Centre for the Study of Comparative Religions and Civilizations
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi
Further Revised Syllabus of M.A Course in Comparative Religion (with the session 2008-2009)

Syllabus
There will be in all 10 papers and a viva voce in the two-year course of M.A. in Comparative Religion. These papers will be of 100 marks each and as per the following scheme:

M.A. (Previous):
Paper I (Part A)- Nature and Scope of Religion; Paper I (B) – Methodologies and Approaches to the Study of Religion
Paper II – Primal Religions
Paper III – Hinduism
Paper IV – Buddhism
Paper V – Jainism

M.A. (Final):

Paper VI – Zoroastrianism
Paper VII – Judaism
Paper VIII – Christianity
Paper IX – Islam
Paper X – Sikhism
M.A. Previous

Paper I (Part A) – Nature and Scope of Religion:

Unit 1 - The Nature of Religious Experience – Traditional and Modern Theories (with special reference to Rudolf Otto, William James, Indian and Semitic Religions)

Unit 2 - The Two Aspects of Religious Life, Individual and Social, Essence and Manifestation, The Evolution of a Religious Tradition

Unit 3 - Religious verses Secular (Sacred and the Profane), Reason and Revelation, The Nature of Symbol, Myth, Theophany and Ritual in Religion.

Unit 4 – Modern Challenges to Religious Traditions, The Inter-Faith Dialogue, Unity and Diversity in Religious Traditions.

Books Recommended:

- Alban G. Widgery. What is religion?
- Stem T. Katz (ed.). Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis
- Anthony C. Thisalton. The Two Horizons
- Roy J. Howard. Three Faces of Hermeneutics
- Paul Ricoeur. Interpretation Theory
- Rudolf Bultmann. Essays: Philosophical and Theological
- W.H. Zuurdeeg. An Analytical Philosophy of Religion
- Frederick J. Steng. Emptiness A Study in Religious Meaning
- Ninian Smart. The Religious Experience of Mankind
- Swami Satprakashananda. Methods of knowledge
- K.S. Murty. Reason and Revelation in Advaita
- G. Van Den Leeu. Religion in Essence and Manifestation
- John B. Carman. The Meaning of Religion
- M. Eliade. Patterns in Comparative Religion
- M. Eliade. Sacred and Profane
- Douglas Allen. Structure and Creativity in Religion
- William James. The Varieties of Religious Experience
- Alistair M. Macleod. Paul Tillich-An Essay on the Role of ontology in his philosophical Theology
- Paul Tillich. Systematic Theology (Introduction), Vol. I
- Paul Tillich. Dynamics of Faith
- Rudolf Otto. The Idea of the Holy
- Joachim Wach. Comparative Religion
- Joachim Wach. Types of Religious Experience
- Eric J. Sharpe. Comparative Religion- A History
- Y. Masih. Comparative Religion
Paper I (Part B) – Methodologies and Approaches to the Study of Religion:

Unit I
A snapshot survey of World Religions; antiquity, diversity and geographical locations; Opening Questions related to the study of World Religions; critical methods; ambivalent, contradictory and complementary paradigms.

Unit 2
The Origin of Religion/ The Evolutionists Approaches; Anthropological and Sociological Approaches; Reductive and Functionalist Approaches.

Unit 3
Experiential Approaches: Phenomenological; Approaches to Mysticism; Psychoanalytical Approaches.

Unit 4
Symbolic Approaches; Exegetical and Hermeneutical Approaches

Unit 5
Feminism and Religion; Inter-faith dialogue and Reconciliatory Approaches.

Books Recommended:

- W.C. Smith. *The Meaning and End of Religion*
- Jan De Vries. *The Study of Religion: A Historical Approach*
- Joseph M. Kitagawa. *History of Religions: Essays in Methodology*
- Toynbee, Arnold J. *Historical Approach to Religion*
- G. Van der Leeuw. *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*
- Joachim Wach. *Sociology of Religion*
- Mircea Eliade. *Patterns in Comparative Religion*
- W. Kritstenson. *Meaning in Religion*
- M. Weber. *Sociology of Religion*
- R. Marle. *Introduction to Hermeneutics*
- R.E. Palmer. *Hermeneutics-Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthy, Heidegger and Gadamer*
- H.G. Gadamer. *Philosophical Hermeneutics*
- Joseph M. Kitagawa (Ed.) *History of Religions: Essays on the Problem of Understanding* (only two essays by Long and Bolo)
- Joachim Wach. *Comparative Study of Religion*
Paper II – Primal Religions

Unit 1- Beliefs and Concepts
a) Background to the Study of Primal religions
   Intellectual trends in 18th and 19th Centuries and their impact on the origin and growth of the study of ‘Primitive’ religions—Evolutionism, Diffusionists, Degenerationists, the concept of survivals, the role of Empire
b) Early Religious Beliefs
   Animism, Manaism, Totemism (Durkhiem’s distinction between sacred and profane, his definition of religion, the importance of ritual in fostering social solidarity), Taboo, Magic and witchcraft, Ancestor Worship, Sacrifice, Pantheism, Panentheism

Unit 2- Myths and Rituals
a) The Study of Ritual: Definitional problems surrounding the concept of ritual: Expressive and instrumental aspects of ritual;
   Examples of approaches to the study of ritual (Max Gluckmann; Levi Strauss etc)
b) Myth: Approaches to the study of Myth; Ritual Myth Approach (Hooke and Harrison); Charter Theory of Myth (Malinowsky); Structuralist and Psychological theories

Unit 3- Rites of Passage
Ritual as proces through the works of Van Gennep and Victor Turner

Unit 4- Changes and Continuities
a) Primitive Religions encounter world religions
b) Case Studies from India

Reading List:
- Durkhiem, Emile *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.
- Anthony Giddens’ *Capitalism and the Rise of Social Theory*
- Steiner, Franz *Taboo* (Penguin Books)
- Gluckman, Max 1955 *Custom and Conflict in Africa* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford). Chapter on the logic of Magic and Witchcraft
- Malinowsky, “Magic, Science and Religion” (Article)
- For Pantheism and Panentheism, see the relevant entries in *Encyclopedia of Religions edited by Mercia Eliade*
- Fotres, Meyer “Reflections on Ancestor Worship in Africa” in African Systems of Thought edited by Fortes and Dieterlen
- __________ “The Sacrificial Role of Cattle among the Nuer” in Africa, Vol. 23, No. 3. 1953
- Van Gennep, Arnold. Rites of Passage
- __________1937 Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande (OUP, Oxford)

**Paper III – Hinduism:**

**Unit I**
Debates on constructing the category “Hinduism”, Pre-Vedic Religions, origin and antiquity of the Vedas; Vedic Texts (Shruti and Smriti), Vedic religion and ritual; an introduction to later Vedic scriptures (Brahmanas and Aranyakas).

**Unit II**
The emergence and development of the Upanishads, fundamental concepts of Classical Hinduism: Brahman-atman, karma, mokhsa, and samsara; Upanishadic ontologies and their influence.

**Unit III a**
Epic literature : Mahabharata and Ramayana; the Bhagavadgita (commentaries and teachings), the early and late Puranas.

**Unit III b**
Classical Hindu Society; the Dharma Shastras-corpus, classification and content; Varna-Asharma-Dharma (Caste and Life stage Law) and the Four Goals of life (purusharthas); Hindu life-cycle rituals (samaskaras).

**Unit III c**
Philosophical worldviews (darshanas) – Samkhya-yoga, Vedanta andShaiva Metaphysics (Kashmir).

**Unit 4 a**
The rise of Medieval Sectarianism, early Bhakti Tradition (North & South); nature and models of Bhakti (Vaishnava, Shaiva and Shaktta). The Sants of Bhakti Tradition (Kabir and the Sant tradition); Dissenting Sectarian cults (Tantra).
Unit 4 b
Religious Expressions (Puja, Vrata, Tirtha); Manifestation of Hindu norms in Visual and Performative Arts (icon, temple, miniature painting, dance and drama).

Unit 5
“Oriental Perceptions” of Hinduism; Reform Movements in the Nineteenth Century; Ram Mohan Roy and the Brahmo Samaj; Dayananda Sarasvati and the Arya Samaj; Vivekananda and the 20th century Renaissance.

Unit 6
Contemporary discourse on Hinduism - Ecology, Human Rights and Feminism etc. Interactive Session on the theme - Which Hinduism is True?

Books Recommended:
- R.G. Bhandarkar. *Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems*
- J. Ganda. *Aspects of Early Visnuism*
- John Woodroffe. *Sakti and Sakta*
- Arthur Avalon (Ed.). *Kularnava Tantra*
- The Ramakrishna Mission. *The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. III & IV*
- P.H. Prabhu. *Hindu Social Organization*
- J.E. Carpenter. *Avatar and Incarnation*
- G. Parrinder. *Avatara and Incarnation*
- J.A.B. Van Buitenen. *Ramarajya on the Bhagavadgītā*
- Nicol Macneil. *Indian Theism from the Vedic to the Mohammadan, Period, chaps. III & IX*
- T.M.F. Mahadevau. *Ten Saints of India*
- A.K. Majumdar. *Bhakti Renaissance*
- Theodore de Bary. *Sources of Indian Tradition, Chap. II*
- Arthur Avalen. *Principles of Tantra, Part I, Introduction*
- Farquhar. *Modern Religious Movements in India*

Paper IV: Buddhism

Unit I: Introduction and Background
a) Curators of the Buddha: Discovery of Buddhism in the West: development of discourse on early Buddhism; Textualisation of Buddhist studies; Contribution of Indologists; Historiography of early Buddhism.

b) Genesis of Early Buddhism: Socio-historical roots, material milieu of the rise of early Buddhism; and ideological setting; Buddhism as a protest movement?

c) Reading the (Early Buddhist) *Pāli* Canon: Assessing the *Tipitaka*: problems and perspectives; Development of the *Pāli* Canon: stages of compilation and writing down; Recovering the Buddha’s message: orality and *Buddhavacana* (“words of the Buddha”)

Unit 2: Buddhist Thoughts and Doctrines
a) Fundamental Buddhist Thoughts: The Four Noble Truths (Ariyasaccâni) and Dukkhavāda; The Eight Fold Path (Astagāma), Dependent Origination (Paticcasmuppada); philosophy of Non-self (anattâ/anâtman).
b) Nirvâna and Karma: Concept and imagery of nirvâna; Karma/kamma and rebirth: Buddhist notion of karma, divergence with the Jaina and Brahmanical notions of karma: Typology, dynamism and working of karma.
c) Buddhist Moral Ethics (Śīlā): Fundamental Buddhist ethics; nature of early Buddhist ethics; transgression and retribution.

Unit III (A): Emergence and Growth of the Sangha
a) Formation of the Buddhist Order (Sangha): Stages in development of the Sangha: from eremitical to cenobitical lifestyle; Sedentarization and domestication of the Sangha.
b) Buddhist Monastic Codes: Pali Vinayapitaka: the development and formation of monastic codes; Monastic initiation; Features of Buddhist monasticism: disciplinary codes in the Suttavibhanga and Khandhaka; Collective ritual expressions of the Sangha: monastic rites ceremonies, viz., pratimoksa, uposatha, pavârana, kathina.

Unit III (B): Sectarian Developments: Mahayana, Tantric, Vajrayana Tibetan
a) Mahâyâna in India: Basic Mahâyâna Scriptures; Origins, growth, influences and nature of Mahâyâna in early India; Emergence of the stûpa cult and Mahâyâna.
b) Mahâyâna Philosophy; Prajnâpâramitâ, ñamaya, and the development of the bodhisattva ideal; divergences with the mainstream (Theravada) Buddhist thought; Doctrine of the multiple bodies of the Buddha (triâkâya).
c) Tantric Buddhism: Appearance and setting; Tantric texts and their basic classification; Significant features of Tantric Buddhism in India; Transgressive elements in Tantric Buddhism.
d) Vajrayana-Tibetan Buddhism: Origins and influences; how distinctive was Vajrayana?; features and elements of practice.

Unit IV: Efflorescence, Decline and Revival
a) Spread and Forms of Buddhism: South & Southeast Asia (Theravada), Tibetan Buddhism, Newar Buddhism (Nepal), Zen (Japan).
b) Early Buddhist art: from aniconic to iconic; cave art; narrative art; sculptural art.
c) Decline of Buddhism in India: external factors, internal weaknesses and contradictions.
d) Revival and Transformation of Buddhism: the case of Singhalese Theravada Buddhism; Emergence of Navayana in modern India; Neo-Buddhist movements in the West.

Books Recommended:
- Bapat, P.V. (Ed.) 1959 2500 Years of Buddhism, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Delhi.
Paper V – Jainism

Unit 1 – Introduction and Background

a) The development of Jain Studies and the West: the delayed arrival of Jainism as a legitimate concern for Indological study; its philological bent; the contribution of Jacobi etc.

Sramanic Religions and Jainism

b) The Jain conception of time: avasarpini and utsarpini

The Tradition of Tirthankaras - from Rsaba to Mahavira

- The Life of Mahavira
- Parsva and Mahavira (Kesi-Gautam samvad and the differences between Law of Four restraints and pancha mahavratas)

The lineage of elders after Mahavira: From Jambu to Bhadrabahu

Jaina Councils and the Spread of Jainism: Origin and Development of Jain Sangha (incl. royal patronage and the geographic expansion)

c) The theory of Karma and bondage (tata gnan/ Jain conception of universe and gati)

The Schism between Svetambar and Digambar: major points of conflict
Unit 2 - Scripture and Practice
a) Jain Scriptures, literary Traditions
Jain Canonical Literature (The Svetambar and Digambar Tradition)
Narrative Literature: Jain Puranas and Story traditions
Sravakcara literature on lay discipline (Hemcandra’s Yogasastra)
b) Philosophy: the nature of reality/ differences with the fatalist and theistic schools and the concept of Syadvad
c) Jain Religious Practices
Asceticism and Devotion: Vratas and restraints/ temple worship/ pilgrimages and other rituals (avasyaka and pratikraman etc)

Unit 3 - Jains in Society
a) Reform and Revivalism: the rise of Jain sects (the main divisions within Jainism, viz, Mandimargis, Sthankavasis etc)
b) Monastic organisation: hierarchy within the monastic orders, the religious specialists (monks, bhattaraks etc); the differences between Digambar and Svetambar Traditions (the contrast between the individualism of Digambar tradition and the church-like ambience of the Svetambar tradition)
c) Caste among Jains

Unit 4 – Contribution of Jainism to Fine Arts and the Sciences
a) Fine arts (Sculpture/ painting/ architecture), Mathematics etc
b) Modern Challenges to Jainism (the continuing reforms, eg, the relaxation on travel among the Terapanthi and Sthanakvasi tradition)

Reading List
- The Jaina Path of Purification by P.S. Jaini
- Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 22, Introduction by Herman Jacobi
- “The Jains and the Western Scholar” by P.S. Jaini in Collected Papers on Jaina Studies
- The Universe as Audience: Metaphor and Community among the Jains of North India by R.K. Jain, See Chapters I and II.
- The Jains by Paul Dundas, See Relevant Chapters
- Riches and Renunciation: Religion, Economy and Society among the Jains by James Laidlaw. See relevant Chapters
- “Monks and Miracles” by Lawrence Babb
- Caillat, C. Atonements in the Ancient Ritual of the Jaina Monks.
- Cort, J. E. Jains in the world: religious values and ideology in India.
- Dixit, K. K. Early Jainism.
Paper VI: Zoroastrianism

Unit I: Background & Introduction

- Beginnings of the academics study of Zoroastrianism.
- Pre-Zoroastrian and the Vedic religion.
- Zoroastrian religion: monotheistic, dualistic, or polytheistic.
- Avesta: exploring its nature and character.

Unit II: Zoroaster and his Religion: Fundamental Standpoints

- Zoroaster: biographical sketch and mission.
- Ahura Mazda & Angra Mainyu: opposition and adversary.
- The Two States & Three Times, Death & lifeafter.
- Worship of Ahura Mazda & associated practices.

Unit III: Historical Transitions and Transformations

- Zoroastrianism during the earliest phase: the unrecorded centuries.
- Zoroastrianism under the Achaemenians.
- Zoroastrianism under the Seleucids.
- Zoroastrianism under the Sasanians.
- Zurvanism: rise of a heretical philosophy.

Unit IV: Zoroastrianism: Immigration and Influence

- Advent and spread of the Parsi community in India.
- Parsis & the Christian missionaries: challenge and response.
- Parsis’ religious and social reforms in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- Zoroastrianism’s influence on the religions of the Middle East

References


Paper VII – Judaism:

Unit 1
- The Salient features of Old Testament as a Religious Scripture – Monotheism.
- The Religious Interpretation of History.
- Religious Law as a means of Salvation.

Unit 2
- The History of Jewish People.
- The Development of Jewish Theology and Talmud Writings.
- Jewish Mysticism – Kabala – Hasidism.

UNIT 3
- The Jewish People in Diaspora.
- The Jewish People in the Medieval Islamic World.
- The Jewish People and the Renaissance.
Unit 4

- The Jewish People in India
- The State of Israel.
- Tradition and Modernity in the Contemporary Israelite Society.

**Books Recommended:** (Books in bold are available at central library, Jamia Millia Islamia)

Rose, Gillian.  *Judaism and Modernity: Philosophical essays.*

Levin, Ephraime.  *Judaism*

Rabinowicz, Oskar.K.  *Arnold Toynbee on Judaism and Zionism*

Renckens, Henry.  *The Religion of Israel*

Wouk, Herman.  *This is my God: The Jewish Way of Life*

Bentwich, N.  *Israel*

Kohler, Kaufmann.  *Jewish Theology*

Moore, G.F.  *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*

- Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*
- John Bright, *History of Israel*
- Otto J. Baab, *The Theology of the Old Testament*
- John Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion*
- Arthur Hertzberg, *Judaism*
- Keith W. Whitelam, *The Invention of Ancient Israel*.

**Paper VIII – Christianity:**
Unit 1 – A General Introduction to Christianity and the Conditions at the time of its emergence – Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ – The Apostles and their Contribution in the Emergence of the Christian Tradition – The Christian Scriptures


Unit 3 – Church, its History and Organization – Landmarks in the Spread of Christianity – Reformation – Renascence and Secularization of European Society – The Process of Rationalization and Demythologization of Christian Theology

Unit 4 – Christianity and Colonialism – Christianity in the Post-Colonial Era – Christian Ethics of Love and Service to Humanity – The Challenge of Dialogue between Christian Churches themselves and with Other Religions

Books Recommended:
- Christianity
  Punjabi University, Patiala
- Goddess MacGregor
  The Bible in the Making
- John Foster
  The first Advance Church History AD 29-500
- Sigfried Eathorn
  The Christian Doctrines of Salvation
- Peter May
  The Doctrine of Trinity
- Gustavo Cutierrez
  A Theology of Liberation

Paper IX – Islam


Unit 2 – The Unification of a large Part of the Civilized World under Umayyads – The Development of the Islamic Civilization under Abbasids – The Establishment of Shari'ah as the basis of Islamic Society – The Emergence of Sufism

Unit 3 – The Contribution of Medieval Islamic Civilization to the Rational Sciences, Technology and Fine Arts – The International Trade under Abbasids and the Fatimids – The Development of Sufism as the Major Religious Instance

Unit 4 – The Challenge of Modernity to the Islamic Societies – The Reform Movements in the Muslim Societies in the Modern Period – The Contemporary Situation in Major Blocks of the Muslim Societies
Books Recommended:
- Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*
- Khwaja Kemaluddin, *The Ideal Prophet*
- Mohammed Manzoor Numani, *What Islam Is*
- Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*
- Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims*
- W.C. Smith, *Islam in Modern History*
- Majid Ali Khan, *Pious Caliphs*
- Mir Valliuddin, *The Quranic Sufism*
- K.A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India (13th Century)*
- Bishop John A Subhan, *Sufism-Its Saints and Shrines*
- H.A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*
- R.C. Bhatnagar, *Dimensions of Classical Sufi Thought*

Paper X – Sikhism:

**Unit 1** - Political, religious and cultural background of Sikhism - Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak Sahib – Historical development of Sikh Panth and Culture – Contribution of Sikh Gurus from Guru Arjun Dev to Guru Tegh Bahadur to the growth of Sikh religious tradition.


**Unit 4** - Challenges of Modernity to Sikh Community – Sikh response to some modern concerns – Gender equality- Sikhs in Diaspora

Books Recommended:
- BALKAR SINGH, *SIKH RAHASWAD.*
- DHARAM SINGH, *THE SIKH THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION.*
- GURNAM KAUR, *REASON AND REVELATION IN SIKHISM.*
- JASWINDER KAUR, *GURU NANAK DI KIMAT MIMAMSA.*
- JODH SINGH, *THE RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY OF GURU NANAK.*
- NIRBHAI SINGH, *PHILOSOPHY OF SIKHISM.*
- RAJINDER KAUR ROHI, *SEMITIC AND SIKH MONOTHEISM.*
- SARDUL SINGH KAWISHAR, *SIKH DHARMA DARSHAN (PB).*
- SHASHI BALA, *SIKH METAPHYSICS.*
- SHER SINGH, *GURMAT DARSHAN (PB).*
- SHER SINGH, *PHILOSOPHY OF SIKHISM.*
- SOHAN SINGH, *THE SEEKERS OF PATH.*
- TEJA SINGH, *KARMA AND TRANSMIGRATION.*
- WAZIR SINGH, *PHALSAFA ATE SIKH PHALSAFA.*