

St Xavier's College (Autonomous) Kolkata

VAC -1

Spirituality and Inter-Religious Harmony

Course name: Spirituality and Inter-Religious Harmony		
Course code:	Course Type: VAC 1	
Course Credits:	2 Credit course. No. of classes per week -1	
Pedagogy:	Classrooms lecture, Case studies, Group discussion & Seminar	
<p>Course Description: this course on “Spirituality and Inter-religious Harmony” is to introduce students to major religious traditions of the world with a brief exposition of basic tenets of Hinduism, Christianity Islam, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. One of the main goals is to understand how these religious movements orient themselves in the world with respect to history, belief and practice. An attempt will be made to explore the traditions on their own terms as much as possible. However, this should not prevent anyone asking healthy critical questions on them, as it also aims to inculcate in students a sense of respect and appreciation for followers of other religions and traditions and to enhance social harmony and inter-religious dialogue in the country. To achieve these goals, topics like God-Man-World concepts, sacred texts, human destiny, rituals, holy places community, spirituality besides others, will be dealt with.</p>		
<p>Learning Objectives: The course aims to help learners to acquire conceptual knowledge of: LO1. how these religious movements orient themselves in the world with respect to history, belief and practice LO2. spirituality and its interconnectedness with the world at large</p>		
<p>Course Outcomes: On successful completion of the course, students will be able to: CO1. Understand one’s personal spiritual quotient and spirituality in everyday life CO2. Understand the importance of social harmony and inter-religious dialogue</p>		
Unit	Details	No. of classes
Unit 1: Introduction to religion and its importance in everyday life	Religion – The origin of religion, the religious and social role of religion, festivals , symbolism of each Religion.	2
Unit 2: Introduction to Hinduism and its basic tenets and practices	Hinduism: Introduction, God-Man-World concepts, Human destiny, Evil-Suffering, life after death, rites and rituals and worship, sacred texts, a popular prayer - Gayatri mantra, principal sects, Hinduism and social system – caste system, samsara, festivals and holy places, and comparative elements in other religions.	3
Unit 3: Introduction to Christianity and its basic tenets and practices	Christianity: Introduction-God-Man-World concept, Jesus Christ, Human destiny, Evil-Suffering, life after death, rites and rituals (Sacraments) and worship, sacred texts. A popular prayer – ‘Our Father’, festivals and holy places, and comparative elements in other religions.	3

Unit 4: Introduction to Islam and its basic tenets and practices	Islam: Introduction, God-Man-World concept, Muhammad, Human destiny, Evil-Suffering, life after death, rites and rituals and worship, sacred texts, a popular prayer -“The Call to Prayer”, principal sects, Sufism, festivals and holy places and comparative elements in other religions.	3
Unit 5: Introduction to Buddhism	Buddhism - The traditions, beliefs and practices in Buddhism	3
Unit 6: Introduction to Jainism	Jainism- The traditions, beliefs and practices in Jainism	3
Unit 7: Introduction to Sikhism	Sikhism- Introduction to Sikhism and its basic tenets and practices	3
Unit 8: Prayer and Ignatian Spirituality	Prayer and Spirituality: St. Ignatius of Loyola and Ignatian Spirituality	1
Unit 9: Prayer and Spirituality in everyday life – What? Why? How?	Spiritual Quotient: Prayer and spirituality in Personal and Public life (Social), Connections and distinctions between spirituality and religion, interrelationship between spirituality and religion, The power and effects of thoughts, Experiencing the Supreme	1
Unit 10: Critical reflection on inter-religious dialogue – a way forward	Inter-Religious Dialogue: steps to foster unity among different followers of faith traditions	1
Practical Exercises/Skill Development Activities: watching documentaries on such areas, project report /assignment. Taking the occasion of one festival of one religion and organising Inter-Faith prayer service. Before the service, explanation of the festivals to be given with Power Point. Visit to religious places.		
Suggested Readings/References:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tiwari, Kedar Nath. Comparative Religion (Chapter 1) 2. Smith, Huston. The World’s Religions (Chapter 1) 3. Stanford, Peter. Religion: 50 ideas you really need to know (Chapter 1) 4. Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (1985) Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur’an in the English Language, Al Madina Al Munawwarah: Islamic University of Al Madina Al Munawwarah. 5. What is Islam? (2010) Compiled by Research Division Darussalam, Riyadh: Maktaba Darussalam. 6. Muhammad al-Jibaly (2004) Knowing the Last Day, Madina: Al Kitab and As Sunnah Publishing. 7. Hammudah Abdalati (2001) Islam in Focus, New Delhi: New Crescent Publishing. 8. Dr. Zakir Naik (2000) Qur’an and Modern Science Compatible or Incompatible? Mumbai: Islamic Research Foundation. 9. The world of religions – samarpan 10. the complete works of Swami Vivekananda 11. selections from the complete works of Swami Vivekananda 12. What’s Buddhism – Plain and Simple, The Practice of Being Aware, Right Now, Every Day, 2013, Steve Hagen, Broadway Books 13. SIKH SPIRITUAL PRACTICE – THE SOUND WAY TO GOD by Siri Kirpal Kaur 14. Jainism: An Introduction, 2009, Jeffery D. Long, I.B.Tauris 12. The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment, by Eckhart Tolle, by New World Library, 2004 		

13. Religious Hinduism by DeSmet and Neumer