

Please note: All readings for this course will be posted online.

Requirements:

- Read the assigned texts each week.
- Write and post a minimum of nine short (one- to two-page) reflection papers.
- Regularly read and respond to one another's reflection papers and the instructor's occasional presentations.
- Prepare a short (eight- to ten-page) final research paper on a related subject matter; topics are of the student's choice.

Course Policies

1. Students will agree to use the materials for themselves only.
2. Each student will agree that the lecture notes are not to be printed out or reproduced in any fashion.
3. Each student will agree that the username and password will not be given to anybody outside this course, and that giving another person this information is a breach of trust and ethics.

THE WORLD RELIGIONS MEET IN THE FIELD OF PERENNIAL WISDOM: TRANSCENDENTALISM & SUFISM

Fall 2007

Purpose

This class will allow the students to creatively travel in four fields of study (History, Theology, Comparative Literature and Comparative Religion) to make bridges by finding similarities and differences between Transcendentalist ideas through the works of Emerson and comparing them with the Sufi theology in the works of Hafiz. The students will roam through the history of the United States in the 19th century, along with a glance on the history of Orientalism in the East and setting of life of Hafiz in 14th century Persia. Finally they will weave a connection between Emerson and Hafiz by studying the Perennial Wisdom that exists in all world religions.

Format and Approach

Each week, students in this online course will read assigned texts and be asked to converse with the texts with a short reflection paper. The student's reflection will be posted online

for classmates to read and respond to by posting a response to the original reflection. The instructor will also read all the students' reflections and all the classmates' responses. She will present her own perspective into some of the units and her own responses to the ongoing student discussion -- as seems appropriate. The pedagogy in this course is to generate a range of historical, personal, pastoral, poetic and theological views to provide a rich, varied and nourishing learning environment in which the student can connect many worlds under the cover of Perennial Wisdom. At the conclusion of the course, each student will prepare a reflection in the form of an academic paper submitted in hard-copy directly to the instructor.

Syllabus: “Transcendentalism & Sufism” 2007

The syllabus is divided into 14 units. We will cover one unit per week.

Unit 1: Sept 3—Sept 9

Biography of Hafiz

Unit 2: Sept 10—Sept 16

Biography of Emerson

Unit 3: Sept 17—Sept 23

A glance at political and literal Orientalism and its manifestation in the U.S.

Unit 4: Sept 24—Sept 30

A glance at the history of philosophical thoughts in the 19th century U.S.

Unit 5: Oct 1—Oct 7

Sufism and Hafiz's Sufism

Unit 6: Oct 8—Oct 14

Tracking Hafiz's poetry in Emerson's works (1)

Unit 7: Oct 15—Oct 21

Tracking Hafiz's poetry in Emerson's works (2)

Oct 22—28

Reading Week, no session

You may wish to use some of this week to work on your final paper.

Unit 8: Oct 29—Nov 4

Tracking Hafiz's poetry in Emerson's works (3)

Unit 9: Nov 5—Nov 11

Transcendentalism

Unit 10: Nov 12—Nov 18

Tracking the influence of Sufi poetry on Transcendentalists

Unit 11: Nov 19—Nov 25

Perennial Wisdom

Unit 12: Nov 26—Dec 2

Perennial Wisdom - Transcendentalism - Sufism

Unit 13: Dec 3—Dec 9

Student's Research paper is due in hard copy to the instructor no later than this week.

Unit 14: Dec 10—16

Questions and Answers