STMA 520: Spiritualities: East and West
Spring, Weekend Format, 2010- April 10, 11
May 21(evening), 22, 23.
Instructors: Valerie Lesniak and Jamal Rahman

Course Description:

"Until sight converges from more than one angle, the world looks as flat as a postcard. The rewards of having two eyes are practical, they keep us from bumping into chairs and enable us to judge the speed of approaching cars. But the final reward is the deepened view of the world itself."

Houston Smith

This course is designed to view **the spiritual life** from the different angles of several traditions. It will expose the participant to an **experiential appreciation** of the major traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity and Islam. The participants will design a personal spiritual program that incorporates practices and insights from these traditions. The course is an effort to aid the cultivation of ***sapientia*** as well as ***scientia***, of wisdom and knowledge. To facilitate this end, classroom time will be divided between group process and discussion, teaching and actual prayer practice.

Course Objectives

1. To develop an **appreciative understanding** of the traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

2. To reflect on insight from the traditions that enhance and deepen one's own faith and beliefs.

3. To study, experience and then possibly incorporate worship practices, meditations, and techniques from different religions that blends in well with one's unique personal spiritual practices.

4. To experience a spaciousness in one's mind and heart by becoming aware of the wealth of insights and practices from the diverse traditions.

This course contributes to the following MATS learning outcomes:

- Ability to listen and respond to how the Spirit is active and alive in local, global and cosmic communities
- Ability to discern and nurture spiritual experience in relation to self and others
- Ability to be a responsive, discerning listener who can enter another's worldview

Required Reading:

Brown, Patricia. **Paths to Prayer: Finding your Way to the Presence of God.** Jossey-Bass, 2003.
0-7879-6565-0

Consiglio, Cyprian. **Prayer in the Cave of the Heart: The Universal Call to Contemplation.** Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2010
978-0-8146-3276-5

Hanh, Thich Nhat. **Living Buddha, Living Christ.** Riverhead. 1995.
1-57322-568-1

Mackenzie, Donald, Falcon, Ted, Rahman, Jamal. **Getting to the Heart of Interfaith.** Vermont: Skylight Publishing, 2009.
978-1-59473-263-8

Rahman, Jamal, Elias, Kate Schmitt and Redding, Ann Holmes. **Out of Darkness Into Light; Spiritual Guidance in the Quran with Reflections from Jewish and Christian Sources.** Morehouse Publishing, 2009.
978-0819223388

Smith, Houston. **The Illustrated World Religions.** Harper. 1995.
978-0060674403

Highly Recommended:

Easwaran, Eknath. **Meditation.** Nilgiri Press. 1991.
0-915132-66-4

Rahman, Jamal. **The Fragrance of Faith: The Enlightened Heart of Islam,** The Book Foundation, 2004.
1-904510-08-6

Prior to Weekend 1, - Students should acquaint themselves with the books by Smith, Brown and Consiglio. By acquaint we mean read pertinent sections associated with the description of the scheduled themes of the block syllabus below. (i.e. Smith on Hinduism, Taoism Buddhism) Please read Rahman. Begin exploring "Getting to the Heart of Interfaith" text.
Please do some type of note keeping, journaling, scrape booking, or highlighting of each of the texts so that you will be able to participate in class room discussions.

Prior to Weekend 2. - Students should read the entire books of Consiglio and Hanh.
The Brown, Rahman, Mackenzie, and Smith books will be used during both weekends.

Tentative Schedule: (Schedule may be changed and adapted at the discretion of the instructors to meet the learning needs of the participants.)

Weekend One:

Block One:	Introduction to course; expectations Introduction to spiritual teachings of Of the world religions: Buddhism
Block Two:	Introduction to spiritual teachings of Hinduism and Islam
Third Block:	Insights from the Spiritual traditions of Sufism and Taoism
Fourth Block:	Experience of a variety of practices, meditations, Breathing techniques, chanting. Creating a spiritual practice that draws from several Traditions

Weekend Two

First Block:	Experience of a variety of practices, meditations, Breathing techniques, body movements and chanting
Block Two:	Reclaiming the feminine aspect in traditions
Block Three:	Divergence/Convergence within traditions
Block Four:	Continuation of practice; Judaism

Block Five: Practices continued and implications for ministry and Social justice and compassion

Course Requirements:

1. Class participation and a keeping of some type of notes or journal of readings and reflections about each type of practices engaged in the course.

2. Completion of Reading assignments.

3. Reflection Paper # 1: Dialogue with another tradition by conversing with someone of another tradition. **Due the beginning of the Second Weekend. (3-5 pages).**

4. Reflection Paper #2 (3-5 pages)
   Drawing on the insights, techniques, rituals and practices discussed and experienced in class, design a personal spiritual practice that integrates spiritual traditions. Due date to be decided by the course participants in dialogue with instructors.

Grade Distribution:

Class Participation: 60%
Written Assignments: 40%