 3. Complete the first assignment prior to the first class session and all subsequent assignments to the best of your ability.
- 4. Participate in the class discussions and demonstrate respect and consideration to the instructor and other students when they express themselves in discussion.

If you cannot perform these four expectations, it is recommended that you drop the course.

Missing one class session will drop the final grade by one letter grade (for example if the student earned a grade of "B" in the course, the final grade would be a "C"). <u>If a student misses two or more classes a grade of F will be entered as their final grade.</u>

Cheating and Plagiarism

It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the standards set forth in the policies on cheating and plagiarism as defined in Chapters 2 and 5 of the Key to UB http://www.bridgeport.edu/pages/2623.asp or the appropriate graduate program handbook

E-mail correspondence

It is imperative that you check your UB e-mail on a regular basis. All written correspondence, to include IDEAL and the University will be sent to you through his e-mail. <u>The University can no</u> longer correspond to your personal e-mail account(s).

Ethics Statement of Confidentiality

An integral component of an IDEAL course is student and faculty expression of personal experiences for the purpose of facilitating coursework. Students enrolled in the program are expected to honor confidentiality as it pertains to student disclosure. Shared information, comments, or opinions expressed by another student or the faculty member during the course of classroom discussion should never be used in a manner which is intended to humiliate, embarrass, harass, damage, or otherwise injure other students in their personal, public, or business lives. In addition, confidentiality must be upheld by not disclosing any information that would identify any particular individual.

The IDEAL Program

WREL 216 PHILOSOPHY OF WORLD RELIGIONS IDEAL Program Summer 2013 May 7, 14, 21, 28, June 4 Tuesdays 6-10 pm Location: Stamford

Instructor: Cassandra Donnelly Email: cassandd@bridgeport.edu

Prerequisite Courses: ENGL 101

Course description:

This course explores the phenomenon of religion, religious thinking, and religious experience from a philosophical perspective. A central theme of these explorations is the question of unity and diversity among the world religions. By focusing on what the various traditions have in common, we will try to construct a framework of comparative analysis. On the other hand, by enhancing our appreciation of the diversity of religious expression and experience, we will challenge the limitations of traditional conceptions of religion. In particular we will focus on such areas of common interest as the nature of ultimate reality, the essence of religious experience, the question of evil, the relationship between religion and morality, the content of the good life, and the image of the sage or holy person who exemplifies the pinnacle of religious fulfillment.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course students should have:

- 1. Gained insight into key philosophical and religious themes that are common to the major world religions, and learned to understand how they contribute to religious identity and diversity.
- 2. Gained basic knowledge of the worldviews of the world's major religions, their differences, conflicts, and points of agreement.
- 3. Developed the ability to think both empathetically and critically about conflicting religious claims.
- 4. Learned to formulate their insights and opinions, as well as the result of their research, in a structured way corresponding to the standards of academic writing.

Textbook – required:

Philosophy of Religion – Toward a Global Perspective

Author: Gary E. Kessler Format: Paperback ISBN: 053450549X Date: 1999 Publisher: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

Highly recommended:

The World's Religions Author: Huston Smith Format: Paperback ISBN: 0-06250-8113 March 1992 Publisher: Harper San Francisco (Harper Collins)

Note on the textbook:

This is one of the few textbooks that can wholeheartedly be recommended. It consists of a collection of brief contributions arranged by theme and written by some of the best minds of the past and present.

Note on the readings:

Readings are intentionally limited to specific pages to encourage targeted focus. The expectation is that every student will actually read these texts before joining the discussion or submitting course work, so that we can have a meaningful interaction. A Weekly Reflection Paper based on the reading is to be submitted at the beginning of each session. Further instructions on the reflection papers will be given in class.

GRADING:

- Attendance and Participation 20%
- 3 Weekly Reading Reaction Papers (2-3 pages) 30%
- Research Paper 5-7 pages 30%
- Final Paper 4-5 pages) 30%

SCHEDULE

Assignment for Week 1: To be completed at home and brought to the first session.

Week 1

- General introduction What is the Philosophy of Religion?
- What is Religion?
- The Nature of Religious Traditions

Reading: Philosophy of Religion (Kessler)

xi-xxi (preface), 3-11 (Ninian Smart), 12-20 (Clifford Geertz)

Assignment due: To be completed at home and brought to the first session.

In a brief essay titled: "*The Truth of Religion*" (2-3 pages), explain your understanding of "religion" by addressing the following (**BEFORE WRITING, PLEASE CONSULT EVALUATION RUBRIC ON THE LAST PAGE OF THE SYLLABUS**):

1) Could you ever prove without a doubt the truth of your religion (or atheism) to another person? How would you go about proving it?

2) Could you ever be convinced to change your religious practice? If so, under what circumstances? If not, why not?

Week 2

- Diverse views of ultimate reality
- Can we prove that some kind of ultimate reality exists?

Reading: Kessler

44-46 (Intro), 56-62 (Shankara)
96-97 (Intro), 103-105 (St. Thomas Aquinas), 115-122 (Gunapala Dharmasiri)
442-444 (Blaise Paschal)
Assignment: Reaction Paper due on the Readings for week 2 (2-3 pages)

Week 3

• Religious experience - what is it and what does it prove?

Reading: Kessler

- 150-152 (Intro), 164-170 (Black Elk), 194-207 (Grace M. Jantzen)
- Why do suffering and evil occur?

Reading: Kessler

210-212 (Intro), 219-224 (Mencius / Hsün Tzu)

<u>Assignment:</u> Reaction Paper due on the Readings for week 3 (2-3 pages) Midterm Exam

Week 4

- How are religion and morality related?
- Are we immortal?

Reading: Kessler

235-238 (Kwame Gyekye) 270-275 (Confucius) 326-328 (Intro), 344-352 (Hick)

Assignment: Research Paper due

Week 5

- Do faith and reason conflict?
- Humanism, science, and miracles
- Are all religions true?
- Conclusion

Reading: Kessler

428-430 (Intro), 466-470 (Radhakrishnan) 483 (Intro), 505-510 (Masao Abe, David Hume) 529-536 (Intro, Raimundo Panikkar)

Assignment: Final Paper/Presentation due

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Attendance Policy

Classroom attendance is an integral part of the academic experience; therefore, students are expected to attend all class sessions. If an absence is unavoidable, the student, prior to class, should advise the instructor. Arrangements should be made at that time for additional assignments if appropriate. It is also expected that students arrive on time and not leave until the class is dismissed. Tardiness will result in a reduced grade for the course. If you cannot attend every class session you should consider dropping the course.

IMPORTANT:

- Missing one class session will drop the final grade by one letter grade (for example if the student earned a grade of "B" in the course, the final grade would be a "C").
- Missing two or more class sessions will be cause for a failing grade.

Incomplete grade

An incomplete <u>may be</u> given, at the discretion of the instructor, to those students who fail to complete assignments due the <u>last day</u> of your course. These would include absence from a final examination or inability to complete terminal assignments (papers, presentations) due to illness, employment conflicts, etc.

Incompletes <u>will not</u> be given to a student who fails to complete any assignment during the term. At the discretion of the instructor, these assignments could be completed no later than the last scheduled day of your class.

Drop Procedures

To drop a course, you must complete and submit a Schedule Change Request Form. The form can be accessed at the following web page:

http://www.bridgeport.edu/pages/2595.asp

Starting Fall 2012

- Add and/or Drop a course after the start date.....\$30.00 per transaction
- Drop prior to the start of classes......100% Tuition Refund

**Please note students <u>will not be</u> automatically dropped for missing the first class. Missing one class session will drop the final grade by one letter grade. If you have to miss the first class, or the first week of class for online classes, *you must contact your instructor* in writing before or after the first class/first week. However, a grade reduction will apply.

Please print and complete the form and fax the form to the IDEAL Office: 203-576-4537. Prior to dropping a course, the student should contact their IDEAL Academic Advisor to understand the implications to financial aid and/or degree plan progress.

Please review the Academic Calendar to see the fees for a drop and the impact on tuition. The Academic Calendar can be found at: <u>http://www.bridgeport.edu/pages/2595.asp</u>

Cell Phones

Cell phones must be turned off while in the classroom. A cell phone call is disruptive and disrespectful to the other students in the class.

Academic Dishonesty

We are committed to intellectual integrity in our academic pursuits; therefore, the IDEAL program prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is normally defined as, but not limited to, the following two categories:

Cheating – Using inappropriate sources of information in an assignment or on a test. The following are examples of cheating taken from real student experiences:

Case #1: A student is enrolled in an introductory computer-programming course. He has coworkers who program in the same language as his final project. As the end of the term approaches, he wonders how he will find the time to get the project finished, and asks one of his co-workers for help. His co-worker hands him a disk with a complete program similar to the kind required for the course project. The student makes minor modifications to the program, and submits it under his own name.

Case #2: A student enrolled in a religious studies course has never taken a humanities or history course, and is unsure about how to structure a research paper. She is doing research on the World Wide Web, and comes across a paper written by a student from another university. Using her computer mouse, she copies and pastes the document into her word processor. She goes to great lengths to re-word the paper in her own style, but essentially leaves the content and organization the same.

Plagiarism – Intentional as well as unintentional failure to acknowledge sources as well as the use of commercially available so-called "research papers" without full recognition of the source. Presenting as one's own, the ideas, words, or products of another. The following are examples of plagiarism taken from real student experiences:

Case #3: A student is conducting research for a Civil War research paper. He has reviewed work on the Internet as well as in the library. Finding helpful information, he has summarized his findings without citing his sources. He believes that minor paraphrasing is all that is necessary.

Case #4: A student is writing a paper that requires her to address specific topics and problems in the assigned course textbook. She takes the information directly from the textbook with slight modification, without giving any citation. She thinks that since it is the course textbook, she doesn't have to use quotations or citations.

Academic dishonesty applies to all courses, assignments or exams completed by students and submitted as their own original work, whether in person or by electronic means. The University does not tolerate cheating in any form. It is a serious breach of conduct with serious consequences. Instructors have the right to determine the appropriate penalty for academic dishonesty in their own classes; generally, however, such acts will result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or the course. The penalty for subsequent acts of academic dishonesty may include expulsion.

More information on how to recognize plagiarism can be found at this site: <u>http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/plagiarism_test.html</u>

ACADEMIC RESOURCE CENTER

The Academic Resource Center is available for IDEAL students seeking help in their studies. The Center is staffed by writing professionals and peer tutors. More information can be found at: http://myub.bridgeport.edu/academics/academicrescenter/Pages/default.aspx The Center is located in the Wahlstrom Library, Room 506. Hours of operation are Mondays –Thursday 9am – 6pm and Fridays 9am – 1pm. Make an appointment or walk-in: Telephone: 203-576-4290. **Online Tutoring** is available at: www.etutoring.org. To use this free service you must have a UBNet account.

Obtaining a UBNet Account

Every registered student should obtain a UBNet Account. The account allows you to access your grades, access library services, access online tutoring, access the computers in computer labs, and provides an email account in which the University sends out information. Go to: http://www.bridgeport.edu/ubnet - Click on "New UBNet Account" and follow the instructions.

The @bridgeport.edu email address is the official email the University uses to send information to you. You can have your Bridgeport.edu email forwarded to any other email account you use. Following the activation of your UBNet account (takes 24 hours), login at:

<u>http://www.bridgeport.edu/email</u> and click on "forwards" at the top of the page. Follow the directions to forward email messages to your other account.

Accessing Your Grades & Schedule Online

The WebAdvisor online information system allows students to search for available classes, check grades, view semester class schedule and verify your personal profile. Grades are generally posted 2-3 weeks following the end of a course. Information on WebAdvisor is password protected and requires you to use your UBNet username and password. To access WebAdvisor, go to:

http://www.bridgeport.edu/webadvisor

- 1. Login in with your UBNet username and password.
- 2. Click on "Student Menu."
- 3. Click on "My Grades."

If you are carrying a financial balance, access to WebAdvisor will be restricted.

Using the Library

You can access the library through the library's website: <u>http://www.bridgeport.edu/library</u>. Research tools available:

- Search for books held at the library.
- Search the online databases for your academic field; business, counseling, human services, psychology, etc.
- Send questions to the Reference Librarian for assistance in research topics and searching strategy.

To access the online journals for research purposes, you will need a UBNet account (see above).

Using Computers

Open access computer labs are available at three campuses:

- Bridgeport 1st floor of the Wahlstrom library. Check library hours of operation at: http://www.bridgeport.edu/library.
- Stamford Room D; Check open hours at: <u>http://www.bridgeport.edu/stamford</u>
- Waterbury Computer Lab; Check open hours at: http://www.bridgeport.edu/waterbury

Course Cancellations/ Weather Policy

Any emergency necessitating the canceling of courses will be announced by the University through the Emergency Notification Telephone Line, (203) 576-4159. Please call this number for information on course cancellations. Also, information will be posted under "Latest News" on the UB home page, (www.bridgeport.edu). Canceled classes will be made up either the week following the end of the

course or in consultation between the instructor and the students as to day and time availability.

Course cancellations are also announced on television and radio stations.

Please note each campus makes weather cancellations independently. You should always check with the specific campus staff. It is best to call the campus emergency phone.

Bridgeport – 203-576-4159 Waterbury - 203-573-8501 Stamford – 203-358-0700

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Office	Contact	Telephone	Email
Bridgeport Campus Security		(203) 576-4911	ubsecurity@bridgeport.edu
Bursar	Robinson Hernandez	(203) 576-4692	bursar@bridgeport.edu
Cashier	Lana Mistry	(203) 576-4682	cashier@bridgeport.edu
Financial Aid		(203) 576-4568	sfs@bridgeport.eud
Registrar		(203) 576-4642	registrar@bridgeport.edu
Emergency Notification Phone		(203) 576-4159	
Distance Education Office		(203) 576-4853	ubonline@bridgeport.edu
IDEAL Office		(203) 576-4800	idealinfo@bridgeport.edu

CAMPUS CONTACT INFORMATION

Campus	Address	Telephone	Email
Bridgeport	126 Park Avenue Bridgeport, CT 06604	(203) 576-4800	idealinfo@bridgeport.edu
Stamford	5 Riverbend Drive Stamford, CT 06750	(203) 358-0700	ubstamford@bridgeport.edu
Waterbury	84 Progress Lane Waterbury, CT 06705	(203) 573-8501	ubwaterbury@bridgeport.edu
Woodbridge	6 Lunar Drive Woodbridge, CT 06525	(203) 576-4800	idealinfo@bridgeport.edu
IDEAL Office		(203) 576-4800	idealinfo@bridgeport.edu

Directions to IDEAL Campus locations <u>http://www.bridgeport.edu/pages/2260.asp</u>

To fill out your financial aid report to the Federal Government, please go online to <u>www.fafsa.ed.gov</u>. The school code for the University of Bridgeport is <u>001416</u>. Federal Student Aid Information: 1-800-433-3243.

Evaluation Rubric

An 'A' essay will have the following qualities (in no particular order):

- 1. Logical Organization- a clear and identifiable thesis; compelling arguments in its defense; questions for further inquiry
- 2. Originality- ideas developed after substantial consideration; that lead to further thought
- 3. Clear Language- few, if any, grammatical mistakes; inspired word usage (avoid clichés)

A **'B'** essay will have 2 of the 3 above components, or all 3 partially executed; a **'C'** essay will have 1 of the 3 above components, or 2 partially executed; a **'D'** essay will have 2 of the elements partially executed; an **'F'** essay will be uninspired and deficient. (*Type and double space all essays.*)

Thesis

All essays **must** have an **underlined** thesis. A thesis is a statement (usually one sentence) that summarizes the main point of your essay. It is always your **answer** to the essay question.

Your thesis **must** contain **both** a "conclusion" and an "argument,"—in other words, your "answer" to the question and the "reasoning" behind your answer.

E.g. the essay question asks, "Which color is more beautiful, purple or blue?"

The "conclusion" or "yes/no" answer is whatever color you find more beautiful, for the sake of argument: purple.

The "argument" or "reasoning" is why you believe purple to be more beautiful: "because it is a combination of two colors."

Your thesis then is: "Purple is more beautiful than blue because it is a combination of two colors."

Reasoning

The aim of an essay is to communicate clearly in writing why you think what you think. The majority of your essay will be given over to this task.

Having written the above thesis, you would have to prove the following:

- 1) Establish as fact that blue is a primary color and that purple is an additive color
- 2) Establish a connection between complexity and beauty. To do so, you'll need to define "beauty" and demonstrate its relation to complexity
- 3) Establish that shades of purple are still more beautiful than shades of blue

Purpose

Explain to the reader the purpose and worth of your essay in both the introduction and conclusion, much like a "before and after" snapshot. Indicate what you have learned/come to doubt.