I. Instructor Information

Name: Dr. Don Spitler  
Ph D – Religious Studies  
M. A. – Communication  
Office Location: CHARTS 439  
Office Hours: MW - 11:00 AM – 12 PM  
TR - 11:00 AM – 12 PM  
F - 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM  
E-mail: dspitler@uaptc.edu (preferred method of contact)  
Telephone: 501-812-2246

II. Catalog Description

3 Credit Hours (3 hours lecture per week)

This course will introduce students to the academic study of religion. Students will survey the essential  
themes, theories and methodological skills that are necessary for the historical and cross-cultural  
analysis of religious phenomena.

Prerequisites: Completion of DEVE 0316, 0317, or 0110 with a grade of “C” or better, or 83 or above on  
the COMPASS Reading Placement Test. (3 credit hours)

III. Course Resources

Textbook: Lawrence S. Cunningham and John Kelsay, The Sacred Quest: An Invitation to the Study of  

Blackboard: The gradebook in Blackboard will be the official gradebook for the class. I will use  
Blackboard to post links, documents, and other resources that I deem helpful to your study of religion  
and American culture.

IV. Division Objectives

The Fine Arts and Humanities Division upholds and promotes the general education objectives stated in  
the PTC Catalog by requiring students taking classes in the Fine Arts and Humanities Division to:

1. Think critically.
2. Act with integrity.
3. Write across the curriculum.
4. Demonstrate computer literacy.
5. Demonstrate information literacy.
6. Demonstrate cultural literacy and sensitivity.
7. Understand the importance of civic/community involvement.

V. Course Objectives and Course Content

Course Objectives.
- Distinguish between the academic study of religion and the confessional-apologetic study of religion.
- Summarize and criticize the work of important theorists.
- Explore and analyze the categories that scholars use to organize the data and phenomena of the world’s religions: myth, ritual, experience, doctrine, etc.
- Examine religion’s influence on personal and social identity, e.g. gender, ethnicity, class, etc.

VI. Attendance Policy

Agencies granting financial assistance may be notified of the violation of the attendance policy by students receiving financial aid.

Attendance is taken starting the first day of the semester, with the exception of students who enroll after classes have started. Teachers have the right to count students as absent if they arrive late to class, leave class early, or go in and out of the classroom during class time. Teachers have the right to lower a student’s grade based on excessive absences. Teachers have the right to enforce UA-PTC’s administrative drop policy for days of consecutive nonattendance. Such particulars as determined by the instructor are detailed in the paragraph below. I will drop those who miss six consecutive class periods and who fail to contact me concerning absences.

You are expected to attend all class meetings unless mitigating circumstances (such as, a death in the family, illness, etc.) arise. I will take roll every class meeting. Five absences without penalty is allowed. You must arrive at class on time. If you arrive after I have taken roll, you will be counted as absent. To receive an excuse for an absence, formal documentation (such as, a doctor’s note, funeral program, etc.) will be required.

I will give points for attendance, and points will be deducted from your attendance grade if you come in late or if you leave early. See the information provide under Attendance Grade in the Grading section below.

VII. Classroom Policies

The UA-PTC Student Handbook rules and regulations will be enforced in this class at all times. Professional behavior is required. Punctual attendance and intelligent participation are expected.

Disagreements about issues related to religion are inevitable, so it is expected that students will treat others with dignity and respect. Students are encouraged to listen respectively and to focus any objections on positions and not on people.
VIII. Grading

Readings
The assigned readings are the foundation for our discussion postings, assignments, and exams. It is expected that you will complete readings before the assigned date. While not always discussed in class, all assigned readings represent testable material.

Unit Exams = 400 Points
Four exams (100 points each) will be given during the course of the semester. For each exam you are responsible for all material presented in your required readings, as well as additional materials I might provide.

Writing Assignments = 200 Points (4 x 50 points)
For each unit, you will write about some topic covered in that unit that you found particularly interesting or intriguing. The purpose of each of the four writing assignments is to get you to think about various issues raised in your study of the themes covered in that particular unit. In each assignment, I will include prompt questions that are designed to get you to thinking about possible topics for discussion. You may choose your own topic to discuss as long as you focus on some topic in the unit, and as long as you clearly identify what the topic is that you will discuss. These assignments are more like discussion assignments rather than like essay. Each of these papers will be about three paragraphs in length.

Attendance Grade = 75 Points
Our class will meet 30 times during the semester. For every day you attend class, you will receive 2.5 points. If you do not attend class, you will not receive the points for that day. For every tardy, 0.5 points will be deducted from your attendance points for that day. In addition, leaving class before we dismiss for the day will result in a deduction of 0.5 points. Students who attend class long enough for me to take roll and then leave WILL be counted absent for the day.

Exploring a Religion Project = 200 Points
Based on the “common patterns” of religions presented throughout the text, you will explore a religion of your choice. The assignment will have two components to it: a written component (500-word essay) and an oral component (a five-to-ten minute presentation about your findings). Each component will be worth 100 points. More information on this assignment will come later in the semester.

Course Agreement = 25

Grading Scale
Letter grades will be based on the following scale:

- **A (Excellent)** = 90% - 100% (810 - 900 points)
- **B (Good)** = 80% - 89% (720 - 809 points)
- **C (Average)** = 70% - 79% (630 - 719 points)
- **D (Below Average)** = 60% - 69% (540 - 629 points)
- **F (Failing)** = 59% or Less (0 – 539 points)

IX. Academic Integrity

It is expected that all students who attend UA-PTC conduct themselves in a manner appropriate for the college experience. Academic integrity is a vital component of collegiate behavior. The UA-PTC Student Handbook states, “The gaining of knowledge and the practice of honesty go hand-in-hand.”
The handbook also states, “The responsibility and authority of initiating discipline arising from violations of the rules against dishonesty during the process of the course are vested in the instructor of that course.” The complete Academic Integrity Policy can be found in the UA-PTC Student Handbook.

X. **Accommodation Policy**

Services for Students with Disabilities: UA-PTC is committed to fulfilling all federal requirements as stated in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Accommodations are available to students who have documented disabilities. Students who request accommodations must register with the Coordinator of Disability Services in Counseling Services (501-812-2220 or www.uaptc.edu) prior to the semester of planned enrollment, and must provide recent documentation of medical, educational, and/or psychological records.

Students who need accommodations should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. Accommodations will only be provided if the instructor receives a letter of approved accommodations from the Coordinator of Disability Services. Failure to provide sufficient notification may result in a delay of services.

XI. **Course Evaluations**

Students may be asked to evaluate their instructor and course near the end of the semester. These student evaluations are very important to the improvement in the quality of instruction and course materials. All results are anonymous and shared with the faculty only after the semester is over and grades have been posted.

XII. **Information Literacy**

UA-PTC is committed to the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education as established by the Association of College and Research Libraries and endorsed by the National Forum on Information Literacy. Therefore, all courses will incorporate an information literacy component so that, by graduation, all students will be able to recognize the need for information, then locate, evaluate, synthesize, and communicate information in an ethical manner. Information literacy encompasses critical thinking, research, media, technology, health, business, and visual literacy skills to produce lifelong learners who can make informed decisions in the workplace and in their personal lives.

XIII. **Course Schedule/Course Content**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT/ACTIVITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 16, 18</td>
<td>Introduction to Course; Course Agreement; Read introduction and chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 23, 25</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jan 30, Feb 1</td>
<td>Chapters 1 and 2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 6, 8</td>
<td>Chapter 2 Unit 1 Exam (Introduction; Chapters 1 and 2); Opens 2/9; Closes 2/15. Unit 1 Paper Due – 2/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Assignment Description</td>
<td>Points Possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 13, 15</td>
<td>Chapter 3; Chapter 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 20, 22</td>
<td>Chapter 4; Chapter 5&lt;br&gt;Unit 2 Exam (Chapters 3, 4 and 5); Opens 2/23; Closes 3/1. Unit 2 Paper Due – 2/22.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 27, Mar 1</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
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<td>Mar 6, 8</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
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<td>Mar 13, 15</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
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<td>Mar 18 - 24</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
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<td>Mar 27, 29</td>
<td>Chapter 7&lt;br&gt;Unit 3 Exam (Chapters 6 and 7). Opens 3/30; Closes 4/5. Unit 3 Paper Due – 3/29</td>
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<td>Apr 3, 5</td>
<td>Chapters 8</td>
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<td>Apr 10, 12</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
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<td>Apr 17, 19</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
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<td>Apr 24, 26</td>
<td>Chapter 9&lt;br&gt;Unit 4 Paper Due – 4/26</td>
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<td>May 1, 3</td>
<td>Presentations of Exploring Religion Assignment (oral and written)</td>
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<td>May 5 - 11</td>
<td>Finals Week - Unit 4 Exam, Chapters 8 and 9 (counts as final). Opens 5/4; Closes 5/11.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Assignment Description</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Syllabus Agreement</td>
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<td>3/1</td>
<td>Unit 1 Exam</td>
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<td>Unit 3 Exam</td>
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<td>5/11</td>
<td>Unit 4 Exam</td>
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<td>2/8</td>
<td>Unit 1 Writing Assignment</td>
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<td>2/22</td>
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<td>Unit 4 Writing Assignment</td>
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<td>Attendance Points (2.5 x 30 days)</td>
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<td>5/1, 5/3</td>
<td>Exploring a Religion</td>
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XIV.  Course Agreement Form

Read, complete, and return to instructor:

I have read the course syllabus for Don Spitler’s Exploring Religions class at UA Pulaski Technical College, and I understand its content. I also understand the rules for the class, and I will follow and abide by these rules, including those relating to attendance, assignments, grading criteria, plagiarism, and behavior.

Date  __________
Print name  ______________________________________
Signature  ______________________________________