Basic ideas

• Religions are inseparable from cultures.
  • Only Abrahamic religions distinguish the sacred & the secular.
  • We will look at how religion is embedded in the culture.
  • And see how religion gets people through the day.
Basic ideas

- Religion makes sense of life.
  - We tend to see religion as a divisive, irrational, fanatical.
  - But “re-ligion” = re-connect.
  - Gives meaning to a crazy world.
  - Control, predictability.
  - Social order.
Course Outline

- Religions of the Middle East
  - Zoroastrianism
  - Islam & its roots in Judaism and Christianity
  - Islam in the Gulf States
  - Islam in Saudi Arabia
  - Islam in Turkey
  - Islam in Iran
  - Islam in Jordan (focus on Alawite sect)
Course Outline

Religions of South Asia

- Background: Harappan and Aryan civilizations
- Hindus, mysticism, and yoga
- Parsis
- Sikhs
- Jains
Course Outline

Religions of East Asia

- Confucianism
- Daoism
- Mahayana Buddhism in China, Japan, Vietnam
- Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia
Course Outline

Religions of Africa and the Americas

- Rastafari movement
- Voodoo (Vodun)
- Candomblé (Brazil) & Santería
- Shona religion (Zimbabwe)
- Maya/Aztec religions & Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe (Mexico)
- Pueblo, Navajo, Hopi, and Cherokee religions
- New religions of the U.S. (Mormonism, 7th Day Adventist, Christian Science, etc.)
Course Outline

Current issues

“Religious” conflict

Fundamentalism
  • Revitalization cults
  • Wahhabis, Taliban, U.S. fundamentalism

Fundamentalism, science, and religion