Description: This course explores the history, major themes, philosophies, and components of the major religions of the world: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Zen Buddhism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In addition, we will also examine primal and native religions, as well as, some ancient religious traditions. This will all be done from an attitude of what relevance do these traditions have for the world and me right now.

Objectives:
1. Through active participation, which by necessity involves and requires listening, we will create, construct and maintain the “Classroom as Holy Ground.”
2. Provide an introduction to the major religions of the world through the lens of the 6 C’s: Creed, Code, Ceremony, Community, Change and Corruption.
3. Understand the Catholic Church’s relationship (different than other Christian traditions) with regard to other world religious traditions.
4. Encourage mature reflection upon one’s own religious and spiritual identity.
5. Foster appreciation and respect with regard to the religious views of others—given the state of the world realize that dialogue is a necessity as opposed to a luxury.
6. Highlight the connections between religious faith and ethical action. In particular, we will examine how religion by its very nature entails an ethical response to the personal, social, and political problems of our time—Global ethic.

Texts:
*Your Life (seriously)*

*Man’s Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy* (newly revised and enlarged) by Viktor Frankl (Touchstone Books, New York), 1959.

*Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse (Bantam Books, New York), 1951.


A collection of articles, further resources (at minimal cost) also will be distributed the first week of school. Other material will be passed out on an "as needed" basis.

Throughout the course of the year certain videos and presenters are used. They have been chosen by the Religious Education Department for their educational value. If you have any questions feel free to contact me. Movies (or clips) which may be viewed: Apocalypto, Black Robe, Smoke Signals, The Joy Luck Club, Little Buddha, Kundun, Osama, Monsieur Ibrahim, Passion of the Christ, Malcolm X, Water, Bend It Like Beckham, etc. This list is not conclusive or exhaustive of all the material used in class.

Format: The class will have a diversified format: a combination of lecture, class discussion, small group discussion, student presentations, guest speakers, and films. Informed reflection upon and discussion of materials is encouraged. You will contribute to the process of education in this class through your contributions to the large and small group discussions and through group reports. You should expect to be called upon for summaries of texts read and for your reflections, opinions, and analyses of those texts. Therefore, careful preparation for class is essential.

Expectations, Policies, and Assignments: You are expected to give evidence that you have carefully read and reflected upon the assigned readings through your active participation in class
and performance on essays and tests. By making perceptive comments and asking pertinent questions, you will contribute to the experience of learning in this class.

Absence does not excuse you from competency concerning the topics discussed or from knowledge of syllabus changes. If you know you will be absent from a test, quiz, or presentation make every effort possible to contact me before the missed class. If this is not possible, please contact me as soon as possible so work can be made up. Failure to do so could result in an "F" for that test/quiz or assignment. Make-up tests and quizzes are best done during school (your lunch or a free period). School policy for late work is stated in your handbook. Please familiarize yourself with it (page 20).

In regard to classroom discipline let respect guide any and everything you say or do. "Hear and understand: not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man" (Mt 15:11). Or another way of putting it: "You can do anything that I do." Or still another phrase to remember is “Too familiar.” And finally, “Don’t transgress sacred ground.” This is from the first article that you’ll read this year.

*Important observation: If what we talk about has any relevance and application, it should show itself in the way this class (this community) interacts with itself. It could be said that this class is a microcosm of the larger macrocosm that is the dynamic of religious traditions in dialogue with one another.

Format for Written Assignments:
1) It is preferred that all written assignments be typed or produced on a word processor, double-spaced with one-inch margins on both sides.
2. Make sure your name appears on the first page; all pages should be stapled prior to class.
3. Avoid gender exclusive language in your work.
4. Before submitting your work proofread and make the necessary corrections. Failure to do so will result in a lower grade.
5. Length of papers will range from 750-1000 words (3-4 pages). There is a connection between quality and quantity.

Evaluation: Will follow the scale of St. Xavier and be a numerical combination of tests, quizzes, essays, presentations, and class participation. Generally speaking assignments will be worth 100 points.

Major Assignments (1st Quarter): (More extensive guidelines will follow)
1. Man’s Search for Meaning and World Religions (Senior Reading Assignment)
2. “Black Robe” movie reflection—integrates binder material.
3. Presentations of Religious Tradition—the bulk of the class.
4. Buddhism and me—3 choices (for lack of a better title). Here you’ll also integrate the book Siddhartha
5. Exam covering first few chapters in text

If you have any questions feel free to see me. Good luck.