

PL203  
Midterm Exam  
Due: On or Before 11/6/03 class

Your readings and lecture material have to date stressed several points, but overarching all have been the following:

- A preliminary definition of “religion,” refined to some extent via the concept of “tradition” as presented in class
- An overview of basic beliefs and assumptions about Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism
- An introduction to monotheism, by way of both contrasts between linear and cyclic understandings of time and the redemptive emphases of Zoroastrianism, and last, an overview of both
- Judaism and Christianity...with the completion of the latter yet to come, together with an overview of Islam

In the light of your study and reflection on these points, please address the following three questions for your midterm exam. All together, they are worth a total of 40 semester points, consistent with the grading schema indicated in the syllabus.

1. In a well thought through essay briefly describe what is meant by “cyclic” and “linear” understandings of time. In your discussion provide two examples that illustrate the contrast between these two approaches or understandings of time. For example, you may speak about ideas of divinity in each, “salvation” in each, “creation” and/or the social fabric in each.. [15 points]
2. Briefly summarize the concept “religion” as you now understand it. In your discussion, be sure to detail the concept of “tradition” and illustrate your discussion with concepts/practices/beliefs, etc., from any of the “traditions” we have examined to date. [15 points]
3. I am curious to know what insights you have come to via the interdisciplinary study of religion. And please note that I said “insights,” not observations, methodologies, or the like, although any of the latter may affect “insight.” [10 points]

## FORMAT

1. **Do not exceed two pages per question (exclusive of any bibliography you may cite).**
2. **Double space your text and use one inch margins all around.**
3. **Your name should appear on each page in either a header or footer.**
4. **Please note: Your grade will include an attention to your writing, with one point deducted for each grammatical, typing and/or spelling error AFTER THE FIRST. Ergo, write clearly, correctly, cogently, and with concrete illustrations as directed. AND BE SURE TO USE THE SPELL CHECK FEATURE.**