Welcome to History 7, the World's Great Religions  
LAVC Spring 2009, Professor Michelle Visco Lewis

Please read this entire document carefully. Enrolled students are responsible for all information contained in this document.

Make sure to complete the Introductory Tasks (beginning on page 4 of this document) by 11pm on Saturday, February 14. Students who do not complete them by the due date may be dropped from the course.

Suggestions for a positive and successful experience:

1) Time commitment

   When this course is offered as a traditional, face-to-face class, it meets for approximately 3 1/2 hours per week. That does not include time spent on the coursework outside of the classroom, such as reading the textbook and writing. Therefore, you should expect to spend the same amount of time for an online class as for a face-to-face class, more than 3 1/2 hours per week. Expect to log on to the class website at least 3 times per week, and to be spending a significant amount of time online.

2) Read and follow all directions carefully

   This is so crucial to be successful in an online course. I have found that some students don't do well in my online courses simply because they have failed to read and follow directions. Ensure a good start by reading this document carefully. Throughout the course, make sure to read all directions for the various assignments carefully and read all announcements.

3) Procrastination…don’t do it!

   Do not wait until the last minute to complete the assignments. Just because an assignment is due on a particular day, does not mean that you need to wait until that day to work on it. In fact, you should always try to work ahead of the due dates. Excuses for missing deadlines, including technical difficulties and personal problems, will not be accepted. Slightly late work will be accepted in some cases, however points will always be deducted.

4) Stay connected

   Every time you log on to Etudes, check the Announcements, your Private Messages and the Discussion Board for new entries. Check the calendar in the Schedule section to make sure you are on track with progress on all of your assignments.

5) Have fun!

   Hopefully you are taking this class, at least in part, because you have an interest in the subject. Enjoy the videos, readings and discussions. Be respectful of your classmates’ opinions as they are expressed in the Discussion Forums.
Course Objectives:
A. Compare and contrast the beliefs and sacred texts of the world’s major religions.
B. Describe the origins and historical development of the world’s major religious institutions.
C. Evaluate the impact of religious belief on human behavior throughout history.
D. Analyze the impact of the spread of the major religions throughout the various parts of the world.
E. Describe how the political, social and cultural institutions of the various peoples have been influenced by their religious concepts.

Instructor Contact Information:
1) Private Message via Etudes
2) Email: viscomm@lavc.edu

I will respond to email and private messages on the same or next day that the message is left Monday-Thursday. Responses are likely over the weekend as well, but not guaranteed. The preferred method is by private message within the Etudes system.

Meetings: Online and In-Person
There are no in-person meetings for this course. There are no required online meetings for this course. You may complete the work according to your own schedule as long as it is submitted on time.

Required Text: Matthews, Warren. World Religions. fifth or sixth editions are acceptable (Thomas Wadsworth). The sixth edition just came out in January 2009, so it will not be possible to find used versions of that version.

The textbook is necessary for this course. You will need it from the very beginning of the course. If you order it online, and the book does not arrive on time, this will not be a valid excuse for not being able to complete your work to the level expected. There are new and used copies available at the LAVC Bookstore. Make sure to purchase the correct volume. There is one copy of the textbook available on reserve at the LAVC Library.

Grading: It is possible to earn a total of 200 points in this class.
A= 180 or more points
B= 160-179 points
C= 140-159 points
D= 120-139 points
F= 119 or less points

Introductory Tasks = 5 points total
5 Assignments = 80 points total
5 Discussion Topics = 75 points total
1 Paper = 40

Assignments: Posted in the “Tasks, Tests, Surveys” section of the Etudes website. The assignments usually will consist of reading particular sections of the textbook and answering questions based on what you have learned.

It is possible to submit assignments up to 2 days past the due date. Points will be deducted for late submissions. Once the 2 day grace period passes and the assignment closes, there will be absolutely no more submissions for that assignment accepted.

Once an assignment is graded you may click on it, and read any comments or feedback from me (in red).
**Discussion Topics:**
Posted in the “Discussion and Private Messages” section of the Etudes website. The Discussion Topics will have two parts and two separate due dates. For each discussion topic, you will be posting an initial response as part one, and you will be responding to your classmates as part two.

You will be placed in small groups for each Discussion Topic. And the groups will rotate, so you will be placed with different students for each topic.

Once a Discussion forum closes, no more submissions will be accepted.

**Paper:**
You will be writing one paper during this course. The topic will be such that it will require you to discuss the connections between some of the various subjects covered in the course. You will draw on information from the textbook readings, the videos and additional outside sources for the paper.

**Course Schedule:**
Although the due date will be listed with each individual task (Paper, Assignment or Discussion Topic), you may access a calendar with the open and due dates for every task in the "Schedule" section of the Etudes website. I recommend that you view the calendar “by month” to get a good overview of the course schedule.

Notice that this course is not self-paced. The Paper, Assignments and Discussion Topics are all set to open and close on specific dates. This is so the class may move along at the same pace. It is your responsibility to check the Schedule often and be aware of when tasks are opening and when they are due.

**Gradebook:**
You are encouraged to check your grade progress regularly in the “Gradebook” section of the Etudes website.

**Technical Help**
The LAVC Help Desk is there for you! If you have any technical difficulties, why not talk to the experts?
Contact: etudeshelp@lavc.edu or (818) 778-5834

**Logging On to the Class**
Enrolled students will be able to log on to the course site beginning approximately 3 days before the official start of the class. At that point, you may get started by going to the LAVC Virtual Valley site and follow the directions carefully. [http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/loggingonline.htm](http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/loggingonline.htm)

Once you have logged in to Etudes, you will automatically be in the “My Workspace” section. Click on the LAVC HIS 007 tab to the right of My Workspace. This will place you in the History 7 class site.
**Introductory Tasks**

To get started, you are responsible for completing several introductory tasks. These tasks are designed to help you become acquainted with the Etudes operating system, and for us to become acquainted with each other. The intention is for you to become comfortable with Etudes, so that throughout the rest of the course, you can focus all of your efforts toward mastering the actual course material, as opposed to dealing with technical issues. You must be logged on to the Etudes class site to accomplish these tasks.

The due date is 11pm on Saturday, February 14. If you have not completed these tasks by the due date, you may be dropped from the course.

Introductory Tasks: Follow the directions carefully. I highly recommend printing this document and using it as a checklist as you move through each task.

1) Introduce yourself in the Discussion Forum and respond to at least one of your classmate’s introductions. Here’s how…
   a. Click “Discussion and Private Messages” from the left side menu.
   b. Once there, click on “Student Introductions”.
   c. Under Topic, click on “Meet Your Classmates”.
   d. Read my post. Then click “Post Reply”. Write your own introduction.
   e. Read other students’ introductions and reply to at least one of them.

** Optional but recommended: within the Discussion and Private Messages section, click the “My Profile” option toward the top. Here you can upload a picture (avatar) which will appear with all of your Discussion posts. Please note: all avatars must be "rated G". If your avatar contains questionable content, I will remove your posts and you won't get credit for those posts.

2) Submit a practice assignment. (There is no preparation for this. It is purely for you to practice the mechanics of submitting an assignment). Here’s how…
   a. Click “Tasks, Tests, Surveys” from the left side menu.
   b. Click “Begin” which is located beneath Practice Assignment.
   c. Read the instructions, then click “Begin” (for a second time).
   d. Type in the responses to the questions where it says “Answer”
   e. Click “Continue Later”
   f. Click “Continue” which is located beneath Practice Assignment.
   g. Click on the question.
   h. Make any modifications to your answer if needed. Then click “Finish”. Click “Finish” again in the pop up window to confirm.
   i. Click “Return”

** Although the Continue Later step is not absolutely necessary, it is recommended to periodically save as you go, to avoid losing any work if your internet connection is disrupted.
3) View the course Schedule. Here’s how…

   a. Click “Schedule” from the left side menu.
   b. Near the top left, you will see “View Calendar by Week”. Click on the drop down menu and select “Calendar by Month”.
   c. Find the date May 8. Write down the item that is due on that date. (You will use this info. when completing Intro. Task 5.) Hint: On the calendar, there will be little red exclamation marks next to items that are due.

4) View a document posted in the Resources section. Here’s how…

   a. Click "Resources" from the left side menu.
   b. Click on the file titled "Discussion 1"
   c. Open the pdf document contained in the file. Write down the title of the document once opened. (You will use this info. when completing Intro. Task 5)

5) Send me a private message. Here’s how…

   a. Click on "Discussion and Private Messages" from the left side menu.
   b. Click the “Private Messages” option toward the top.
   c. Click on “newpm”
   d. Select my name (Lewis, Michelle Visco) from the To User list
   e. In the Subject, type “test”.
   f. In the message body, type in the name of the item due from Task 3 and the title of the document from Task 4.
   g. Click “Submit”
   h. I will reply to your private message. So, make sure to check your Inbox to read my reply.

6) Confirm your contact email address. This is very important because it ensures that you will receive my announcements by email. Here's how…

   a. In Etudes, click on the "My Workspace" tab in the top left corner of the screen.
   b. Click on "Account" from the left side menu.
   c. You should see an email address listed under your name. If this is the email address you would like to use, you are done. If you would like to change this email address, click "Modify Details" and type in your preferred email address.
   d. Click "Update Details" when finished modifying your information.