

Syllabus for Cults and World Religions (BST 703)
Front Range Bible Institute



Professor Tim Dane
Fall 2017

I. Course Description

Cults and World Religions is an apologetics class to help acquaint Christians with several of the major religious groups that one will likely encounter from time to time. This course will embrace two major kinds of topics: (1) cults, and (2) major world religions. The former consists primarily of religious groups that claim some type of significant identification with Jesus, but deviate substantially from biblical Christianity. These groups will generally have their authority based on the teachings of one particular individual. These groups will generally claim belief in the Bible but look in practice to some alternative book(s) of authority as the real source(s) of spiritual authority. Classic examples include Mormonism and Jehovah Witnesses.

World religions (as intended in this usage) would be those religions that do not claim such a high level of commitment to Jesus as do some of the cultic groups. These groups may (and often do) make statements that suggest a favorable view of Jesus. However, these groups have faith systems that are generally very different than Christianity. Some illustrations might include religions like Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, etc.

The course will include classroom lectures that are primarily based upon the professor's notes, although the format will not be in a pure lecture form. Students are encouraged to participate by asking and answering questions and taking notes. Detailed notes will be provided, but the student is encouraged to make additions in the margins based upon classroom discussions that will expand and elaborate. This class will also include relevant video presentations as well as a special conference to discuss the religions of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taosim. Classroom studies will be supplemented by relevant textbooks.

The course project will be aimed at helping the student compile a concise biblical presentation that the student will have for speaking with people in these groups.

II. Course Objectives

One objective of this class is to have students become familiar with the major views of these groups so that he might be able to effectively engage in conversation for the purpose of evangelization. Knowing what another person believes in spiritual issues and why that person holds those beliefs can be very helpful when seeking to lead another person to Jesus Christ. This course is built upon the conviction that it is not necessary for Christians to have an extensive knowledge of all the views of deviant religions, but that a working knowledge of major issues is helpful. To accomplish first objective, the professor will expose the students to the major issues on each group: origin, founder, major viewpoints, and major theological deviations.

A second but related objective of this class is to help the student develop his biblical and systematic theology so that he will be well equipped for recognizing and answering heretical doctrines in whatever group he might find them. This course is built on the assumption that a thorough knowledge of the Bible and its theological truths is the best way for helping those who are in false religions.

III. Required Course Materials

- A. All students: Survey professor's notes on Cults and World Religions.
- B. All students: Read Walter Martin's *The Kingdom of the Cults*, Revised edition, Ravi Zacharias, ed.
- C. All students: Read Bodie Hodge *World Religion and Cults*.
- D. Your own computer or at least access to a computer
 - i. Class work should be on Microsoft Word (or any comparable word processing program), although the hard copies of your project do not necessarily have to be done on this program. Using the same program may be helpful when it comes to questions about style and formatting.
 - ii. One may employ Power Point in putting together resources.
 - iii. You do not need to have a laptop in class, but you may use one for note-taking if you prefer.
- E. Logos Libronix Bible Software Program (highly **recommended** as a personal study tool, but not required for the class. Group discount may be possible through FBI).

IV. Course Requirements

- A. **Attend all classes** (if a student must miss a class, he/she must obtain a DVD copy and watch the lecture)
- B. **All students** read Walter Martin's *Kingdom of the Cults* (revised edition as edited by Ravi Zacharias, appx.)
- C. **All students** read Bodie Hodge *World Religions and Cults*.
- D. **All students must memorize assigned memory verses** (and put into writing) and **turn them in on assigned dates**.

V. Course Grading Criteria

- A. 20% Attend class and participate in discussions
- B. 20% Threaded discussion participation
- C. 30% Complete all course reading
- D. 30% Scripture memorization

VI. Class Projects

- A. **All students** must memorize certain significant Bible verses related to the topic material on a weekly basis.
- i. Students may choose their translation. The professor recommends that it be a well-respected and popular translation, i.e., NASB (**my preference**), NIV, NKJV, ESV, etc.
 - ii. Students must memorize the verse exactly as in the translation and where it is located.
 - iii. When memorized, the students turn in a written (computer preferred) sheet that they did from memory to demonstrate their successful memorization of those verses (can be emailed).
 - iv. The verses to be memorized and the due date for each written sheet are listed below on the schedule.
- B. Answer threaded discussion questions:
- i. The professor will have threaded discussion questions placed onto the FRBI website starting in week 2.
 - ii. Each student must reply to each of the questions with an answer of roughly 100-200 words.
 - iii. Each student must interact with at least one of the other students each week with a reply of roughly 20-50 words.
 - iv. This reply will be an affirmation for what is helpful but it may also contain further information on the topic or even corrective statements in the case of errors.
 - v. All answers must be done with supreme grace and thoughtfulness. The goal is not to tell people how they are wrong, but to provide an opportunity for helping each other grow.
 - vi. Ask me if you have questions about this requirement.
- C. Project: Take the Scripture that you are memorizing, and organize it into an outline of Biblical Theology as a ministry tool (**Note: This course requirement will not be utilized in the Fall 2017 session**).
- i. Organize according to theological concepts:
 1. A category for Bibliology
 2. A category for God
 3. A category for Christ
 4. A category for the Holy Spirit
 5. A category for Salvation
 6. Others if you wish to be more thorough

- ii. Under each category (which you will have in some kind of outline format) you will place the appropriate verses and a concise statement about what that verse teaches on that respective doctrine.
- iii. You can add more verses from anywhere if you want to expand.
- iv. The idea is to have you create a very useful ministry tool for sharing the gospel with others.
- v. Ask me if you have questions about the objective of the project or its format.

D. Have all project **completed, taught, and turned in by the date listed below.**

VII. Course Schedule

Class	Date	Class Topic	Personal Studies
1	9-7	Key principles of evangelism, apologetics, and cults, basic communication reminders	Begin reading Martin's Kingdom of the Cults (read fast for the sake of staying current, but there is no schedule on the reading)
2	9-14	Mormonism	Continue reading Martin Begin memorizing #1: Deut. 6:4-6; Matt. 22:37-40; Is. 43:10-13; 44:6; 48:12; Rev. 1:7-8, 17-18; 21:6; 22:12-13; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 1 Tim. 2:5
3	9-21	Mormonism, cont., Jehovah Witnesses	Continue reading Martin Turn in #1: Deut. 6:4-6; Matt. 22:37-40; Is. 43:10-13; 44:6; 48:12; Rev. 1:7-8, 17-18; 21:6; 22:12-13; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 1 Tim. 2:5 Begin memorizing #2: Mic. 5:2; Zech. 12:10; 14:4; John 1:1-5, 14, 18; 3:16; 5:18-27; 6:35, 51; 8:12, 24, 58; 10:9, 11, 14; 11:25-26; 15:1-5; 18:4-9; 20:28
4	9-28	Jehovah Witness, cont., Christian Science, Unity,	Finish Martin

		Scientology	<p>Turn in #2: Mic. 5:2; Zech. 12:10; 14:4; John 1:1-5, 14, 18; 3:16; 5:18-27; 6:35, 51; 8:12, 24, 58; 10:9, 11, 14; 11:25-26; 15:1-5; 18:4-9; 20:28;</p> <p>Begin memorizing #3: Acts 10:43; Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:13-20; Heb. 1:1-3, 8; 3:1-6; 13:8, 1 John 1:1-5; 5:18-21</p>
5	10-5	Roman Catholicism	<p>Begin reading Hodge</p> <p>Turn in #3: Acts 10:43; Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:13-20; Heb. 1:1-3, 8; 3:1-6; 13:8, 1 John 1:1-5; 5:18-21</p> <p>Begin memorizing #4: Is. 52:13-53:12</p>
6	10-12	Seventh-Day Adventism	<p>Continue reading Hodge</p> <p>Turn in #4: Is. 52:13-53:12</p> <p>Begin memorizing #5: John 6:35, 48, 51; John 8:12; 10:7 (and 10:9); John 10:11 (and 10:14); John 11:25-26; John 14:6; John 15:1 (and 15:5); John 18:5-6</p>
7	10-19	Oneness Pentecostalism	<p>Continue reading Hodge</p> <p>Turn in #5: John 6:35, 48, 51; John 8:12; 10:7 (and 10:9); John 10:11 (and 10:14); John 11:25-26; John 14:6; John 15:1 (and 15:5); John 18:5-6</p> <p>Begin memorizing #6: Matthew 11:27-30; John 3:16; 6:29, 37-39, 44, 63; 10:27-30; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-11, 13-14; Acts 5:3-4; 16:31</p>
8	10-26	Judaism	<p>Continue reading Hodge</p> <p>Turn in #6: Matthew 11:27-30; John 3:16; 6:29, 37-39, 44, 63;</p>

			10:27-30; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-11, 13-14; Acts 5:3-4; 16:31 Begin memorizing #7: Romans 8:26-27, 28-30; 2 Cor. 1:22; 3:17-18; 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14; 2:1-10; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2:5; Titus 2:11-13; 3:3-7
9	11-2	Islam	Finish reading Hodge Turn in #7: Romans 8:26-27, 28-30; 2 Cor. 1:22; 3:17-18; 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14; 2:1-10; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2:5; Titus 2:11-13; 3:3-7 Begin memorizing #8: Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 26, 28; 10:10, 12; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:1-2; 2 Peter 1:1-3
10	11-9	Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism	Turn in #8: Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 26, 28; 10:10, 12; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:1-2; 2 Peter 1:1-3
11	11-16	Bahai, Kabala	Final class.
			All reading all semester projects, and all other requirements must be completed and turned in by class 11 on Nov. 11

VIII. Weekly questions (find answers in your textbook, other personal resources, or internet). Answer your question to the professor by Friday following the stated date. Your reply to the other students must be by Sunday of that same week (the day before the next question comes up). You can answer the questions on the very day they are do. You can work ahead and answer them before they are do, too.

Class	Week	Question
1	9-7	No question this week
2	9-14	Describe the Mormon concept of God and Christ, and the Spirit, and give a biblical answer as to why this Mormon view is not acceptable.
3	9-21	Describe the Mormon view of salvation, and give a biblical answer as to why this Mormon view is not acceptable.
4	9-28	Describe the JW view of Christ and salvation, and give a biblical

		answer as to why this JW view is not acceptable.
5	10-5	Describe the Roman Catholic view of salvation (including the sufficiency of the cross) and give a biblical answer as to why this view is not acceptable.
6	10-12	Describe the Seventh Day Adventist view of the Sabbath, and give a biblical answer as to why this view is not acceptable.
7	10-19	Describe the Seventh Day Adventist view of eternal punishment, and give a biblical answer as to why this view is not acceptable.
8	10-26	Give a summary of the major teachings of Islam on who God is and how one can have a relationship with God, and why these views should be rejected.
9	11-2	Give a concise explanation of the history and basic belief systems of (1) Hinduism, (2) Buddhism, and Taoism.
10	11-9	Give a concise explanation of the history and basic belief systems of (1) Bahai, and (2) Kabala.
11	11-16	No questions.

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