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**BLOOMINGTON SPIRITUAL LIFE CENTER  
And INNERSPARK, INC.**

**SURVEY OF BLOOMINGTON FAITH TRADITIONS**

**FALL, 2010  
Round 1**

**Instructor: Thomas F. Capshew, J.D., Ph.D.  
Office and Classroom: 412 S. Walnut St.  
Bloomington, IN 47401-4603  
Phone 812-961-0664  
Email: [tom@innerspark.org](mailto:tom@innerspark.org)**

**Class Times: Varies by faith tradition (see schedule of classes, page 3)**

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**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course provides direct experience of selected faith traditions practicing in Bloomington, Indiana. The course will combine attendance of services and events with written information. Discussion periods will seek to integrate new experiences into beliefs and perceptions about each faith tradition. The primary purpose of this course is to promote understanding of, and celebration of, the diverse approaches humans have to a relationship with the creative force of the universe.

**II. PREREQUISITES:**

There are two prerequisites for this course. One is an openness to respectfully learn about different faith traditions. The second is to be able to hold respectful space for classmates to share their experiences, questions, and breakthroughs.

**III. LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

During this course it is expected that students will:

1. Respectfully join in the services and activities of each faith tradition to the extent appropriate and allowed;
2. Recognize and examine their own knowledge of each faith tradition;
3. Seek additional information or experience in areas where questions arise;
4. Hold space for fellow students to fulfill their learning objectives.

#### **IV. COST:**

This course is part of my interfaith ministry, Innerspark. As such, I am not setting a particular registration fee, and ask that you give an amount that balances your resources with the value you place on the course. All faith traditions offer similar guidelines, more or less rigid, depending on the tradition. Once you have arrived at an amount that is comfortable for you, I suggest you divide it between Innerspark and the faith community we are currently attending. You are welcome to give weekly, monthly or one time for the whole course. If you are uncertain about the amount you have arrived at, or are having difficulty arriving at an amount, please consult with me.

#### **V. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND METHODS:**

##### **A. STRONGLY RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

The following textbooks are strongly recommended for this course:

Smith, Houston (2009). The World's Religions. New York: HarperOne.

Matlins, Stuart M. & Magida, Arthur J. (Eds.) (2006). How to Be a Perfect Stranger: The Essential Religious Etiquette Handbook (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths.

##### **B. ADDITIONAL READING:**

In addition to the strongly recommended textbooks, there are several additional books that expand understanding of each faith tradition which will be recommended during the course.

##### **C. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:**

This course is designed as a **seminar**. As a seminar, the expectation is that everyone will come to all class meetings prepared. The two core instructional methods are experiential and relational. There will be weekly opportunities to experience the practices of the faith tradition and weekly opportunities to discuss and integrate the experience in relation to one's beliefs, one's perceptions and prejudgments, and one's daily interactions with people following the faith tradition.

#### **VI. STUDENT EVALUATION:**

This course is not offered for academic credit. However, some students may find that their learning experience would be enhanced by having structured assignments that provide a framework for deeper understanding and learning. If you are interested in this type of structure, please consult with me early in the experience so we can develop an individualized plan that suits your needs. Individualized plans may, but need not, include reading assignments, writing assignments, homework, or class presentations.

**VII. PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF CLASS TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:**

The first round of this course, offered in the fall of 2010, will be organized around four faith traditions: Judaism; Islam; Buddhism; and Christianity. **NO FAITH COMMUNITY IN BLOOMINGTON CAN BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DIVERSITY WITHIN ANY CATEGORY.** For example, Congregation Beth Shalom is not representative of all Jewish traditions, and the same can be said for each faith community we will attend.

An “Essential Information” sheet will be provided for each faith tradition prior to the scheduled attendance of services or events.

**WEEK      DATE                      SERVICE OR EVENT and READING ASSIGNMENT**

**Judaism: Congregation Beth Shalom,  
3750 East Third Street, Bloomington, IN 47401                      (812) 334-2440**

Week 1    Fri 3 Sept\*            Shabbat Service. Read The World’s Religions, chapter 7,  
pages 271-316  
OR Sat 4 Sept

Week 2    Fri 10 Sept            Shabbat Service  
OR Sat 11 Sept

Week 3    Fri 17 Sept            Shabbat Service, Yom Kippur  
OR Sat 18 Sept

Week 4    Fri 24 Sept            Shabbat Service  
OR Sat 25 Sept

\* Friday evening services begin at 7:30 and are “liberal,” Saturday morning services begin at 9:30 am and are “traditional.” Congregation Beth Shalom is a member of the Union for Reform Judaism.

**Islam: The Islamic Center of Bloomington, Indiana,  
1925 E. Atwater, Bloomington, Indiana 47401                      (812) 333-1611**

Week 5    Fri 1 Oct\*\*            2:00 pm, Jumu’ah (Friday Prayer), Read The World’s  
Religions, chapter 6, pages 221-270

Week 6    Fri 8 Oct                2:00 pm, Jumu’ah (Friday Prayer)

Week 7    Fri 15 Oct              2:00 pm. Jumu’ah (Friday Prayer), Meet with Islamic Center

representatives

Week 8 Fri 22 Oct 2:00 pm, Jumu'ah (Friday Prayer)

Week 9 Fri 29 Oct 6:00 pm, Meet at Bloomington Spiritual Life Center for  
midterm integration session

\*\* Jumu'ah (Friday Prayer) is mentioned in the Qur'an 62:9.

**Buddhism: Tibetan Mongolian Buddhist Cultural Center,  
3655 Snoddy Road, Bloomington, IN 47401**

**(812) 336-6807**

Week 10 Sun 7 Nov\*\*\* 10:30 am, Teachings with lunch to follow, Read The World's  
Religions, chapter 3, pages 82-153

Week 11 Sun 14 Nov 10:30 am, Teachings with lunch to follow

And/or Thur 18 Nov 7:00 – 8:00 pm, Meditation and Dharma question & answer  
session

Week 12 Sun 21 Nov 10:30 am, Teachings with lunch to follow

Week 13 Sun 28 Nov 10:30 am, Teachings with lunch to follow

**Christianity: Second Baptist Church,  
321 N. Rogers Street, Bloomington, Indiana 47404**

**(812) 336-5827**

Week 14 Sun 5 Dec\*\*\*\* 10:00 am, Sunday Service, Read The World's Religions,  
chapter 8, 317-364

Week 15 Sun 12 Dec 10:00 am, Sunday Service

Week 16 Sun 19 Dec 10:00 am, Sunday Service

Week 17 Sun 26 Dec 10:00 am, Sunday Service