

World Religions in Greater Indianapolis Teaching Module

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Humanities Discipline: Philosophy (Ethics)

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World Religion: Christianity

Teaching Module Title: Assessing Views of Christianity

Teaching Module Goals:

"Of the three main branches of Christianity, (Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant) there are reportedly over 33,000 denominations of Protestantism."³ According to a poll reported by ABC₂, the vast majority of Americans claim to be Christian. This module aims to discuss whether or not Christianity in all of its various forms contributes to or diminishes societal harmony in America and human flourishing in general. A further goal is to give students an opportunity to think deeply on what they actually believe about Christianity, moral development, and ethical living.

Assigned Readings and Websites:

<http://christianityinview.com/comparison.html>

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=90356&page=1> Poll: "Most Americans say they are Christian" by Gary Langer

<http://www.asa3.org/ASA/education/views/wvb.htm>

<http://www.christianhumanist.net>

<http://www.ethicsmorals.com/ethicschristian.html>

<http://www.ccel.org/cCEL/aquinas/summa.pdf> (Second Part of the Summa Theologica)

<http://lifehopeandtruth.com/bible/10-commandments/the-ten-commandments/10-commandments-list/>

Matthew 7:1-5, 7:12

Study Questions and/or Class Discussion Prompts for Students:

1. What is required in order to be a Christian? What are the requirements of Christian behavior?
2. Does the fact that there are so many different denominations mean that Christianity is or ought to be relative?
3. We will discuss the philosophy of Manifest Destiny.
4. We will discuss the view that human beings need God, Jesus and the Bible in order to be ethical beings. We will also discuss the alternative view; that morality exists whether one is religious or not.
5. We will discuss Nietzsche's view that Christian Doctrine is "life-denying."
6. We will discuss Soren Kierkegaard's view that belief in God is "life affirming."

Written Assignments and/or other Assessment Instruments:

[Students are expected to read the articles that are listed above. Blog or discussion board responses that reflect opinion is expected, but students are required to back up what they say with meaningful reference to the assigned readings.]

In two Course Blogs, students will address the following statements:

1. "So long as you believe in God, it does not matter what religion you follow; any God is better than No God."
2. Discuss what you think Nietzsche meant when he wrote "There is only one Christian and he died on the Cross."

Students are required to submit to each blog at least four times. They may upload visuals or other supporting materials.

For a discussion board, students will respond to the following prompt: In order to be a Christian, it is essential that one believes that Jesus--as Christ--is the Messiah.

Students will then reply to at least TWO other students with posts not less than 75 words each. (3 comments total)