

Newark Catholic High School

Theology III

World Religions

“The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men” (Nostra aetate, 3).

Objective:

This course is intended to introduce high school juniors to the religious diversity that surrounds us. Our goal is to gain an insight into other religions—their histories, as well as their activities and their adherents—and through this newfound insight gain a better understanding of our own religion and ourselves. As we become more and more understanding we will become more and more charitable.

Textbook and Readings:

- *Exploring the Religions of the World (ERW)*, by Nancy Clemmons, SNJM. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, Inc., 1999.
- Excerpts from other assigned readings will be distributed in class throughout the semester.

Tentative Topics of Study:

Judaism
Christianity
Islam
Hinduism
Buddhism
Chinese Religions
Japanese Religions
Religions with Christian and American Roots

Grading Breakdown:

1 Research Project & 1 Group Project @ 50-75 points
3 Tests @ 100 points each
Quizzes @ 20-25 points each
Homework/In-class assignments or quizzes @ 5-20 points each
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE = 700-1000 points (350-500 points per quarter)

Grading Scale:

A	100-93
A-	92-90
B+	88-89
B	87-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-78
C	77-73
C-	72-70
D+	69-68
D	67-63
D-	62-60
F	Below 60

How to Succeed in Theology III, World Religions:

Success in this class may be summed up with three bits of advice:

1. Pay Attention

Paying attention does not simply mean listening (although listening is an important part of paying attention). Rather, paying attention means that you actively engage yourself with the topics being presented and discussed. Yes, this means that you listen; but this also means that you open up your mind and intellectually wrestle with the topics at hand. Share your opinions about the topics with others (i.e., the class), compare your opinions with other perspectives, and reevaluate your opinions in order to strengthen them, modify them, or, if necessary, even change them. Practically speaking, therefore, paying attention requires a lot of listening and participating. Through this, you will gain a deeper understanding of the class topics, and you will be able to succeed come test-time. But also, more importantly, through paying attention you will move further and further down the road to young adulthood, growing intellectually and spiritually along the way.

2. Take Good Notes

This class covers a lot of material, and as a result we will talk about a wide range of information. It is good to organize this material by selecting the important points—that is, the stuff that gets repeated or emphasized throughout our lectures and discussions—and jot down these important points in some sort of organized fashion (for example, in an outline format). I will often help by providing on the chalkboard a basic outline of topical information that will be covered. But, I stress that this outline is only basic and is mostly for organizational purposes; it in no way should be the only substance of your notes. Rather, use this outline as a starting point, adding to it as the lectures and class discussions go into further detail. Come test-time, good in-depth notes will come in very handy. It is much easier to recall the important information covered in previous class lectures and discussions if you have a written record to study, rather than just trying to remember everything.

Furthermore, this class will talk about many philosophical ideas and foreign concepts which may be difficult to grasp. A good way to understand these ideas and concepts is by taking the information presented in the lectures or readings and restating this information in your own words in your notes. This allows you to internalize the information and grasp it on your own terms. Therefore, developing your own system of note-taking to explain esoteric ideas and concepts will greatly help you come to a deeper understanding of the class topics, and you will be in a better position to succeed come test-time.

3. Ask Questions

Questioning is necessary in any learning enterprise. Questioning helps to clear up misunderstandings, it gives you alternative ways to understand, and it allows you to more fully connect with the topic. In short, by continually asking questions about the material, your understanding will grow along with your critical thinking skills. This, no doubt, will put you in a better position to succeed come test-time.

Class Rules, Policies, & Procedures:

“Obedience is a blessing to be shown by all, not only to the teacher but also to one another as brothers and sisters, since we know that it is by this way of obedience that we go to God”
(St. Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of St. Benedict*, Chapter 71).

1. Be respectful to everyone.
 - Disruptive behavior will result in either a school or a teacher detention.
2. Be on time and seated when class begins.
 - You are counted tardy if you enter the classroom after the bell without an appropriate pass, and if you are not seated in your assigned seat and ready to go when the bell rings.
 - More than 3 tardies will result in either a school or a teacher detention.
3. Follow the dress code at all times. No Gum.
 - Excessive gum-chewing or violations of the dress code will result in a school detention.
4. Be prepared each day; bring your textbook and all your supplies to class everyday.

- Please participate in the class discussions and activities. Class participation is vitally important to learning and it demonstrates that you are prepared.
5. Cheating will not be tolerated.
 - Any student caught cheating on any test, project, or homework assignment will receive a zero on that task and may face further consequences in line with the student handbook.
 - Cheating includes plagiarism as well as copying off the work of other classmates.
 6. Homework is due at the beginning of class; in-class assignments are due at the end of class.
 7. Late homework assignments will be accepted up to one week after the original due date. Turning in late homework is far better than turning in no homework.
 - Late homework turned in up to three days late will automatically lose one letter grade per day late.
 - Late homework turned in four to seven days late will automatically lose half of the total points possible.
 - After a week has passed since the original due date, homework not turned in will be automatically counted as a zero.
 - Late homework turned in prior to the one week deadline and with a valid excuse will be accepted at no penalty; however, I reserve the right to determine the validity of the excuse.
 8. Quizzes and tests will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and/or long essay questions.
 9. For students who miss a day of class:
 - It is your responsibility to see me when you return to class to see what you missed. I will give you the appropriate reading assignments, worksheets or handouts (if any), and homework assignments (if any). Please get the notes from the class you missed from a fellow classmate.
 - All homework assignments must be made-up and turned in. The amount of days missed is the amount of time you will have to make-up the homework and turn it in with no penalty.
 - All quizzes and tests must be made up within one week of the original quiz or test date. Please coordinate your make-up date with me. Quizzes or tests not made up will result in a zero.

Links for Religious Study:

www.newadvent.org

- This is an excellent Catholic website that has an enormously full theological encyclopedia. It also has many ancient and medieval writings of the saints, including the full text of the Summa Theologica by St. Thomas Aquinas (literal translation by Fathers of the English Dominican Province).

www.ccel.org

- This is a great resource which has a large Christian encyclopedia and a full library of ancient, medieval, and modern Christian writings as well as scriptural commentaries and sermons.

www.blueletterbible.com

- This is an outstanding tool for Biblical study, as it has dozens of resources that are all very helpful for research and for improving your individual reading of Scripture.

www.vatican.va

- This is the official website for the Holy See. In understandable terms yet in remarkable depth, it nicely explains many features of the Catholic Church. It also has a giant library.